

Allusion in T. S. Eliot's 'The Hollow Men'

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Abstract

The present paper is concerned with a strategic literary concept in T. S. Eliot's poem "**The Hollow Men**", i.e., use of "**Allusion**" through which Eliot quotes events, images, and characters from the past literary works to be alluded to in his present literary works. Allusive style in Eliot's poetry performs a double duty, simultaneously, which is to elicit a distant tradition on one hand, and transform it into a modern idiom on the other hand. Hence, critics describe the poetry of T. S. Eliot as an "**allusive**", which can be intelligible for readers who have a prior knowledge with literary tradition. Allusion, as an integral part of Eliot's approach, reinforces the value of culture as well as validate the literariness of his own poems. Accordingly, Eliot's "**The Hollow Men**" readers continue to struggle with this poetic practice which requires both immense learning and considerable patience to get the significance of the poem.

الخلاصة

تناول البحث فكرة أدبية مهمة في قصيدة "الرجال الجوف" عند توماس ستيرن اليوت وهي استخدام التلميح والذي من خلاله اليوت يقتبس احداث و صور و شخصيات من اعمال ادبية من الماضي ليلمح لها في اعماله الادبية في الحاضر. الاسلوب التلمحي في شعر اليوت يؤدي مهمتين في وقت واحد وهو اضهار الموروث القديم من جانب وتحويله الى اصطلاح حديث من جانب اخر ولهذا السبب النقاد يصفون شعر اليوت بالتلمحي والذي يمكن ان يكون مفهوم للقراء الذي لديهم معرفة سابقة بالموروث الادبي. التلميح، كجزء اساسي في شعر اليوت، يعزز قيمة الثقافة ويثبت ادبية قصائده. وعليه قراء قصيدة الرجال الجوف يواجهون هذه الممارسة الشعرية والتي تتطلب القراءة الواسعة والتحمل للوصول الى معرفة معنى القصيدة.

INTRODUCTION

Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965) is a key figure in the English modernist poetic tradition. His innovative style and influential critical essays helped to establish new attitudes to literature. They drew attention to tradition, the importance of continuity and the role of objectivity. In rejecting the poetic values of the previous century, Eliot, along with Yeats and Pound, was to set new poetic standards. (Thorne, 2006) In his well-known preface to "**For Lancelot Andrews**" (1928), Eliot openly described himself as classicist in literature, a royalist in politics, and an Anglo-Catholic in religion. In other words, he always believed in the need of an outside authority as norm or standard to curb the inner voice within man, or what he calls, "doing as one likes". (Nagarajan, 2006) Eliot's work demands contextual commentary. The celebrated obliquities of his poetry are extraordinary. Studded with allusions, echoes and parallels to previous poets, these poems revel in a dislocated syntax which willfully abstains from logical articulation. Similarly, his prose is habitually densely layered, making continual play with source materials and canvassing, in intricate and nuanced detail, a multitude of contemporary literary, cultural, social, economic, philosophical, theological and political issues that have now, for the most part, receded dimly into the past. In truth, his voluminous outpouring of poems, essays and books from 1905 until his death in 1965 cannot be divorced from the circumstances of their immediate composition and reception. (Harding, 2011)

Eliot's contribution to the English poetic tradition is significant. Along with Pounds and other experimental writers, he challenged the literary conventions of the nineteenth century, changing the subject matter and the language of poetry. Eliot was no longer a man speaking to men as Wordsworth was, but a manipulator and creator of words and patterns. He was prominent in the development of artistic symbols as representations of the sensibility of the time, and consciously moved away from the sentimentality of much Victorian verse, replacing emotional outpourings with detachment (Thorne, 2006).

THE DEFINITION OF ALLUSION:

Poetry can draw attention to its distinct qualities as a form of knowledge in several ways. One is to draw attention to its textuality by alluding to, or quoting from, other texts. Allusion allows modernist writers to reach back into literary history, and to remind the reader of the interconnection of the past and the present. It also allows the writer to indicate that he or she is acquainted with the works of his or her predecessors; it allows the writer to demonstrate that the new work was achieved by "standing on the shoulders of giants." The phrase is Isaac Newton's, and the ideal of cumulative knowledge connects the allusion to an ideal of scientific method. However, a scientist referring to the work of his or her predecessors and contemporaries would normally do so explicitly; a writer may learn from other writers without having to wear that learning on his or her sleeve. (Whitworth, 2010)

Allusion is the most striking of the ways in which poetry takes into its service elements and forms of experience which are not inevitable to life but need to be specially acquired. And the difficulty which it raises is merely a special instance of a general communicative difficulty which will probably increase for the poetry of the future. All the thought and feeling of recent man goes on in terms of experience which is much more likely to be special and peculiar to the individual, than, let us say, the experience of medieval man. The survival of medieval man on such a vast scale among us should not mislead in this matter. The people who are most keenly and variously interested, that is to say, the people whose lives are most valuable on our theory of value, the people for whom the poet writes and by his appeal to whom he is judged, inevitably build up their minds with far more varied elements than has even been the case before. And the poet, in so far as he is equal to his opportunities, does the same. It is hard, and, in fact, impossible, to deny him his natural and necessary resources on the ground that a majority of his readers will not understand. This is not his fault but the fault of the social structure. Given present conditions and future developments in the directions indicated by the changes of the last two hundred years, it is extremely probable that poets will become not less but more allusive, that their work will depend more and more not only upon other poetry but upon all manner of special fields of familiarity. (Richards, 2004)

Allusion is a method that contributes to the impression that modernist texts are difficult. Allusion rouses complex feelings: when one recognizes an allusion, a feeling of belonging, of feeling that one belongs to the same cultural group as the poet; but if one feels that a poet is alluding and the allusions remain unrecognizable or unintelligible, it can lead to a sense of exclusion. The distinction between recognition and comprehension is important, because one might recognize the source of the allusion, perhaps with help from an annotated edition, but not feel comfortable with the way the poet is using it; the poet's use of the source text implies that they value and interpret it differently, and that they belong to a different cultural group. H. G. Wells was speaking not just for scientists, but for the lower middle classes. There is, in short, a cultural politics to allusion. As with other forms of modernist difficulty, it

is important both to try to overcome the difficulty, but not to dissolve the memory of it completely: it may be that the difficulty constitutes part of the meaning of the text. (Whitworth, 2010).

M. H. Abrams defines allusion as a passing reference, without explicit identification, to literary or historical person, place, event or to another literary work or passage. In the Elizabethan Thomas Nashe's "**Litany in Time of Plague**,"

*Brightness falls from the air,
Queens have died young and fair,
Dust hath closed Helen eye,*

The unidentified "**Helen**" in the last line alludes to Helen of Troy. Most allusions serve to illustrate or expand upon or enhance a subject, but some are used in order to undercut it ironically by the discrepancy between the subject and the allusion. In the lines from T. S. Eliot's "**The Waste Land**" (1922) describing a woman at her modern dressing table,

"The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,/Glowed on the marble,"

The ironic allusion, achieved by echoing Shakespeare's phrasing, is to Cleopatra's magnificent barge in "**Antony and Cleopatra**" *The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,/ Burn'd on the water* ". (II. ii. 196 ff.):

Since allusions are not explicitly identified, they imply a fund of knowledge that is shared by an author and the audience for whom the author writes. Most literary allusions are intended to be recognized by the generally educated readers of the author's time, but some are aimed at a special coterie. For example, in "Astrophel and Stella", the Elizabethan sonnet sequence, Sir Philip Sidney's punning allusions to Lord Robert Rich, who had married the Stella of the sonnets, were identifiable only by intimates of the people concerned. (Sonnets 24 and 37) Some modern authors, including Joyce, Pound, and Eliot, include allusions that are very specialized, or else drawn from the author's private reading and experience, in the awareness that few if any readers will recognize them prior to the detective work of scholarly annotators. The current term "**intertextuality**" includes literary echoes and allusions as one of the many ways in which any text is interlinked with other texts. (Abrams, 2005)

S. Constantakis says that, an allusion is a reference in a literary or artistic work to another literary or artistic work or to a real-world event or person. In this way, the work grounds itself in the world outside of itself. Instead of becoming a fictional and self-referential construction, an allusive work establishes itself as part of a greater conversation with the events and works it touches upon. (Constantakis, 2010)

J.A. Cuddon defines allusion, as an implicit reference, perhaps to another work of literature or art, to a person or an event. It is often a kind of appeal to a reader to share some experience with the writer. An allusion may enrich the work by association, and give it depth. When using allusions a writer tends to assume an established literary tradition, a body of common knowledge with an audience sharing that tradition and an ability on the part of the audience to 'pick up' the reference. The following kinds may be roughly distinguished: (a) a reference to events and people (e.g. there are a number in Dryden's and Pope's satires); (b) reference to facts about the author himself (e.g. Shakespeare's puns on V/ill; Donne's pun on Donne, Anne and Undone); (c) a metaphorical allusion (there are many examples in T. S. Eliot's work); (d) an imitative allusion (e.g. Johnson's to Juvenal in London). (Cuddon, 1999)

T. S. ELIOT'S ALLUSION

Allusion was a crucial aspect of his personal life as a poet. Despite the ways in which Eliot manipulated allusions in his poems, the practice of allusion came naturally to him, and he often expressed his deepest feelings through allusion. (Moody,

2005) Many of the allusions in Eliot's early poetry operate in this double fashion, simultaneously eliciting an estranged tradition and transforming it into a distinctively modern idiom. At the same time, Eliot's readers continue to struggle with, and often object to, the elusive references, the scraps of verbal citation that require both immense learning and considerable patience to wrest whatever significance they may have. (Chinitz, 2009) Eliot's use of allusions can be difficult for the reader. He draws extensively on a wide range of references to create complex patterns of meaning. A quotation from Dante in the epigraph to **"The love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"** sets the tone for the poem and prepares us for the suffering of Prufrock in his personal hell. Other references are literary (Hamlet), or biblical (John the Baptist; Lazarus). They function thematically as a cohesive thread, but also help to give us an insight into the mind of Prufrock. In **"The Waste Land"**, the allusions help to give the poem its fragmentary feel, creating stylistic and typographical variations. Biblical and classical references, cultural and spiritual allusions and literary quotations also create cohesion since they reveal the common concerns of humanity in both the past and the present. The allusions and the quotations are an integral part of Eliot's approach. The "heap of broken images" (**The Waste Land**, 1) not only reflects the disintegration he saw in twentieth-century society, but also, paradoxically, provides meaning. The "fragments he has shored against his ruin" (**The Waste Land**, v) create a common bond between the past and the present, instilling hope and suggesting way forward. (Thorne, 2006)

One of the major problems arising in literary scholarship from the intentional fallacy, according to the authors, concerns the poetic use of allusion by writers such as T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, whose verse extensively alludes or refers to lines and phrases of earlier poets. Taking as an example Eliot's inclusion of a lengthy series of notes explaining the various allusions found in his long poem **"The Waste Land"**, the authors suggest that Eliot's use of these notes attempts to justify his poetic practice through recourse to his own intention. Yet the notes, they say, should be held up to the same scrutiny as the lines of the poem itself; if the force of the allusions is not felt by the reader through the poem itself, then recourse to the notes is superfluous. As far as allusions are concerned, we must be able to justify their use in terms of their objectively discerned function in the poem, not by consulting the author as an oracle for his intention (Habib, 2005) Eliot's poetry is over-intellectualised. One reason for this is his use of allusion. A reader who in one short poem picks up allusions to: **"The Aspern Papers"**, **"Othello"**, **"A Toccata of Galuppi's Marston"**, **"The Phoenix and the Turtle"**, **"Antony and Cleopatra"** (twice), **"The Extasie"**, **"Macbeth"**, **"The Merchant of Venice"** and **"Ruskin"** feels that his wits are being unusually well exercised. He may easily leap to the conclusion that the basis of the poem is in wit also. But this would be a mistake. These things come in, not that the reader may be ingenious or admire the writer's erudition (this last accusation has tempted several critics to disgrace themselves) but for the sake of the emotional aura which they bring. Allusion in Mr. Eliot's hands is a technical device for compression. **"The Waste Land"** is the equivalent in content to an epic. Without this device twelve books would have been needed. But these allusions and the notes in which some of them are elucidated have made many a petulant reader turn down his thumb at once. (Grant, 2005) The citations in Eliot's early poetry serve a variety of purposes. By appealing to a readership that shares his literary culture, Eliot's citations reinforce the value of that culture as well as validate the literariness of his own poems. Critics as diverse as A. Walton Litz and Harold Bloom agree that Eliot's allusions function to assert the unity of what he believed to be the literary tradition as well as his own place in it, although

Litz attributes this strategy to the cultural chaos born of the First World War, whereas Bloom links it to Eliot's defensive anxiety over his belatedness as an American poet. (Lamos, 2004)

TRADITION, INTERTEXTUALITY AND ALLUSION

J. A. Cuddon defines "**Tradition**" as the inherited past, the writers are studying and learning from it. Anything traditional is established, has often been tried and is constantly returned to the past. All the authors begin with a kind of tradition and every writer in a specific way modifies and alters that tradition, even when being imitative. For example, some poems by Keats might have been written by Milton. (Cuddon, 1999).

Eliot saw the literary tradition as an evolving and transforming canon. He believed that the past, in the form of a literary tradition, informed and enlivened the present and that individual writers of talent became a part of and transformed that tradition if they could create "the new work of art". (Castle, 2007)

Eliot's use of citations seems to conform to the traditional notion of literary influence. The numerous quotations, allusions, and echoes in his early poetry serve, in the first place, to accredit him as the knowledgeable possessor of a wide range of mostly canonical texts in the European literary tradition. (Lamos, 2004)

The profusion of allusions in his poetry constitutes an elegy for the literary tradition it evokes, which, in Eliot's case, refers to a distinctly paternal heritage. Ramazani notes that the fragmentary discourse employed by Eliot "implicitly functions as a mode of inscription – an epitaph," so that quotations, such as the repetition of Spenser's line "*Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song*" in "**The Waste Land**", became "an elegiac device." Eliot's citational practice manifests his identification with his self-designated literary forebears, concomitant with a guilty sense of failure at falling short of their standard and, more broadly, a feeling of loss. This is precisely the dilemma of the masochist hounded by his sadistic conscience. Eliot's citational practice enacts an erotics of submission to the demands of paternal authority. The poet's "*continual surrender of himself*," as he writes in "**Tradition and the Individual Talent**," is a surrender to literary fathers. The many allusions woven into the fabric of his poems point away from a Bloomian Oedipal scenario toward a masochistic one in which the father is the object of identification and, at bottom, of love. Eliot allied himself with his chosen literary patriarchs, internalized them as ideals, and wanted to accede to their ranks, yet suffered, in Bush's words, from "*a perpetual feeling of unworthiness*." Eliot's citational practice placed him in a "*feminine*" position of subordination to literary authority, one in which his own mastery as a poet devolved from his devotion to his precursors – in a word, from the dead. (Laity and Gish, 2004)

Eliot emphasizes that the writer or the poet must develop a sense of the past and always seeks to examine the poem or the work in its relation to the works of the dead writers or the poets. Tradition is a matter of vast importance. It isn't referred to a legacy of writers which regrets a great deal of Endeavour.

"It involves, in the first place, historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past but its but its presence. This historical a sense which is a sense of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional"

Tradition is one of the main concept and necessity for the poet or artist to be a creator.

"No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning A lone his significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artist." Every writer can't find the full meaning to himself alone without his appreciation to the dead

poets or artist. The poet can't assess himself alone, but in comparison and contrast with the dead poets as an aesthetic principle, not just historical, criticism. Necessarily, the poet shall conform, what happen, when a new piece of art is created, the same thing that happened to all the works of art which preceded it. The poet must introduce an ideal order which must be alters before the new work arrive. Each work of art must be readjusted and this is conformity between the new and the old. In English literature will not find it impossible that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. The writer will be known the great difficulties and responsibilities. In a strange sense, the poet finds himself judgment by the standards of the past, is not judged to be as a good or bad or better than the dead, and definitely not judged by the canons of dead critics. It is a judgment; two works are measured by a comparison. To conform just, in fact not absolutely conformity because it will not be a new and will not be a piece of art. (Eliot, 2004)

"Intertextuality" is a term coined by Julia Kristeva in 1966 to denote the interdependence of literary texts, the interdependence of any one literary text with all those that have gone before it. Her contention was that a literary text is not an isolated phenomenon but is made up of a mosaic of quotations, and that any text is the "absorption and transformation of another". She challenges traditional notions of literary influence, saying that intertextuality denotes a transposition of one or several sign systems into another or others. But this is not connected with the study of sources. **"Transposition"** is a Freudian term, and Kristeva is pointing not merely to the way texts echo each other but to the way that discourses or sign systems are transposed into one another - so that meanings in one kind of discourse are overlaid with meanings from another kind of discourse. It is a kind of new articulation. For Kristeva the idea is part of a wider psychoanalytical theory which questions the stability of the subject, and her views about intertextuality are very different from those of Roland Barthes and other theorists. (Cuddon, 1999)

Julia Kristeva refers to the fact that texts are constituted by a tissue of citations, that every word of every text refers to other texts and so on, limitlessly. Often used in an imprecise or weak sense to talk about echoes or allusions. Kristeva defines intertextuality depending on two axes: a horizontal, is connecting the author and reader of a text, and a vertical, is connecting the texts to other texts. According to Kristeva, every text has to be understood as a "mosaic of quotations". (Bennett and Royle, 2004)

Abrams says that intertextuality is used to signify the multiple ways in which any one literary text is made up of other texts, by means of its open or covert citations and allusions, its repetitions and transformations of the formal and substantive features of earlier texts, or simply its unavoidable participation in the common stock of linguistic and literary conventions and procedures that are "always already" in place and constitute the discourses into which we are born. In Kristeva's formulation, accordingly, any text is in fact an intertext—the site of an intersection of numberless other texts, and existing only through its relations to other texts. (Abrams, 2005)

Although many opponents of intertextuality see it as a new name for **"old tricks"**, such as allusion and influence, the novelty of intertextuality is that it is not limited to either. And in just the same way, it is broader than Eliot's coining of the term **"mythic"**, which points at myths as an exclusive choice, although it's literary application offers a much wider variety of devices. To illustrate this, it is sufficient to see Eliot's use of other sources in his works, mainly in **"The Waste Land"**. One of the most original ways in which Eliot chose to integrate fragments of existing texts into his own poems is through quotations. (Nasi, 2000)

ALLUSION IN "THE HOLLOW MEN"

"**The Hollow Men**" was Eliot's first major work after the wild success of "**The Waste Land**", and it was read and reviewed in light of that success. Both poems contain similar imagery, language, and themes. In fact, critics have often referred to "**The Hollow Men**" as something of a sequel to its predecessor "**The Waste Land**". . (Constantakis, 2010)

Eliot claimed, in a January 1935 letter, that the title for the poem came about by combining the title of a romance by William Morris "**The Hollow Land**" with the title of a poem by Rudyard Kipling "**The Broken Men**". There is another suggestion that the title maybe came from Shakespeare's "**Julius Caesar**": (Murphy, 2007)

*"There are no tricks in plain and simple faith, But
hollow men, like horses hot at hand, Make gallant
show and promise of their mettle, But when they
should endure the bloody spur, They fall their crests,
and like deceitful jades, Sink in the trial."* (Act V, Sc. 3, line 55)

T. S. Eliot and his work were at the forefront of the modernist poetry movement. His lengthy poem "**The Hollow Men**" was written at both the height of this movement and the height of his career. Indeed, it was published in its entirety only three years after the release of Eliot's most famous epic poem, "**The Waste Land**" (1922). Parts of "**The Hollow Men**" were published in the periodicals *Chapbook*, *Commerce*, *Criterion*, and *Dial* from 1924 to 1925. The poem then appeared in its final cohesive form in Eliot's 1925 collection *Poems, 1909–1925*. "**The Hollow Men**" largely is built on the themes in "**The Waste Land**", specifically the need for death to take place as a means to make way for the new. "**The Hollow Men**" is also written in the same style as its famous predecessor. Both poems additionally share the same source of inspiration: Joseph Conrad's 1902 novella "**Heart of Darkness**". "**The Hollow Men**" also alludes to or is heavily influenced by several works, including Dante Alighieri's fourteenth century masterpiece "**Divine Comedy**" and William Shakespeare's 1599 play "**Julius Caesar**". (Constantakis, 2010) Eliot cleverly splices together two entirely separate allusions to make the epigraph to "**The Hollow Men**" seem to be two consecutive sentences: "*Mistah Kurtz—he dead. / A penny for the Old Guy.*" The two sentences come from two entirely different sources that are separated by several centuries and wealth of background detail. The source for the first part of the epigraph is Conrad's "**Heart of Darkness**". "*Mistah Kurtz—he dead*" came in Conrad's text within less than a page of the passage from Conrad that Ezra Pound had convinced Eliot to discard as his original epigraph to "**The Waste Land**". It almost seems as if Eliot refused to let go of his desire to allude to that passage from the Conrad novella in which the dying Kurtz, the mysterious idealistic trader turned moral monster whom Marlow is hired to rescue, is heard to utter the words "*The horror, the horror!*". Eliot found a place for a near allusion to it here in the epigraph to his poem published some three years later. In fact, the words from the epigraph to "**The Hollow Men**" are spoken to Conrad's narrator, Marlow, within moments of the time that Kurtz had had his final say about the horror, and they are spoken by a native retainer bringing Marlow the news that Kurtz, the legendary social reformer and light of Western civilization, has at last succumbed to the jungle fever that had, along with his moral blindness, driven him mad. The second part of Eliot's epigraph, "*A penny for the Old Guy*", meanwhile, although it comes from an entirely different context, this one historical rather than literary, perhaps also points to an individual whose

misguided idealism proved to be his undoing."A penny for the Old Guy" finds its origins in a centuries-old English celebration, variously called Guy Fawkes Day, Bonfire Night, and, in New England until the late 18th century, Pope Day. The festivities, such as they are, find their origin in the discovery and suppression, on November 5, 1605, of the infamous Gunpowder Plot, a conspiracy among a band of English Roman Catholics to blow up Parliament and, with it, King James I in order to foment an uprising of Catholics, who were then suffering under increasingly severe and restrictive laws at the hands of a Protestant establishment. (Murphy, 2007)

The notable allusion in "**The Hollow Men**" is to Guy Fawkes Day. The holiday, on November 5, celebrates the foiling of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, which was headed by Guy Fawkes. As part of the celebration, stuffed straw effigies of Fawkes are burned on bonfires. This image of straw men and their death is central to Eliot's poem. (Constantakis, 2010)

Guy Fawkes was arrested in the cellars of the House of Lords, where he guarded nearly two tons of gunpowder. The circumstances of the Gunpowder Plot are referred to in line 10 "*dry cellar*", line 16 "*violent souls*", and in the final "*whimper*", an allusion to the failed explosion and, perhaps, the wail of pain with which the tortured Guy Fawkes gave away the names of his co – conspirators. (Chinitz, 2009)

The story goes that when word spread through London that a plot to assassinate the king had been foiled, the relieved citizenry lit bonfires in thanksgiving, and the event has been repeated on the anniversary date ever since, with bonfires and firework displays throughout England. Effigies of Fawkes and frequently the pope, the head of the Roman Catholic Church, are burnt on these bonfires. It is another common practice for children to prepare a dummy of Fawkes, which they call "**the Guy**" and which they then carry through the streets, begging passersby for "*a penny for the Guy*." What they do with the coins they collect is their business, but the dummy is eventually thrown onto one of the bonfires. (Murphy, 2007)

The connection with Dante is more important, for the images of '**The Divine Comedy**' are echoed pervasively throughout the poem. The hollow men recall the crowd of the "*trimmers*" or the "*uncommitted*" on the banks of the Acheron river in Canto III of the Dante's "**Inferno**", who have not yet "*crossed to death's other Kingdom*" (hell itself, in the "**Inferno**") and who are "*gathered on the beach of this tumid river*" in Eliot's "**The Hollow Men**" :

Those who have crossed

With direct eyes, to death's other kingdom

Remember us-if at all-not as lost

Violent souls, but only

As the hollow men

The stuffed men (The Hollow Men: lines 13-18)

The "*Multifoliate rose*" directly recalls Dante's vision of the court of heaven in the form of a Rose in the "**Paradiso**", "*multifoliate*", because of the tiers of "*petals*" of the ranks of the redeemed. Further, the "*eyes*" of Eliot's poem recall the marked awareness of eyes and sight throughout those Cantos of the "**Purgatorio**" in which Dante encounters Beatrice's eyes. The parallels intensify the feeling that '**The Hollow Men**' is reaching after some experience in which a love which has failed is transformed into a spiritual awareness. (Scofield, 2003)

The fourth section's third stanza is comprised of seven lines. In it, the speakers state that without eyes, there is no sight. Should the eyes become present again, they will be an undying star, and a special type of rose representative of the church. In

Dante, the rose symbolizes heaven. For the speakers in Eliot's poem, this rose is the only hope of the hollow men. (Constantakis, 2010)

*Sightless, unless
The eyes reappear
As the perpetual star
Multifoliate rose
Of death's twilight kingdom
The hope only
Of empty men* (The Hollow Men: lines 59-65)

Eliot's "kingdoms" seems to bear some resemblance to Dante's traditional Catholic division of the afterlife into Hell, Purgatory and Heaven, but any attempt to find exact equivalents breaks down. The hollow men gathered on the bank seem to be like those on the near side of the Acheron in '**Inferno** III'. The "*other kingdom*" to which some have "*crossed*" may recall Hell itself, where prayers are futile, "*prayers to broken stone*". But the "*twilight kingdom*" has elements of both Dante's "**Purgatorio**" (where Dante has his "final meeting" with Beatrice) and Dante's "**Paradiso**" (where the multifoliate rose appears). And the features of the "*dream kingdom*" in Part II ("*the wind's singing*", the "*fading star*") have been thought to echo the imagery of Dante's "**Purgatorio**" which are more tenuously connected: (Scofield, 2003)

*And voices are
In the wind's singing
More distant and more solemn*

Than a fading star (The Hollow Men: lines 25-28) Quotations from the Lord's Prayer are obviously religious, as are allusions to Dante's **The Divine Comedy**. Yet, the latter does bear some additional exploration. Dante's work is arguably the source of contemporary conceptions of heaven, hell, and purgatory, and Eliot uses these concepts to great effect. The afterlife that Eliot describes is a desert without eyes, watched over by fading stars, replete with crumbling statues and mouths unable to kiss.

*This is the dead land
This is cactus land
Here the stone images
Are raised, here they receive
The supplication of a dead man's hand
Under the twinkle of a fading star* (The Hollow Men: line 37-42)
*Lips that would kiss
Form prayers to broken stone.
The eyes are not here
There are no eyes here
In this valley of dying stars* (The Hollow Men: line 48-52)
*In this last of meeting places
We grope together* (The Hollow Men: line 55-56)

All of these images take on a quality distinctly reminiscent of Dante's **purgatory**. Given the belief that souls in purgatory will ultimately be allowed to enter heaven, the idea that Eliot portrays purgatory in the poem is bolstered by the speakers' claim that there is another afterlife, and that there is a final meeting that comes after what would already appear to have been the final meeting. (Constantakis, 2010)

The images of heaven and hell established by Dante are called upon in "**The Hollow Men**" simply because the poem alludes to Dante's **Divine Comedy**. Thus, Eliot is able

to rely on and build upon the reader's previous knowledge of fictional portrayals of heaven and hell without quoting them directly. At the same time, Eliot does directly quote the Lord's Prayer though he does not cite it. This allusion further underscores the religious implications in the poem. Another allusion that can be found in Eliot's poem is to Shakespeare's "**Julius Caesar**". In particular, the second, third, and fourth stanzas of the fifth section mention the shadow that lies between theory and practice, movement and deed, and so forth. This construct is mentioned by Brutus in Shakespeare's play. (Constantakis, 2010)

Between the idea

And the reality

Between the motion

And the act

Falls the shadow (The Hollow Men: line 70-74)

Brutus is Roman citizen, Brutus meets Cassius who organized the people against Caesar. Cassius has envy, malice, and hate towards the Caesar. He satisfied Brutus that Caesar is a savage who wants to destroy the Roman Republic. Cassius misled Brutus, when he tells him that he must share with him in the conspiracy. The multiple allusions to Shakespeare's play "**Julius Caesar**" reinforce the poem's theme of hollowness, juxtaposing the helpless paralysis of the hollow men with the envy of Cassius and self - deception of Brutus, which spurred their violent betrayal. (Chinitz, 2009)

We are the hollow men

We are the stuffed men

Leaning together

Headpiece filled with straw. Alas! (The Hollow Men: line 1-4)

Violent souls, but only

As the hollow men

The stuffed men (The Hollow Men: line 16-18)

The stars in "**The Hollow Men**" are more resonant if we are familiar with the marvelous lines describing Dante's joy in the first canto of "**Purgatory**", when after his harrowing escape from hell he welcomes the "*sweet azure of the sapphire . . . gathering on the serene horizon* ", and is overcome by the beauty of the "*four stars . . . unseen by mortals since the first mankind* ".

More distant and more solemn

Than a fading star. (The Hollow Men: line 27-28)

The supplication of a dead man's hand

Under the twinkle of a fading star (The Hollow Men: line 41-42)

There are no eyes here

In this valley of dying stars (The Hollow Men: line 51-52)

And the image of the hollow men "*gathered on this beach of the tumid river*" in section IV immediately recalls at least two graphically detailed scenes: first, the train of the "*nearly soulless \ whose lives concluded neither blame nor praise*". Second, the damned souls gathered in the dim light of the sad river Acheron – the "*lost \ violent souls*", eager to find their way across the water, "*for here \ transforms and spurs them so \ their dread turns wish: they yearn for what they fear* ". (Chinitz, 2009)

Death's dream kingdom, as the reference to " *this beach of the tumid river* " in part IV indicates, is located in hell's vestibule, a place and spiritual state that proved of consuming interest for Eliot, who had merged it in "**The Waste Land**" with limbo – the place for the virtuous but unbaptized – to epitomize in a most condensed manner the hell of contemporary civilization and its peculiarly modern spiritual disease: spleen, ennui, and spiritual lethargy. In a significant departure from Dante's geography, the limbo of the hollow men is bounded by the River Acheron, and those who traverse it eventually find themselves not in hell, but in " *death's other kingdom*, "a place of sunlight, trees, wind, and voices, whose imagery mirrors both that of Dante's paradise and, more ominously, that of Marlow's sojourn in the heart of darkness, with its trees " *swayed by the wind* " and its " *jabber* " of voices, " *silly, atrocious, sordid, savage, or simply mean, without any kind of sense* ". Death's twilight kingdom, invoked only twice in the poem, is a transitional realm that loosely corresponds with Dante's arduous ascent of Mount Purgatory toward the Earthly Paradise: he passes through a wall of refining fire and submits to being humbled and shamed by a fearsome Beatrice, who reminds him of his sins and unfaithfulness. In Eliot's revised topography of hell, purgatory, and paradise, the twilight kingdom is the shadowy realm that needs to be crossed with " *direct eyes*" confronting the horror of self – knowledge.(Chinitz,2009)

Readers also familiar with Conrad's "**Heart of Darkness**" are bound to have an even richer visual experience, as for them the " *tumid river* " will bring to mind both the Acheron and an image of a modern inferno, this one on the banks of the Congo, where Conrad's narrator Marlow steps into the:

" *gloomy circle of some Inferno* " and encounters " *black shapes* " that " *crouched, lay, sat between the trees, leaning against the trunks, clinging to the earth, half coming out, half effaced within the dim light, in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair* " "

Marlow's nightmare vision of the colonialist enterprise in Africa, of its implacable grayness and moral ambiguity, which becomes for him the condition of life in general, serves as a crucial atmospheric counterpoint to Dante's vision of hell, which despite its despair and gloom is relieved by a sense of its divinely appointed order, justice, and love. In Conrad's modern inferno, created by the "imbecile rapacity" of European imperialism, it is the white intruders who are the hollow men – men like Kurtz and his cohorts who mask their brute acquisitiveness by the trappings of an allegedly superior civilization. Kurtz is the archetypal hollow man, which Marlow calls him a " *hollow sham* ". What redeems him in Marlow's eyes, however, is his willingness on the threshold of death to face the truth about himself. Kurtz's dying words proved so resonant for Eliot that he had originally placed them as epigraph to "**The Hollow Men**":

" *Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision, – he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath – 'The horror! The horror!'* " (Chinitz, 2009)

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