

INTERTEXTUALITY AND MULTICULTURALISM APPEALED TO PLAGIARISM IN SELECTED WORKS OF T.S. ELIOT

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Abstract: This paper would refer to how T.S. Eliot used the myths, allusions and quotations from the past and matched it to the present; and shows how the critics reacted to that as a kind of plagiarism. In this paper my aim is to defend Eliot's usage of such devices and show how effective those in giving most of his major works a sense and meaning. I have provided the evidences that not only Eliot has borrowed from others.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Intersexuality, Mythic Method, Plagiarism, Allusion, and Epigraph

Introduction: It has always been clear that poetry is not original, and it can be a blend and imitation of what others have written. Many great writers with highly profiled career were accused of plagiarism like William Shakespeare, and T.S. Eliot. Both pillars of literature have borrowed in their literary works from others who preceded them in time.

However, such acts must not be directly judged as a theft of copyrights or plagiarism. The focus of this paper is on how T.S. Eliot used such lines, quotations in a manner of allusions and references to the past legends and myths. In his book *T.S. Eliot The poems* Scofield commented on Eliot's use of allusions as follow

"The mythical and the allusive method did, however, serve an important purpose. It enabled Eliot to stand back from his experience and to generalize into a view of life; and in another way it also helped him to get closer to his experience, that is, to deal with matters which would have been too painful to approach in any more direct way" (Scofield 1988; 132)

Whenever T.S. Eliot observed any analogy between the past and the present he would pick that up and use it in his poetry. This function as an approach of asserting the facts that is eternal. He borrowed from Shakespeare, Dante, Joseph Conrad, Spencer and others.

Multiculturalism: It can be defined as the interrelated and tangible effect that the reader can grasp while reading one work of a certain writer with reference to a previous instances in a form of quotation, allusion or even an epigraph. These texts may not belong to the same cultural climate, society or civilization.

For Instance the modern poetry of T.S. Eliot has a plenty of allusions and use of mythologies to the Greek, Roman and the classics. Eliot's Poetry is thus described as an obscure and difficult. He has referred to many cultures, philosophies and religions. Eliot was a good traveler, so he was familiar with many societies and wrote about the eastern civilization, Egypt, France. In his poetry one can find the philosophical effects of Buddhists stream, the Hindu and the Anglo-Catholicism.

Eliot's poetry can be read as a social document of the whole world and not only the English speaking world. The ideas and thoughts conveyed in his poetry bear within the blend, mixture and multiculturalism. Tilak in his remarks about T.S. Eliot's style of borrowing said:

"His Poetry abounds in allusions, references, quotations, and literary reminiscences which bewilder and perplex the readers. Eliot's erudition was profound, he was familiar with not one literature, but with many literatures, not with one philosophy but with many philosophies. European philosophy right from Homer down to his own day, the Hindu and the Buddhist and other oriental philosophies and literatures, ancient and primitive myths and legends, Biblical mythology and legend, all furnish him with allusions and quotations. (Tilak 2013; 44).

The poetry of T.S. Eliot has shown us how the cultures from different parts of the world have got together and mingled in a cohesive one work such as *The Waste Land* only in that poem more than twenty writers were alluded to and about six different languages were used.

Mythic Method: It is crystal clear that when some work is sustained by the use of mythology can be so elegant and effective on the readers part the poetry of T.S. Eliot had them in bundles; like the Fisher King, and *The Wholly Grail*. In the myth of the Fisher King who is known over the generations as an impotent king who laid his land as infertile as him, Eliot used that myth to reflect the waste and barren land that is the modern world or civilization. Mythic Method can be defined as the technique used by T.S. Eliot to show the analogy and similarity between the past and present, and how the two incidents are identical. Eliot published his review "Ulysses, Order, and Myth", in which he introduced the Mythic Method as "In manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him, they will not be imitators, anymore than the scientist who uses the discoveries of an Einstein in pursuing his own, independent, further investigations. It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and

significance to the immense panorama of the futility and anarchy which a contemporary history..."(Kermode 1975;178)

In fact the reason that Eliot made an allusion as he always preferred to consider it borrowing other's lines or quotations was to replicate for more benefit on the interest of the text .He is dealing with contemporary age but referring to the past to compare and prove his allegations.

Epigraph: A short lines to be added separately in advanced position and can serve as an introductory phrase for the sake of for shadowing the gist of the poem .Eliot in the major poems like *Gerontion* (1920), *The Waste land* (1922) and *The Hollow men* (1925) all these poems were introduced by a short lines from other writers prior in time. For Instance:

-The epigraph from the Greek poet Gaius Petronius in his *Satyricon*

"*Nam SibyllamquidemCumis ego ipse
Meisvidi in ampulla pendere...*

As came in T.S.Eliot's rough translation 'I saw with my own eyes the sibyl at cumae hanging in a cage, and when the boys asked her: "Sibyl, what do you want? She answered: "I want to die". This is the story of Sibyl the Prophetess who was granted an everlasting life but without eternal youth .She lived hundreds of years, till she is fed up with life and her life has become futile and purposeless Eliot used this epigraph to hint out the purposeless existence of the modern and the way his characters live in the modern age.

-In his other major poem *The Hollow Men* Eliot used two different lines from different cultures that are separated by several centuries and a wealth of background details. As Murphy mentioned: " 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"(Murphy 2007;253)

The importance of the aforesaid epigraph here is to set in a contrast the status of the hollow men of the modern age to the hero of Joseph Conrad and the Gun Powder plot of the Old Guy Fawkes. The two stories are from different cultures and different periods of time .In Mr Kurtz case he is empty at the core a slave trader in Africa. The effigy of Guy Fawkes that is set in a comparison to the state of the hollow men of the modern times. The story of the Guy fawkes plunges back in history up to the 1600's and what is known as the gun powder plot in which the Guy failed in his plot to blow up England Parliament.

Allusion: It is the reference to a certain literary text, event , legend or a myth that is universally known to the history readers .The real purpose of the allusion is to match the current work to the previous works and to point out the analogy, in a matter of "The history

repeats itself. In her abstract to her essay :“Gadamer’s and Hebermas’ Dialogical Model of Sociological Understanding” noted the following ;

“ Gadamer and Habermas both argue that in order to understand the practices and beliefs of the other cultures and periods of history fully and critically ,researchers should enter into ‘imaginary’ dialogue with their subjects about the nature of the world.(Harrington 2001).

Thus, such dialogue between the past and the present must come into a play in order to give meaning to a current text, despite the culturally different circumstances. In his remarks about the allusive style of T.S.Eliot Scofield defended Eliot’s use of allusion in this way:

“The mythical and the allusive technique, serve an important purpose. It enabled Eliot to stand back from his experience and to generalize it into a view of life ;and in another way it is also helped him to get closer to his experience, that is , to deal with matters which would have been too painful to approach in any more direct way”.(Scofield 1988;132)

In the poem *The Hollow Men* there is an allusion to the great late Medieval Italian Dante and his *La Divina Comedia*(The Divine Comedy) Eliot referred to this drama in a relationship with the undetermined status of the hollow men, they are in between situation not passed to heaven or to hell.They are like those caught in a Dante’s ‘Limbo’.

Plagiarism: A term that describe the copyright stealing of others’ texts, paragraphs in a way that is clear theft without any consideration to the credibility of the sources. In particular is to claim others’ works or endeavour to be genuine or original.

The history of plagiarism extends back to the old times of the classical era and those who were accused of plagiarism are many like William Shakespeare,H.G. Wells,and T.S.Eliot himself.It’s said that the greatest writer Shakespeare has used many of Christopher Marlow and Thomas Kyd’s works and involved them in his works, for example the technique of the metaplay (a play within play) Shakespeare used that type of play to act the reality of his uncle king Claudius who murdered his father and married his mother, already the style was applied to Hieromino in Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* in that episode Hieromino has taken revenge on the murderer of his son.

T.S.Eliot in his turn also defended his style of borrowing in his essay on Massinger as the following “ A good poet will usually borrow from authors remote in time or alien in languages or diverse in interest.Champman borrowed from Seneca; Shakespeare and Webster from Montaigne.(Eliot 1960;182)Thus, Eliot attitude towards plagiarism was clear and frank one ,because he has consulted these scripts without any alliterations .

The aim also was to create such an interwoven piece of art, because Eliot believe that the poet must not be judged only subjectively but also traditionally, he must be compared to the others who are dead. He remarked in his essay *Tradition and The Individual Talent* “No poet , nor artist of any art , has his own complete meaning alone .His significance , his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists”(Eliot 1920;44).

T.S.Eliot, however, was the one who developed the theory of the Impersonality of Poetry as a reaction to William Wordsworth’s definition of poetry. He call to liberate poetry from the author’s background. Dr. S.E.Mundara remarks on the borrowing of T.S.Eliot from others as follow:

“Eliot’s borrowing has been two-fold; his technique of borrowing phrases , lines and passages from other writers and make them his own , and secondly his trick in adopting the poetic style of French symbolists and later Elizabethan writers and some individual writers.”(Mudara2009 ;33)

Eliot in *The Waste Land* only has referred to many writers like Pretenius ,Thomas Middleton ,William Shakespeare, etc. and as Eliot was a multilingual he employed six different languages to involve languagesform Europe like German , French ,and even Sanskrit the lines DattaDayadhvamDamyata/ Shantihshantihshantih(*The Waste Land* 33-34).

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