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The Waste Land in the Light of T. S. Eliot's Concept of Tradition

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Abstract

‘The Wasteland’ is one of the most representative of T S Eliot’s poems to depict the use of his typical critical concepts. It shows ample use of the idea of literary tradition as described by Eliot in his critical writings. The mention of characters, situations, ideas and phrases from the noteworthy earlier literary works give the poem a definite title of being the ‘traditional poem’ from Eliot’s point of view.

Eliot creates the new form by using literary allusions which actually make his footnotes part of the poem. Eliot was of the opinion that a firm correlation with the past is satisfying to readers; he recognized the need for a new genre to deal with the feelings of the people who suffered a lot in the post-war world. At various places, lines from many different past masters have been included to support his own ideas; thus making his own ideas stronger than as presented before. What Eliot does to make his work different, is that he uses allusions and images that are firmly grounded especially in English literature, so much so that, according to Ames, there is a “collective memory” of the images.

The intertextual use of a number of classics has been made so enormously that, at least, for an educated reader, the understanding of them has been contextually and innovatively clear. “The Waste Land” expresses feelings by using references to works that have an extensive amount of

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criticism. This paper evaluates Eliot's use of techniques by means of which he has tried to maintain his concept of tradition in his poem 'The Wasteland'.

Eliot's Critical Concepts

Since the poem 'The Wasteland' is said to be the most representative of Eliot's entire work, considerable evidences are found in the poem regarding the true practice of the poet's given critical concepts. Like the concept of impersonality, the canon of tradition is also well practiced in this poem.

In a number of places in the poem, the reader is artistically reminded of various great literary, religious and cultural points especially belonging to past. The mention of characters, situations, ideas and phrases from the noteworthy earlier literary works give the poem a definite title of being the 'traditional poem' from Eliot's point of view.

Willard (2005) is of the view that as Eliot himself was a man of strong critical tendency and had a much stricter sense of 'literary tradition' than those of his most other contemporaries, he could skillfully apply his given concepts in his poetry quite sensibly.

A Fine Example of the Use of Traditions

The poem "The Waste Land" can be called a fine example of the use of "literary tradition" to make a completely new scenario as the ground of an ancient conflict. T. S. Eliot's viewpoint, as mentioned in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" paved the way to the creation of a new poetic form in "The Waste Land".

Limanta, in her paper on the use of allusions in "The Waste Land" is of the view which can be briefly summed up as, "A poet cannot be a poet at all if he is not connected with all the poetic tradition before him. This is T.S. Eliot's dictum which he stated in Tradition and the Individual Talent and which he practiced in his work The Waste Land."

The form is based on the work of other poets, as well as a reaction to the failed attempts of earlier writers to voice similar ideas. The Waste Land' exhibits the scenes and feelings of post World War I life more skillfully than many other poems of the same period because it takes the readers back to earlier works which make part of the message of the poem and give a comprehensive shape to the poem (Ames).

Since T S Eliot believed in the composite whole of European tradition and not only in the fragment of English tradition, he tried to portray the European world of post war scenario in the poem. "The Waste Land" provides a deeply disillusioned view of a cosmopolitan postwar European (rather than merely English) society (Sutton. p.24). This allows it to be much more compact than epic poems, yet it is as vivid in abstract imagery as Georgian and trench poetry.

The Epigraph of the Poem

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About the Epigraph of the poem, Davidson (121) says that it was selected after the poet's warm debate with his most influential friend, Ezra Pound. The existing epigraph sets out the element of traditional references in the very start of the poem. Davidson writes, "The passage from the *Satyricon* is appropriate to the poem in its references to imprisonment and desire for death, and in its connection to the Greek and Roman beginnings of European civilization."

Davidson (122) remarks that the change in the selection of the appropriate epigraph shows Eliot's respect for the tradition because the poet has tried to connect each part of the poem with its theme and with the European literary tradition in a proper way. Worthington (14) also sees a befitting correlation between the epigraph and the general theme of "The Waste Land". He says that the apt use of Eliot's epigraph can easily be understood. The people of the *Satyricon* and the characters of "The Waste Land" are similarly marked by vulgar attitude, sexual lust, and greed for money and everything else.

Additional Mythological Characters

Tiresias, already mentioned in Impersonality section, is also important to be described as a traditional mythological character used for the unification of the poem. Nevo (p.455) is of the opinion that as all the female characters melt into each other, Tiresias melts into other traditional characters like Cumean sibyl, Ezekiel, Isaiah and Madam Sosostriis. Not only these past characters have been shown linked with the powerful persona of Tiresias, but the characters, representing the modern age, have been associated under the vision of this great mythological seer.

Gerstenberger (25) also points out that in the poem "The Waste Land" the poet has skillfully tried to create an inescapable mythic structure of materials which authors of the modern times facing their own disillusionments will any how hear at their backs time after time. He is specially mentioning the modern authors' indebtedness to learn and borrow things from different works of Eliot. As an example Gerstenberger describes the influence of "The Waste Land" on Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. This also substantiates Eliot's claim about the importance of the handing down of the "tradition" to the writers of coming generations.

Combining the Strength of Various Genres

By combining the techniques and strengths of various genres such as the epic, the Georgian and Romantic poetry in new ways, "The Waste Land" gives the reader a new experience which captures, in a new voice, what the other works could not—the feeling of disillusionment after the war.

Eliot creates the new form by using literary allusions which actually make his footnotes part of the poem. The footnotes add substantial meaning through rich cultural, critical and imagistic connotations.

Elliot (2005:03) also speaks of Eliot's commitment with the traditional style of his contemporary

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poetry. He says that most of the serious work by T S Eliot is marked by a sense of loss, confusion and frustration which has also been shared by many other writers of the generation. Elliot further says that many of Eliot's famous poems exhibit a sequence of scattered images, out of their original contexts; quotations from and references to earlier poems, short and long passages from foreign languages, allusions to historical events and literary characters, and pieces taken from a number of popular songs in an unconnected collage. Talking about the typical style of the poem, Donker connects its structure with the ancient classical tradition. He writes:

Eliot evokes not only the Aeneid's mythic design, but the particular concatenation of events of its first six books. He recalls Virgil's literary strategies, and like him reformulates the monuments of the past to comment upon the present. He points to Virgil over and over again with a variety of gestures, some of them obvious, others wittily disguised (164).

Canon of Past Works in Writing Poetry

Having comparable type of significance in mind, in "Tradition and the Individual Talent", Eliot explains why it is important to include the canon of past works when writing poetry:

In English writing we seldom speak of tradition, though we occasionally apply its name in deploring its absence. We cannot refer to "the tradition" or to "a tradition"; at most, we employ the adjective in saying that the poetry of so-and-so is "traditional" or even "too traditional." Seldom, perhaps does the word appear except in a phrase of censure. If otherwise, it is vaguely approbative, with the implication, as to the work approved, of some pleasing archaeological reconstruction. You can hardly make the word agreeable to English ears without this comfortable reference to the reassuring science of archaeology.

Technical Aspects of the Poem *Waste Land*

Spanos (227), having quoted a number of well-reputed critics, gives the details of technical aspects of the poem. He says, "Eliot's strategy is broadly assumed to involve the reflexive or ironic juxtaposition of past and present, mythic and contemporary, from a teleological vantage point in order to negate temporal – and 'interested' – hermeneutic encounter with the poem in favour of a logocentrically simultaneous or spatial – and 'objective' – perception." He is actually describing Eliot's attachment with the traditional (in Eliot's language) works of past, his own time and mythological conventions.

McGuirk (2003), speaking of Eliot's dedication to Pound, relates the facts to the European literary tradition. He says: "The dedication to Ezra Pound then harks back to the Troubadour poets of twelfth-century Provence, who "represent the origins of great European traditions of high poetic art."

Correlation of the Past and the Present

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To Eliot the collective effect of the continental literature had a very significant role to pave the way for a new literature. Eliot states "No poet has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation, is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists" (Eliot, 2171).

Eliot was of the opinion that a firm correlation with the past is satisfying to readers; he recognized the need for a new genre to deal with the feelings of the people who suffered a lot in the post-war world. Ames, in his essay, explains Eliot's intentions and objectives of his theory of tradition. He says, from Eliot's point of view: "Simply reiterating or copying older works was not enough, instead, the modern poet of any age must utilize both the "tradition" of those who came before and "the individual talent" of those who would add distinctiveness to the modern work".

While *The Waste Land* was published three years after "Tradition and the Individual Talent," it is the same philosophy that inspires both works. "The Waste Land" utilizes the sentiments of "Tradition" in that it is highly allusive, yet, simultaneously; it is a new kind of poem, which is clearly different from anything that came before. Clinton (2003), talking about Kirk's work on Eliot, has given a number of facts that are about Eliot's adherence to his literary context; he says: "Kirk saw in Eliot a vital link to the past and a promising link to the future."

In his article, Clinton, quoting Kirk, has tried to establish Eliot's literary position by honouring him with great titles and labels; he speaks of Eliot in very nasty and blunt wording, calling him "the upstart American who took the European literary establishment by storm"; the iconoclastic pioneer of poetic innovation and improvement; the romantic rebel and expert of the aesthetics of hopelessness; the arrogant originator and craftsman of obscurity and insignificance; the mentally diseased person, neo-medievalist and decaying Anglican; the literary authoritarian and severe trendsetter and facilitator of privileged elite class. Eiland (2004) also speaks of Eliot's such contextual inspirations to write "The Waste Land". "The Waste Land" (1922) is T S Eliot's hallucinatory vision of the modern metropolis, directly inspired by Charles Baudelaire's somber and vivid collection, *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857)", and it is termed as the opening event and most accepted and famous representation and interpretation of city life style in lyric poetry.

Donker (164) has given a comparison between "The Waste Land" and Virgil's *Aeneid*, where he says, "It is generally accepted, for example, that the two poems share a particular mythic configuration, a pattern of quest that involves descent into and return from an experience of mystery and sacred knowledge." Donker is of the view that Eliot has maintained the poetic tradition of 'descents into hell'. He further says that a series of such descents was founded first by Virgil, then by Dante and in modern times by Eliot. Donker concludes, "Virgil's position in the mind of Europe, his pervasive influence on Western literature, is the critical assumption of "The Waste Land". "Some regard the poem's distinctive reliance on allusion, particularly to Greek and Latin mythological figures, and its inclusion of German and French phrases, as weaknesses which exclude the "average" reader, yet the poem remains one of Eliot's most-read works" (Johnston).

Acosta (2002) finds the poem as an exemplary piece of literary work that upholds the poet's

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claim of keeping up the signs of past and present, culture and religion etc. he writes, “The poem mixes descriptions of contemporary life with literary allusions and quotations, religious symbolism, and references to ancient and medieval cultures and mythologies, vegetation and fertility rites, as well as Eastern religions and philosophies.”

Allusions not only require a reader to recognize the past in new ways that add meaning to the present, but it adds layers of connotations that could not be presented in any other manner, except perhaps the epic. The epic has not had the success with modern readers that it had with the ancient Greeks and Romans.

With the exception of *Ulysses*, by James Joyce, and *Paradise Lost*, by John Milton, the epic in English is a contradiction in terms. While the scale of “The Waste Land” is epic, its voice is not. Other styles that had followings in both popular and critical circles were the free verse poems of Walt Whitman, the World War I trench poets, and the “neo-romantic” poetry of the Georgians. Christ (158) is of the opinion that although Eliot refuses to have followed the Victorian path or literary tradition, a great deal of his works betrays the ways of his immediate predecessors i.e. the Victorians. He says: “Eliot writes a criticism in the tradition of Arnold and a poetry in the tradition of Tennyson.” Christ has, then, tried to prove that Eliot’s development of all the typical literary cannons is all due to the Victorian literature not indebted to the seventeenth century English literature as claimed by Eliot himself. However, McGuirk’s (2003) observations are different, who says, “*A Game of Chess* begins with a style reminiscent of seventeenth and eighteenth century literature.” At various places, lines from many different past masters have been included to support his own ideas; thus making his own ideas stronger than as presented before; as Vianu says, “The last line of *The Burial of the Dead*, taken from Baudelaire,

You! hypocrite lecteur! – mon semblable, – mon frère!

supports the idea.

A Coherent Life Told Fragmentarily

“The Waste Land” can, therefore, be read as the story of a coherent life told fragmentarily (in good stream-of-consciousness tradition).” Speaking of the role of Madam Sosostriis and her relation with the drowned Phoenician Sailor, Eliot quotes a line from Shakespeare’s *Tempest*: “*Those are pearls that were his eyes.*” All this is done not just for its own sake, but it is to give new meanings to the current ideas with full support and strength. In this line he has given a new connotation to death; it depicts it, like Shakespeare, as a *sea-change/ Into something rich and strange* (Vianu). Speaking about the images of death, Vianu also points out that Eliot’s death images are those of John Donne, which are used to extend the sense of life. Talking about Lil’s story and specially her married life, Shakespeare’s Ophelia (*Hamlet*) has not been ignored and thus the line, “Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night”.

Impact of War Conditions

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John Masfield, Rupert Brooke and other Georgian poets expressed their views on the war conditions which also impressed Eliot to a noticeable extent. "They did offer T. S. Eliot something to base his work against, and he did actually share some of their techniques" (Ames). This shows that Eliot took not only the ancients as his models, but he equally regarded his contemporary talent to be alluded in his poetry. The critics are of the view that Eliot has used enough of Rupert Brooke in "The Waste Land", which may be seen at a close analysis of the poem, and it is mostly the wartime vers libre that can be found common in the two poets.

The other famous wartime poet Siegfried Sassoon has also gained room in Eliot's poetry from the point of view of style and content. Sassoon's war experience and its aftermath feelings can easily be felt echoing in "The Waste Land" with a typical abstract imagery. What Eliot does to make his work different, is that he uses allusions and images that are firmly grounded especially in English literature, so much so that, according to Ames, there is a "collective memory" of the images. A collective memory is built upon the history, the literature and the experiences of a civilization and its culture—it becomes a part of the people's collective memory. The out of date clichés and tales from the Bible and other works like Dante's *Inferno* etc present not only an image in the mind of the reader, but they offer a feeling and sensation that has been articulated traditionally through several writers and critics (Ames). Christ (157) also speaks of Eliot's use of the works of previous writers. He says that Eliot's poetry criticism persistently show agreement to each other and are different drastically from the poetry of the nineteenth century poets and he, in his poetry, returns to a stylistic model which he discovers both in the seventeenth century poets and in the works of certain renowned French symbolists.

From Ritual to Romance

Kroll (161) speaks of the lines 70-75 of "The Waste Land":

You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!
That corps you planted last year in your garden,
Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?
O keep the dog far hence, that's friend to men,
Or with his nails he'll dig it up again.

In these lines the reference is made to a section of *the Golden Bough*, i.e., 'Adonis' where Frazer elucidates the olden ritual of ceremonially placing in the ground a corpse. *Golden Bough* and *From Ritual to Romance* are the two books that Eliot has made most of to construct the theme and characterization of his poem. At a number of places we find allusions to the contents of these books of ancient myths.

Imagery and Abstraction

Eliot has made most of the allusions by combining the power of imagery and abstraction. The intertextual use of a number of classics has been made so enormously that, at least, for an

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educated reader, the understanding of them has been contextually and innovatively clear. “The Waste Land” expresses feelings by using references to works that have an extensive amount of criticism.

For such references the poet does not need to give details as to what it represents. Instead of describing an experience or a feeling, he draws on "the tradition" to supply both the image and the feeling which leaves him free to express himself by adding to the images. Eliot is able to say far more, and in a far more precise mode, than anything that has been done during the pre-war and wartime period.

“The Waste Land” has a scope and magnitude of interpretation that is rivaled in English, perhaps, only by Milton and Shakespeare. This is what places “The Waste Land” between the epics and the trench poets. Remarkable economy of words and true depth of meaning come together in one poem. Lidia Vianu has enumerated quite a lot of examples where in Eliot has maintained to up lift the European literary tradition. A single line quoted from Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* acts upon the whole incident as a devouring fire, (ie *When lovely woman stoops to folly*) which reduces to ashes whatever is human.

Vianu says that when Eliot wants to allude to a literary work or character, he usually amends it to his own need and choice; he tries to fit the borrowed things in his own context as if they were originally created for his works. “He (Eliot) delights in reversing the meaning of the original context, as if he were mocking at it (as he mocked at the very titles of his own previous poems). He treats all authors he borrows from (except Shakespeare, maybe) with bitter irony” (Vianu).

“The Waste Land” and *Paradise Lost*

Ames has, at length, given a comparison of “The Waste Land” and *Paradise Lost* on the lines of the old epic style. He says that Milton’s epic is too lengthy a work for a modern reader where as Eliot’s short epic gives to the cotemporary reader a look into his own age as well as into the tradition of epic style of literary writing. Eliot’s use of allusion accomplishes many of the targets and aspirations of an epic without requiring a burdensome speculation on the part of the reader (Ames). Eliot has actually tried to rewrite or reform the epic style with his individual talent, which for the modern reader has got a timely appeal and significance. The successful impression of “The Waste Land” is based upon its allusions and compactness.

Speaking of Eliot’s skill of benefiting from the past works, Ames says: “The Waste Land” makes extensive use of *Inferno* by Dante Aligheri and of the longer works by Ovid, Shakespeare and the Bible” Eliot is in fact so much impressed by Dante’s *Divine Comedy* that we find a lot of direct and indirect references in “The Waste Land” following Dante’s line of theme, style and characterisation.

Craven (2001) also seems to be so much impressed by Eliot’s art of using ideas from past works. He writes, “His own famous "Englishing" of Dante in “The Waste Land” - *I had not thought death had undone so many* - perhaps the most canonical moment outside of the Bible where a

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quotation in one language becomes a quotation in another.” Eliot has, in his works, directly and indirectly alluded to this masterpiece a number of times. For example lines 60-63 of “The Waste Land”:

Unreal City,
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many
I had not thought death had undone so many

Correspond to *inferno*’s following lines:

E io, che riguardi, vidi una ’nsegna
che girando correve tanto ratta
che d’ogne posa mi pareva indegna;
e dietro le venìa sì lunga tratta
di gente, ch’i’ non averi credutto
che morte tanta n’avesse disfatta. (ll. 52-7)

Which translate to mean, (as quoted by Ames) "When I looked again, I saw a flag running in circles so rapidly that it seemed to scorn all pause; and after it there came so long a train of people, that I would not have believed death had undone so many." (Dante, 57) The line by Eliot refers to a single sestet by Dante, and the meaning of it has been the topic of criticism for hundreds of years. Not only has Eliot given the reader a clear image of people traversing a bridge but he also gives the connotations and a critical history of *Inferno* to enrich and enhance the image. The people on the bridge in “The Waste Land” now seem like ghosts descending into hell. Eliot recalls, to the educated reader, the scene from *Inferno*, along with his own words to form a new combination. The "Unreal City" is now a rich image filled with undertones that connect it, not only with *Inferno*, but with other references in *The Waste Land* to London Bridge.

In line 427 of “The Waste Land” London Bridge brings the poem full circle:

Fishing, with the arid plain behind me
Shall I at least set my lands in order?
London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down . . .

The thematic rhymes of “The Waste Land” also add not only to an image of "Yeats-ian" or Vorticist cycles, but they add again to the richness of the poem without resorting to clichéd techniques and forms like Tennyson. At yet another level in the poem, the faces of the dead are commuting, much like Walt Whitmans’s commuters in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" from *Leaves of Grass*:

Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes, how curious you are to me!

On the ferry-boats the hundreds and hundreds that cross, returning home, are more curious to me

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than you suppose,

And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence are more to me, and more in my meditations, than you might suppose. (ll. 2-4)

The Future

Future has been positively symbolized by the befitting imagery of the lilac. The recurring attribute of the lilac flower each year gives the narrator tranquility, even in the face of distressing suffering. Eliot intentionally recalls this feeling and then modifies it to become his own. He uses allusions with all their potential power and significance and in a way that makes a new presentation of the already used material. Whitman and Milton are of those literary figures who give Eliot the source to construct a new structure on, but also sometimes they offer him something to respond against, so that the innovation is appreciated with its novelty as individual talent. Eliot has made use the most appropriate ways and means and the history of an author's earlier works to develop and to produce his own typical style of writing.

Jug Jug

McCord (270) has pointed out to a very interesting traditional allusion in the poem. He says that in the poem the words "jug jug" (ll. 103) refer to the nightingale's cry described so as in Elizabethan time. He remarks that the very making of the word "jug", after English naturalization, stands for the Greek name of wryneck which is derived from its cry. McCord (271) adds that in old folklore/rituals, the wryneck was connected with the idea of love because of its use in magical appeals to recuperate unfaithful lovers. He traces out its use by the early Greek masters like Aeschylus to symbolize sexual desire. McCord, further, says that as Eliot was, for his erudition, well aware of the implication of the word "jug", he applied it with all its historical setting in the mind. McCord (271) further adds that Eliot could very well see technical aspects of the his diction, his knowledge of Greek lore etc helped him use words like *jug* with its poetic qualities and technicalities, hence he could achieve a fine parallel that adds a kind of modulation, a flicker of ambiguity to a poem which is already full of various allusions.

Use of Footnotes by the Poet!

As the poem is full of allusions, some sections/lines give us plenty some of which have been defined with footnotes by the poet himself and some are without notes. As far as their usefulness to the poem is concerned, it is extraordinary. More knowledge about these references opens up more gates of understanding. In this manner, Eliot makes contact with a very extensive range of audience by attracting not only the intellectual and learned persons, but also to the infrequent reader of poetry. Although "The Waste Land" has a great number of allusions but they make their place in the poem on necessity not just for the sake of creating difficulties as can be seen in pomes like Ezra Pound's *Cantos* or James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, which seem to be obscure only for the sake of being obscure. Eliot may be difficult enough to understand but at the same time he is interesting enough too to captivate his readers – learned as well as casual.

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A New Style of Poetry

Eliot was not the only poet searching for a new style of poetry. The poets who wrote about the war before Eliot, as mentioned earlier, based their works on older techniques as well, and despite their attempt to find new expressions, ultimately, they relied on empathy and abstract feelings. Eliot, by contrast, found a new method of writing that would manifest his thoughts, but he was also aided by the writings of pre-war and early war poets. Ames has compared Eliot's techniques with those of the early war-poets and has found immense similarities of style. He says that Charles Hamilton Sorley, in his poem "When You See the Millions of the Mouthless Dead" has used techniques which are similar those used by Eliot:

The technique he uses is closer to Eliot's than it appears. It does not draw heavily on specific images and recollections requiring empathy, but it is like Rupert Brooke in that it draws on abstract images to make its point. Eliot combines elements found in poems like Sorley's to write "The Waste Land"; so some of the same themes are evident:

When you see millions of the mouthless dead
Across your dreams in pale battalions go,
Say not soft things as other men have said,
That you'll remember. For you need not so.
Give them not praise. For, deaf, how should they know
It is not curses heaped on each gashed head?
Nor tears. Their blind eyes see not your tears flow.
Nor honour. It is easy to be dead. (Sorley, 89)

Birth, Death and Rebirth

Mouthless implies that the dead cannot speak which implies a loss, and the passing of something, perhaps tradition, but the image is vague. Sorley emphasizes the inability to speak by making them both dead and mouthless, instead of "silent" or "mute" or "dumb." Eliot would recognize the image, but he would have tried to find a richer metaphor in the shape of an historical or literary reference. Sorley's poem indicates that, "... you'll remember. For you need not so." The way the word 'remember' is placed side by side with "need not so" indicates that it is of no use in this new world, to keep the past in mind, but the uselessness is not a sensation that every reader can understand or imagine in an abstract manner. It does indicate, however, a cyclic nature to events, but Sorley fails to communicate his point because shared experience is necessary to fully understand the poem. Eliot's technique in "The Waste Land" overcomes this obstacle. However, he does borrow a sense of abstraction from the Georgians and even the trench poets to produce a new image that has more capacity for allusion.

Musurillo (175) talks about the origin floating body of Phlebas the Phoenician sailor in part IV, *Death by Water*. He says that this character refers to an old Greek literary work *Palatine Anthology* that talks about the sailors especially the drowned ones.

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Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you, ("The Waste Land". 321)

Musurillo, then, gives the account of the Garland of Meleager from the above said Anthology, which he says is the original source of the said character in "The Waste Land". He says that the said Greek work is dedicated to the services and life of the then sailors and is a kind of tribute to them.

McGuirk reflects upon the content of the section, "What the Thunder Said" and finds appeal for the readers in the form of Eastern philosophy, more specifically, Hinduism. It is because of the concepts of reincarnation and regeneration especially of human beings, Eliot seems to be impressed by Hindu mythology. Hindu mythic folklore and stories related to peace, justice, beauty and holiness have exceptional place in Eliot's mind and thereby in his poetry.

In the context of the Hindu philosophy, Craven (2001) also observes similar facts. He claims that for Eliot the supreme poem along with *The Divine Comedy* was the long Hindu poem – "Bhagavad Gita". Craven further says that in a way the concept of Trinitarianism, as depicted in Dante's *Paradiso*, finds room in "Bhagavad Gita" too. Craven is, here, referring to the end of "The Waste Land" where Eliot has used Sanskrit words, which mean give, sympathize and control. In this section Eliot's religious beliefs especially that of rebirth or regeneration have been given with different allusions.

Sutton (25), speaking of the ideas like Christian rituals, vegetation rites and rebirth experience, says that it facilitated him to bring together seemingly disconnected stuff from the disjointed society of the West and from the Eastern frame of mind of its concepts and beliefs and to illustrate them to be language of a continuous requirement for spiritual revival. Hence, we find a number of foreign phrases, referring to different religious or worldly situations, at different places in the poem Fowler also points out to the use of number of foreign phrases at the end of the poem. He says that although, so many critics have raised questions on the purpose of the concluding fragments of the poem, their meaning is implied in the traditional use of the foreign to make the magical charms effective and stronger. He writes, "The potency of foreign or strange words in charms was considered to be great. Witness, for example, the use of Latin words and phrases in the Old English charms" (235).

Fowler concludes that after Eliot's conversion to English Catholicism, these foreign quotations serve as a wish for the betterment of the wasteland - the main theme of the poem. Hence these phrases are related to the old writings for a definite purpose of an omen.

Acosta (2002) also positively shares his views with Fowler saying that concluding part of the poem puts forward a hope of salvation by means of peculiar concepts and images grounded on the combination of Christian and Eastern (Hindu/Buddhist) spiritual beliefs.

However, Chandran's views are a bit different. He says that the use of these words (Shantih, shantih) from Hindu Scripture is nothing but to intensify the irony of the poem. He observes that

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the poet's irony in corresponding the word 'shantih' with the mind shoring pieces and the tongue raving act of calling down a curse that invokes evil is hard to miss: 'shantih' here is not so much wished as wished for' (Chandran. 683)

Gerstenberger writes a very interesting note on the appended notes of "The Waste Land". He raises lots of questions on the form of the poem and the significance of its unusual footnotes. "The poem which itself has become a supplement to the whole corpus of European literature that it quotes, and within the drama of which it acts its play?" (460). He calls the poem a representative piece of work to allude to European literary tradition at one place. Gerstenberger also calls the poem a glaring example of the Deconstruction creed in which a number of historic characters have been placed and displaced at the same time.

To Conclude

The whole of the poem is in fact a conspicuous instance showing Eliot's mastery over the maintenance of his typical sense of literary tradition. Various allusions, quotations, themes, and mention of characters truly give the poem traditional impression which throughout permeates all the sections of the poem. Eliot has tried his best to saturate his work referring to numerous ancient and modern literary, historical, mythological and religious works. The poet has used a number of foreign language quotes to suit and depict the situations in the desired manner. This technique does not only retain his concept of tradition but also serves to uphold the other important concept i.e. impersonality of poetry.

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