

Myths: A Link between Past and Present in T. S. Eliot's Poems

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1. Abstract:

Mythology, the life blood, in T S Eliot's poems, establishes a link between the past and present introducing universally recognized characters and events with common human errors and qualities. Myths in T S Eliot's poems are not ornamental- antiquarian device merely to tell the lore or tales of gods and goddesses; rather an organizing principle through which the fragmentation of modern wayward society and civilization achieve artistic and philosophical coherence and significance. T S Eliot's (1888-1965) two most read, discussed and studied poems "**The Waste Land**", (1922) and "**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**" (1915) deal with Classical, German, Indian, Mediaeval, Egyptian, Buddhist and Christian mythology very skillfully and they have established a coherent link between the past and the present civilization. "**The Waste Land**" itself is an epic and reference book to mythology. This poem develops an elaborate mythic structure that integrates Grail legend, classical mythology, fertility rituals, Christianity, Buddhism, and Hindu philosophy into a unified representation of cultural and spiritual decay while, "**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**" presents- isolated mythological, Biblical, and literary allusions to illuminate the psychological paralysis of the modern man like us. This study adopts a qualitative textual approach to achieve the goal. Primary attention is given to T S Eliot's two renowned poems- "**The Waste Land**", and "**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**" and his own critical writings- '**Ulysses, Order, and Myth**' and two reference books- 1. Miss Jessie L. Weston's - "**From Ritual to Romance**"- (1920) on the Arthurian romances of the quest for the Holy Grail legend and 2. Sir James Frazer's "**The Golden Bough**" (1890-1915), an anthropology, are chosen as reference documents to find out the uses and functions of myths- establishing link between Past and Present.

2. Keywords: Mythology, life blood, link, ornamental- antiquarian device, fragmentation, wayward, classical mythology, Tiresias, spiritual decay.

3. Introduction:

T S Eliot, the most famous poet, critic and playwright of modern and post-modern period, was born in St. Lois on September 1888 and died in London on January 04, 1965. He is an American poet, critic, and dramatist got settled in London and became an English writer as well. T S Eliot is predominantly famous for his poem "**The Waste Land**", a criticism and faithful presentation of present civilization, a poem of mythological link between past and present time. "**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**", on the other hand, is the true presentation of neurotic-psychological paralysis of the modern man



T S Eliot (1888-1965)

like us. “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919), “Ulysses, Order, and Myth” (1923), “Prufrock and Other Observations” (1917), “Poems” (1919), “The Hollow Men” (1925), “Ash-Wednesday” (1930), “Four Quartets” (1943), “Hamlet and His Problems” (1919), “The Metaphysical Poets” (1921), “Andrew Marvell” (1921), “The Function of Criticism” (1923), “Murder in the Cathedral” (1935), “The Family Reunion” (1939), “The Cocktail Party” (1949), “The Confidential Clerk” (1953), “The Elder Statesman” (1958), etc., are the other famous literary works of T S Eliot. He won Nobel Prize in literature in 1948.

In modern English poetry, T. S. Eliot claims a pivotal position. The anxieties, doubts, immorality, lawlessness, sexual promiscuity, disillusionment, absurd psychological practices of the modern age, all are reflected in his poetry, particularly in “**The Waste Land**”, and in “**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**”. The early twentieth century -experienced the **First World War** along with industrialization, urbanization, scientific development and decline of religious faith and promise. Spiritual barrenness occupies the place of ‘The Sea of Faith’-mentioned by Arnold. T S Eliot, being aware of the modern crisis, writes his poems, critical works and plays to address the problems. “**The Waste Land**”, and “**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**” are such two poems in which he has not only pointed out the problems but also has given the solutions.

4. Etymology of Myth: The word myth comes from Ancient Greek μῦθος (mýthos), meaning 'speech', 'narrative', or 'fiction'. In turn, Ancient Greek μυθολογία (mythología 'story', 'legends', or 'story-telling') combines the word mýthos with the suffix -λογία (logia 'study'). Accordingly, Plato used mythología as a general term for fiction or story telling of any kind. This word was adapted into other European languages and literatures in the early 19th century Romantic poetry, Victorian poetry and in twentieth century modern works. T S Eliot, W B Yeats, J. M. Synge, along with other writers, use this word in their works in modern time also. They used mythological agents and stories as fundamental source for poetic inspiration to write poems, epics, plays and stories. From ancient to modern time, there is hardly any literary work where myth is not noticed. Actually, the Greek term mythología was borrowed into Late Latin, occurring in the title of Latin author Fabius Planciades Fulgentius' 5th-century Mythologiae to denote what is now referred to as classical mythology—i.e., Greco-Roman etiological stories involving their gods and goddess. The Latin term was then adopted in Middle French as mythologie. Whether from French or Latin usage, English adopted the word mythology in the 15th century, initially meaning 'the exposition of a myth or myths', 'the interpretation of fables', or 'a book of such expositions'. The word is first attested in John Lydgate's Troy Book (c. 1425).^{[16][18][19]} From Lydgate until the 17th or 18th century, mythology meant a moral, fable, allegory or a parable, or collection of traditional stories—understood to be false. It came eventually to be applied to similar bodies of traditional stories among other polytheistic cultures around the world.^[16] Thus mythology entered the English language before myth. Johnson's Dictionary, for example, has an entry for mythology, but not for myth.^[24] Indeed, the Greek loanword mythos^[26] (pl. mythoi) and Latinate mythus^[28] (pl. mythi) both appeared in English before the first example of myth in 1830.^[31] **(Ref-Online Source).**

Myth is thus a traditional story that uses supernatural agents or events to clarify the deep rooted truth of human beings, supernatural beings, their nature, culture and life style. Myth is really mysterious and complex to explain as the soul, weather, love, god, birth, death, supernaturalism, tide and ebb etc. T S Eliot has used myths in his poetic works particularly in the “**The Waste Land**”, and “**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**” to show a link between the past and present.

5. Problem of the study:

Taking reference to the study of the above mentioned two poems, basically two questions arise in our mind.

- i) What is the role of myths to establish a link between past and present in the poems-- “**The Waste Land**”, and “**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**”?
- ii) How does the poet treat different myths in these two poems?

6. Research Objectives:

The study aims at finding out the applications of myths to establish link between the past and the present in these two poems-“**The Waste Land**”, and “**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**”.

- a) To reveal that different types of myths used in the poems -“**The Waste Land**”, and “**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**” establish a link between past and present.
- b) To reveal the applications of myths in five sections of the poem “**The Waste Land**”-
 - i) The Burial of the Dead, ii) A Game of Chess, iii) The Fire Sermon, iv) Death by Water, v) What the Thunder Said, and in the poem “**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**”
- c) To demonstrate how myth enables Eliot to represent the crisis of modern civilization.
- d) To analyse the structural and symbolic significance of myth in “**The Waste Land**”.

7. Literature Review:

“**The Waste Land**” is a master piece of T S Eliot. This is a reference poem to mythology. In this poem, the poet has used the reference to four Mythological Waste lands old and new to show a link between the past and present. The Wastelands are- 1. Waste land of ‘King Oedipus of Thebes’, 2. Wasteland of ‘Fisher King’. 3. The Biblical Wasteland and 4. Modern Waste land. The references of these Wastelands will be found gradually in this poem. In the very outset of this poem, the poet uses the “**Myth of Sibyl**” to make people aware of their knowledge limitation, power of God, consequences of unwise demand and the duty of human beings past and present. The poet has divided this poem into five sections and they are i) **The Burial of the Dead**, ii) **A Game of Chess** iii) **The Fire Sermon**, iv) **Death by Water**, v) **What the Thunder Said**. All these sections are correlated and all together are a single poem namely “**The Waste Land**”. To get the study benefit and result of this research, we will examine the five sections to explore the use of myths and the function of myths that establish a link between the past and the present.

7.1 Myths, Symbols and link between Past and Present in ‘The Burial of the Dead’:

The title of this section ‘**The Burial of the Dead**’ refers to the burial of the fertility or the burial service of Christianity, and symbolically it denotes the spiritual decadence and death of the Waste landers. This section starts ironically to indicate the antagonist role of modern people. They do not like April-a symbol of growth and restoration, Easter and resurrection, harbinger of rain, sun, sweet shower and fertility; rather-they like winter, as season of infertility and bareness, spiritual sterility, chaos and guilty love. Here the poet refers to the sensual but unproductive practices of the past and present people that make them engaged but damage them spiritually. In line number 21, the poet addresses the people of modern civilization as God called Prophet Ezekiel in the ‘**Book of Ezekiel**’ over ninety times. It also appears in New Testament, where Jesus is frequently referred as ‘**the son of Man**’. The poet asks the people of modern civilization to follow the path of spiritual regeneration as the prophets Ezekiel and Jesus called people in the past. This is the use of Biblical allusion and Christian mythology that link the past and present. In line number 25 of this section, Eliot uses the Biblical symbolical phrase ‘**Red Rock**’ that stands for a symbol of God's protection and, in Christian interpretation, of Christ himself. The “**red rock**” alludes to the Bible, especially Isaiah 32:2 (“the shadow of a great rock in a weary land”) and the Christian interpretation of the Rock as Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4). It may evoke Christ's blood, making the rock an image of sacrifice and redemption. The poet asks the people of modern civilization to take shelter under the red rock, means under Christianity or the under the guardianship of Christ. Actually, human being is nothing but a shadow and a handful of dust after death. This is a religious message for the world people past and present and ‘red Rock’ is used here as link.

In lines 31-34, the poet uses the reference to the myth of “**Tristan and Isolde**”-ref-Verse. 5-8(Eliot's note). A sailor on the ship which brings Isolde from Ireland to her unloved husband to be, King Mark of Cornwall, sings wistfully of a girl he left behind: “**Fresh blows the wind/ To the homeland;/ My Irish darling./ Where do you linger?**” and in lines-41-42, Eliot again uses the same reference in another way. He tells-“**Looking into the heart of light, the silence. / O'ed' und leer das Meer.**”- 'Id. iii. verse-24'(Eliot's note),Tristan having been caught in adultery with Isolde and badly wounded, awaits her coming to heal him; but a shepherd, posted as lookout for her sheep, says sadly-“**Desolate and empty the sea.**” This is also a message of Eliot that modern world is desolate and hopeless, so,

religious shelter- Christianity can save people of all ages. Eliot in line number **43** and **46** uses two references, one reference to Egyptian pharaoh Sesostris, a fortune teller, - [Sesostris- is an Egyptian Pharaoh (Eliot came across it in a comic scene Aldous Huxley's- Crome Yellow-1921)] and another of a Phoenician Sailor also reappears as Phlebas in part-iv. Eliot gives a note on this.

In line number **48, 49 and 50**, Eliot uses two mythological references-Biblical and Buddhist myth. **"the Lady of the Rocks, / The Lady of situations. / Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel."** **"The Lady of the Rocks"** refers to Madonna of the Rocks, a painting of Leonardo Da Vinci, a picture of Virgin Mary and **"Wheel of Fortune"** refers to Buddhist's **"Wheel of Existence"** from which the soul endeavours to escape. In line number **62-63**, **"I had not thought death had undone so many,/ Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled."** the poet again uses the references to Dante's epic **"Inferno"**. According to Eliot's note-[**"Cf. Inferno iii, 55-56, Dante describes souls in limbo as "So long a train of people/ That I should never have behaved/ That death had undone so many."** They are in limbo because they 'lived without praise or blame' or did not know the faith:"] Eliot condemns here secularism and indifference to good and evil. Regarding line number-63, Eliot gives the reference to **"Divine Comedy"**-[**"Cf. Inferno iv. 25-27—"Here, so far as I could tel by listening/ There was no lamentation except sighs. /Which caused the eternal air to tremble."** The sighs are uttered by the souls of the virtuous heathen who lived before Christ.] In line number **67**, **"the final stroke of nine"**, the poet uses the reference to the time of crucifixion that is nine. It is the hour of prayer for human beings particularly for the Christians. But, the people are very busy with their commercial activity and it is not fair. This is the reference to Biblical allusion. In line number **69**, **"Stetson!"** refers to Stetson, a friend of Tiresias, a legendary Greek mythological character and the protagonist of this poem. He himself is the representative of the past and present. In line number **71-72** **"That corpse you planted last year in your garden, / Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?"**-the poet has used the reference to Osiris is the Egyptian mythological god of the underworld, the dead and resurrection, fertility and vegetation, and eternal life.

Eliot has used different myths to describe different religious and mythological events to make people aware of their responsibilities. The poet actually, urges the people of present civilization to follow the path of Christianity by using the mythological references. In this regards, myths play the role of link between the past and the present.

7.2 Myths: as link between past and present in "A Game of Chess":

The name **"A Game of Chess"** comes from a mythological background. The title **"A Game of Chess"** alludes primarily to Thomas Middleton's (1570-1627) play **"A Game of Chess"**, but refers particularly to another play by Middleton **"Women Beware Women"**, where a chess game symbolizes seduction and manipulation. Here a beautiful girl is seduced in one room while her mother in law is kept busy at chess game in the next room. T S Eliot-keeping this reference, introduces the Greek myth of **Philomela**, a girl, raped and tongue cut by her brother in law- King Tereus and transformed Philomela into a nightingale and Tereus into a hoopoe/Eagle, while Philomela's sister Procne turned into a swallow for the divine curse. Philomela is a symbol of violated innocence and silenced suffering. The setting of this section also evokes **Cleopatra** from Shakespeare's **"Antony and Cleopatra"**, and **Dido** from Virgil's **"Aeneid"**. This section highlights the futility of love, seduction, divine punishment and a lesson from the mythological and ancient references that sensuality often causes destruction and it is equally true for the people of past and present.

In this section, in line number 80, the poet uses the reference to Greek God Cupid, the god of Love, to show the condition of the so called perverted modern ladies to modernity. They are so gorgeously presented that Cupid, the god of love peeped to see their beauty. It is a negative reference and the poet wants to cover it through his reference to Philomela legend. The poet tells in line number-98-103,

**"As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
The Change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
And still she cried, and still the world pursue,
Jug Jug to dirty ears."**

The poet later describes the condition of this modern time and to make us aware- write the following two lines in this section-

**“I think we are in rats’ alley
Where the dead men lost their bones.”**

7.3 Myths treated in section-iii “The Fire Sermon”:

This section is taken from the ‘**importance to the Sermon on the Mount**’. While Buddha was counselling his followers to conceive an aversion for the burning flames of passion and physical sensation with a view to having a holy life, freedom from earthly urges and the circle of rebirth to attain **Nirvana**, he told them that- the whole earth is burning on fire of hatred, infatuation, old age, death, sorrow, lamination, misery and despair. The main target of man on this earth is to attain Nirvana and ignoring the above things is the best way to achieve that goal. This section thus discusses the suggestions of Buddha and the contradictory deeds of the modern people for getting temporary pleasures. Eliot here uses different myths as a link to show the nature of human beings past and present for getting a chance of correction. The reference to Mrs. Porter comes from an Australian soldiers' marching song: **“Oh the moon shines bright on Mrs. Porter/And on her daughter...”** Here Mrs. Porter is presented as a prostitute or brothel keeper. Eliot's note also refers to the washing of feet with soda water, a detail from the song. Washing is associated with purification but here washing is cynically used because a prostitute does not wash to get purified; rather getting away of her dirt. The poet here satirizes the modern civilized people who are apparently pure but internally vulgar as Mrs. Sweeney. This reference is used to bring correction. This is the use of modern anti-hero theory to give passive message. Thus, Mrs. Sweeney has become a discussed mythical character. Eliot uses the myth of Philomela again to draw our notice towards the unnatural, despicable practices in the unreal city of the world, particularly in London. Here he mentions the homosexuality, illegal sexual relationship, patronization of illegal things through the reference to Tiresias, the protagonist of this poem. Tiresias had experienced the same irregularities when he was a young man/ woman in Thebes. Even today, she bears the wrinkled breasts as a symbol of her/his dual identity. In fact, Tiresias does not get puzzled watching the objectionable practices of the modern men because he was not exempt from these things in his/her youthful period. So, Tiresias, a mythical figure, is a link between the past and present to show human character of the ancient time and of the present time. Illegal sex making is nothing but combing the hair of a girl and listening to song on gramophone. The poet narrates-

**“She smoothes her hair with automatic hand,
And puts a record on the gramophone.”**

In line number-307-311, the poet uses the reference to St. Augustine's Confessions. Augustine wrote **“I entangle my steps with these outward beauties, but Thou pluckest me out, O Lord, ‘Thou pluckest me out’”**. Here, he wants to leave the world but he fails because he is caught by the charms of this world. Through this Christian Saint, the poet wants to give us a message that there is a continuous fight between the negative and positive sides of the world. This reference is applicable for both the people of past and present. This is a religious myth used by Eliot to distinguish between right and wrong.

7.4 Myth in Section iv- ‘Death by Water’:

The name **‘Death by Water’** comes from the section-i, where the fortune teller Madame Sosostris predicted Phlebas that he would die by water/drowning. Phlebas had actually died since a fortnight in the sea by drowning and the people, seagulls and other birds had forgotten him. This is the go of the world. Nothing is out of Nature and Phlebas also became a prey to it. Here, the poet has given the importance to the fortune telling, a powerful mythical practice by the Egyptian Pharaoh- Madam Sosostris. Even today, fortune tellers are found not only in Egypt but also in other countries of the world. So, this myth has established a link between the people of past and present.

7.5 'What the Thunder Said', A Myth of Crisis, Salvation and Suggestion:

'What the Thunder Said' section -V of "The Waste Land" of T S Eliot, is the last section of this poem. Here the poet introduces myths from Hinduism, Christianity, the Grail legend, Buddhism, and European folklore to suggest that spiritual renewal is possible only through suffering, sacrifice, and self-discipline. Three themes are employed here- i) The Journey to Emmaus, ii) The approach to the Chapel Perilous(ref- Miss Jessi Western's book) iii) Present decay of Eastern Europe. This is the climax section of the poem where the sterile, dead and unproductive world begins to turn into a world of hope and regeneration.

In line number-328, the poet uses the reference to Christianity, Crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. The poet tells-"He who was living is now dead", indicates Christ's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, his imprisonment, trial and death on the cross. In lines-360-366, the poet uses the reference to the Journey to Emmaus. In line 360- 'Who is the third who walks always beside you?', the phrase- 'the third who walks always beside you', refers to Jesus Christ, helping the disciples on the way to Emmaus, though the disciples fail to recognize Him(Christ). It also refers to the account of Ernest Shackleton, Antarctic explorer, who felt the mysterious presence of a "third man." and this man was also Jesus Christ. This reference suggests the invisible presence, spiritual guidance and hope among the Waste landers. In line number 386-395, the poet describes the perilous journey of the Knight to Chapel Perilous to collect the 'Holy Grail'. It is very challenging, arduous and dedicating. The ruined Chapel symbolizes the spiritual decay, the collapse of religious belief, and modern world's inability to attain salvation. This is the reference to Chapel Perilous myth of Fisher King who became maimed and his country became barren as his soldiers raped the nuns on the way to the Chapel Perilous. But, at last, because of the 'Holy Grail' the rain came and everything came to order. This journey indicates the struggle on the way to the path of religion in the past and present.

In line number-396-423, T S Eliot uses the Hindu Myth-taken from Brihadaranyaka Upanishad-5.1. Here the poet mentioned an old age Indian natural disaster due to the fault and sin of Lesser Gods, human being and demons. When the situation went out of control and the three above mentioned agents were about to be ruined, the Creator God- in form of a Prajapati gave the solution by uttering the same sound 'Da' three times in the form of thunder over the Himalayan Mountains and later the suggested things were observed and the Ganga basin got rid of that horrible sterility and draught. According to T S Eliot- 'In the Hindu fable of 'the Three Great Disciplines, "the Creator God instructs the lesser gods to 'Control' their unruly natures, men to 'Give' alms despite their natural miserliness, and the cruel demons to 'Sympathize'; 'That very thing is repeated even today by the heavenly voice, in the form of thunder as 'Da', 'Da', 'Da', Therefore, one should practice these three things; self-control, giving, and mercy," to get rid of danger.

In Sanskrit, an ancient Indo-Aryan language, the three 'Da', 'Da' 'Da' stands for 'Datta', 'Dayadhvam' and 'Damyata'- meaning- Give, Sympathize and Control. Through this Hindu mythology, the poet has shown the path of salvation and this is even today practiced with importance. Thus, 'The thunder' (symbol of the three commands-Give, Sympathize, Control') as a mythical agent and 'rain' (symbolizes- rebirth, purification, restoration, hope) as a result of expiation stand in this subcontinent as mythical reference to establish a link between past and present. 'Shantih' this word is thrice used to recur the traditional ending of many Upanishads. It stands for a prayer for inner peace. This word is now used as "Om Shantih" in prayer by the Hindus and Buddhists.

8. Use of myths in 'The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock':

T S Eliot's "The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock" is a testimony of a modern man's neurotic and psychological problem. Here Prufrock is the representative of a modern civilization. To draw the nature and picture of Prufrock, Eliot has started the poem with an epigraph from Dante's 'Inferno', Canto-XXVII, where the poet asks Guido da Montefeltro, who like the other Counsellors of Fraud is wrapped in a tall flame, to identify himself. Guido, having sinned with his tongue, has to speak through the tongue of the flame. He replies, "If I thought that I was speaking/ to someone who would go back to the world,/ this flame would shake no more./ But since nobody has ever/ gone back alive from this place, if what I hear is true,/ I answer you without fear of infamy." According to some critics and readers, this epigraph indicates that Prufrock speaks to himself; but Eliot tells that here 'you' is an unidentified male companion.

This poet in different spheres uses myths in this poem. If we have a glance over this poem, we will see that-the poet has used myths to establish a link between past and present. He compares the past mythical figures with the present known characters, like – Biblical Characters-Lazarus and John the Baptist and Shakespeare's Hamlet, the symbols of-courage, sacrifice and decisive action with the present nervous, invalid, hesitant but self-conscious Prufrock, the protagonist of this poem. Spiritual truth versus modern spiritual barrenness are presented side by side with the presentation of the character Lazarus and Prufrock. The great Renaissance poet, artist and painter **Michelangelo** becomes the subject matter of the current poor discussion repeatedly by the so-called sophisticated ladies of Prufrock's time –that is present society. It is cynical and unwanted. In the last of this poem, the poem uses the reference to the **mermaids**, the mythological ocean character found in many works of ancient and present is also presented. The **mermaids** leave the shore just watching Prufrock-means he is not worth of beauty, romance and transcendence.

The poem "**The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock**" has very few mythological references. The epigraph of this poem is mythical. Except this, **line number-82-83**, the poet uses the Biblical myth of **Prophet John the Baptist** in the following way-"**Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald)/ brought in upon a platter**". This reference indicates the horrible Biblical reference. **John the Baptist** was beheaded by order of **King Herod**, and his head was brought in upon a silver dish to please the queen, **Herodias**, (Matthew 14:3-11). In **line number 94-95**, the poet uses the reference to **Lazarus** who was raised by **Christ** from the dead, (John 11:1-44). The poet uses the reference in the following way- "**I am Lazarus' come from the dead, / Come back to tell you all. I shall tell you all.**" Line number **13-14**, gives the reference to Michelangelo, the famous Italian painter, to describe the futile discussion of the modern ladies. Line number-**111-112**, uses the reference to **Hamlet and Polonius**, to satirize the irresolute character Prufrock. Line number **123-131**, uses the reference to mermaids who escapes from Prufrock as he is not worth of beauty, romance and love.

9. Research Methodology:

This research work ensures a qualitative and analytical approach to explore the mythological elements in two famous poems of T S Eliot namely-"**The Waste Land**", and "**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**". This methodology is designed to investigate the use of myths as a source of link between past and present in the above two poems. This literary framework also focuses simultaneously mainly on textual analysis, referential interpretation and on T S Eliot's own notes.

9.1 Research Design:

This study follows a descriptive- analytical design to examine the selected lines, words, epigraphs, Biblical and mythological allusions as primary texts of the two poems -"**The Waste Land**", and "**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**". This research investigates T S Eliot's use of myths, Biblical allusions, especially Greek mythology, their narrative function, and their symbolic significances in these two poems. Secondary critical works, scholarly articles and reliable online sources are consulted as literary- mythological support to contextualize the analysis.

9.2 Primary Sources:

T S Eliot's two renowned poems -"**The Waste Land**", and "**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**" are carefully, meticulously and cautiously analyzed and notes are taken from Eliot to find out the use of myths as link between past and present to complete this study.

9.3 Secondary Sources:

Relevant literary criticism, journal articles, "Myth". Encyclopedia Britannica. Oxford English Dictionary, Cambridge English Dictionary, Eliot's own notes, above mentioned two poems, explicit and implicit use of Greek myths, Biblical allusions, Hindu myths, Buddhist religious myths, and other mythological works are used and consulted to complete this research work. The study owes gratefully to the scholarly works-"**THE MYTHIC METHOD AND INTERTEXTUALITY IN T.S. ELIOT'S POETRY**" by Manjola Nasi, M.A. University of Tirana, Albani, "**AN ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF MYTHOLOGY IN THE POETRY OF T.S. ELIOT**" by-Mrs. Sunita S Kademani, PGT English, Sainik School Balachadi, Jamnagar, Gujara, " Myth and modernity in the poetry of T. S.

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9.4 Analytical Framework:

The analysis is mainly focused on T S Eliot’s use of myths, Biblical allusions and other mythological and religious allusions in his two poems--“**The Waste Land**”, and “**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**”. Greek mythology, Biblical allusions, Hindu mythology, Buddhist religious allusions, Egyptian mythology, the eternal source of world literature, are applied in different forms by T S Eliot- in his two poems as links between past and present.

10. Procedure:

Close reading of all lines of the two chosen poems-“**The Waste Land**”, and “**The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**” are ensured to identify and catalog instances of Greek mythology, Biblical allusions, Hindu mythology, Egyptian mythology, thematic analysis of how these elements contribute to contextual literary development, narrative structure and referential mythological commentary and comparative analysis across two the poems to judge T S Eliot’s use of myths as link between past and present.

11. Conclusion:

T S Eliot’s “**The Waste Land**” and “**The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock**” are the two noted poems in the context of Twentieth Century English literature. He is a very famous poet, critic and playwright of modern and postmodern time. Many of his poems and plays deal with mythological affairs-but the above mentioned two poems are obviously the best among them. In 20th century, we find two celebrated poems- **1. The Waste land**- by T S Eliot, and **2. The Second Coming**, by W B Yeats. In both poems, the poets have used myths to connect the past with the present. T S Eliot’s another poem- “**The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock**” is a testimony of a modern man’s neurotic and psychological problems. In the both poems the poet has used many mythological references, Biblical allusions, Egyptian myths, Hindu myths, Buddhist religious allusions, ancient literary characters, poets, painters, kings, prophets, supernatural and oceanic characters to bind a link between the past and the present. The modern age is an age of spiritual crisis and decadence. Morally people are deranged and wayward, they need guidance like ‘**DA, DA, DA**, or the assistance as **Christ** gave to the followers on the way to **Chapel Perilous**, or like the mysterious “**third man**” when Ernest Shackleton was in the Antarctic region for exploration. The poet’s use of epigraph in both poems has increased their importance and relevance. Eliot has used myth not to tell stories or to display pedantry; rather, he introduces mythological, biblical, and religious characters and events to present the fragmented experience of modern life as a coherent whole, thereby linking the past with the present in his poetry.

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