

Memory in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*

Komal Prasad Phuyal

Central Department of English
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur,
Nepal.

ephuyal@gmail.com

Received: July 3, 2023

Revised: Aug 24, 2023

Accepted: Oct 7, 2023

Published: Oct 20, 2023

How to cite this paper:

Phuyal, K. (2023). Memory in
T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*
Khwopa Journal, 5 (2), 14 - 26.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/kjour.v5i2.60405>

Copyright© 2023 by authors
and Research Management
Cell,

Khwopa College.

This work is licensed under a
Creative Commons Attribution-Non
Commercial-No
Derivatives 4.0 International
License.

[https://creativecommons.org/
licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

ABSTRACT

*The greatest of the issues in modernism emanates from memory in human beings. It is the first condition for people to realize what they have lost in their life, resulting from World War I. Often known as the manifesto of modernism in the West, T. S. Eliot's 1922 poem *The Wasteland* deals with the intellectual, social, political, and quotidian issues of the people, basically resulting from memory. The people begin to value the glory of the past as the epitome in contemporary times, meaning that they have been driven out of paradise now. In other words, memory became a tool to rewrite a new Bible in the twentieth century following the trail of John Milton's *The Paradise Lost* (1667). The phantoms of negative memories torment the people in the West: for instance, the people set out in search of Christ or metonymically the Holy Grail. Most importantly, the poetic persona is Tiresias who still remembers both his lives. He searches for the images that best represent the experience of living in the Western world shattered at the hand of the destructive forces. The centers of the civilizations have undergone massive destruction and they have remained unable to reconstruct themselves. Both the poet and the poetic persona go through the pages of the books of the Western and Eastern body of knowledge to identify the remedy for the fragmentation or loss of the binding principles of human society. This study aims to explore how memory is treated in modernist literature to examine the presence of history in making sense of the presence. The Eastern myths remind the Western world of the cure to the existing problems of*

society. In fact, this paper claims that The Wasteland builds its argument in the treatment of memory as the prime factor in the articulation of the central vision about the West in general and modernism in particular.

Keywords: Modernism, World War I, Destruction, Memory, Fragmentation

1. Introduction

T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) collects various snapshots of contemporary life, historical epi-sodes, literary narratives, and slices of myths into a collage in his seminal poetic work, *The Waste Land* (1922) through the holistic memory. He strategically chooses his poetic persona from Greek mythical narratives, Tiresias. The blind seer is portrayed in Greek myths as the one who has lived as both man and woman. He can travel across European civilization in crises in search of images of the suffering people, the historical and literary narratives to sort out the similar experiences of the people, and the mythical narratives of the world as his memory helps him revive the historical sense in the people who suffer from loss of memory. Through multiple snapshots of modern life in Europe, the poet contemplates on the nature of life and society at the close of the World War I. Eliot's poetic presentation claims that the cause of suffering lies in erosion of three fundamental values in the Western World after the World War I: sacrifice, control, and compassion. Through Tiresias's memory, Eliot successfully explores the similar situation in the Subcontinent in the past in which the gods, the humans, and the demons had undergone spiritual death.

The gods, the humans, and the demons learned the absent virtues in themselves when Prajapati spoke to them through the thunder. The gods knew that they had to control themselves; the humans realized the absence of sacrifice in them; and the demons began to feel compassionate to others. The Subcontinent revitalized itself and restored spirituality. Post-war Europe suffers from the erosion of the values that previously gave life to the whole civilization. Tiresias observes the people experiencing loss of control for the lust for physical pleasure and wealth, loss of sacrifice, and utter absence of compassion after the World War I. However, he uses his memory to recall the instances of purity in the past, in the literary world, and in the mythical narratives to impart the historical sense in the general public victimized with amnesia. Eliot and Tiresias restore order in the fragmented world by using memory as the reserve of knowledge and imparting the historical sense in the society.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. A Brief Review of Previous Studies

The section presents a brief review of some of the seminal readings of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) which has been interpreted from multiple points of view. Much of the readings of Eliot or his poem under discussion in the paper have pointed at the modernist features in the poem in that like James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), the poem is often taken as the herald of modernism in English poetry. Also,

Matthew Hart argues that T. S. Eliot occupies the leading position in modernist studies as he pioneers the critical assessment of the West as a civilization block undergoing critical phase in history after the World War I. Hart has further argued: “Eliot’s ‘once there was a culture here,’ should remind us that *The Waste Land*’s tragedy of unreconciled voices is not just a phenomenological problem: it is a metic’s political reaction to the post-1918 crisis in European national cultures, involving the sense that the home of homes is burning down the house” (p. 184). Searching for a homogenous, all-encompassing voice in the world hit with the World War I, Eliot moves through the broken pieces of life and empathizes with the world because he observes the agony of the people in the modern world. In fact, he searches for a voice that can heal all the problems of the people of the modern world.

His quest leads him into the literary archives which serve as the reserve of knowledge, speculations, and expectations of the people in the past. As he travels through the pages of the scriptures to find out the remedy for the modern people, he gathers pieces of the larger collage from the world piece by piece. Juan A. Suarez (2001) has stated:

It is not difficult to see a certain kinship between these experiments and *The Waste Land*. In fact, Eliot’s poem itself is based on zapping through a sort of prerecorded literary archive which seems to be kept on the air at different frequencies. As it runs through the length of the spectrum, the dial picks up some voices and frequencies while it skips others; the resulting collage is transcribed onto the page. (p. 757)

The characters of the scriptures appear like living people before the poet and he places his persona face to face with them interacting about the issues of the world. Besides, Harry Levin (1960) has tangentially approached the text from the perspective of memory as he studies the use of flashback in the poem, *The Waste Land*. As he has critically viewed the use of flashback as part of memory in the poem, “Future writers would take advantage of it, as he predicted; and even then he had just finished his *Waste Land*, which abounded in flashbacks and parallels. In that least heroic and most fragmentary of epics, he exorcized the blight of contemporaneous London by tracing through it the outline of a quest for the Holy Grail” (p. 624). The wounds of culture find their adequate attention in the poem as he goes deep in the roots of the Christian values and their erosion in the modern world.

When critics study the poem, they have also traced the contemporary influence on Eliot. For instance, R. Galand (1950) has stated that T.S. Eliot as a poet has borrowed resources from Baudelaire in his poetry. Specifically, *The Waste Land* has also used a few allusions from him in its making (p. 32). As an avid reader of continental resources, Eliot has depended on such poets. However, Eliot believes that an individual’s talent is not only founded on the past and its resources: he has to move beyond the set criteria of tradition. As Crews (1998) has claimed, “This denies the individual’s independence the past and past actions, although in *The Waste*

Land rather than the individual we can think more in terms of a collective memory which holds everything together” (p.19). Crews has identified the role of collective memory of the Western World as the poem contemplates on the whole continent and the loss of Christian values as the root cause of the suffering of the people. As Cole (2009) has argued,

What a reading of *The Waste Land* shows, in part, is that literary modernism was fully entangled, in its deepest commitments, not only with the war, but also with a long history of violence, that its works were grouped and polarized around the question of whether violence can stand as the bed rock of a culture's artistic accomplishments. (p.1633)

The collective memory of violence that rose in the 1910s in Europe serves as the cultural terrain for Eliot to work on his poem.

Eliot largely depends on European geography because he was in Europe. He wanted to show the suffering of the people in Europe. So, he weaves a narrative of the people in Europe throughout the poem. As Soboleva and Wrenn (2017) have analyzed:

At the time when Eliot was composing *The Waste Land*, in Switzerland, Lithuania was joining the League of Nations, whose headquarters were adjacent at Geneva. Eliot's poem reflects European political events which were unfolding even as he drafted it, but the speaker overheard at this point is at pains to deny Russian nationality and to assert that she is a Lithuanian of pure German, and not Slav pedigree. (p.285)

Moving beyond the political context behind the poem, multiple readings have appeared in the contemporary world. Still, Crews (1998) has synthesized the findings of many studies and presented the basic features of Eliot's poetry: "... we also begin to find a tendency towards indirect presentation, a preoccupation with the presentness of the past, a different attitude towards time and history involving a break with and nostalgia for the past, all of which result from a common need to come to terms with the conditions of modernity" (p. 17). The geo-graphical and historical contexts add novel perspectives on what and how Eliot approaches the world.

2.2. Departure

Even though critics have comprehensively interpreted history, myth, violence, and war in *The Waste Land*, myth has not been studied by using the tools and devices that were recently developed with the advent of memory studies as a field of academic inquiry towards the end of the twentieth century. Since memory studies has appeared as the entangled space after the wave of the postmodern cultural intellectual phenomena after the 1980s, multiple facets of time and language have intertwined in the way to understanding the past at the present. Previous studies have not been able to address the challenges that Eliot had observed in the creation of the poem in 1922 since it was the time of utter confusion in the West after World War

I. This study takes a new turn in the interpretation of the text by exploring the trajectory of memory which Eliot employs in the poem in search of the remedy to the erosion of the Western, Christian values in the West. The present paper reads *The Waste Land* through the perspective of memory studies in order to see the treatment of past in present and exploration of the remedies of the presence in the historical practices in different civilizations.

2.3. Memory and Literature

The problem of contemporary life resides in social amnesia. In other words, global capitalism and consumerism promote ahistorical sense of reasoning which began immediately after the World War I. Also, Radstone and Schwarz (2010) have stated that "... memory is in jeopardy that the present critical hyper-activity has occurred" (p. 2). Memory studies at presents requires to relocate the past at the service of the present in order to make the present aware of the course of action human beings have taken up in the course of arriving at the present state. Since the present study assumes that only the revival of memory through the historical search in the literary can acquaint people with the proper sense of the roots, it attempts to interpret Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) as a historical repository of knowledge that connects the readers with the historical context of its production. Further elaborating on the political function of memory, Radstone and Schwarz (2010) have written:

Identities, individual and collective, are formed and reformed through narrative, in history, and through adversity. No simple call to "remember"—charged as that imperative now finds itself, with the power to heal and to restore, or to stoke the fires of deadly conflicts—can leapfrog over the complexities of history, of politics, and of speaking positions. Neither can remembrance turn back the clock by inserting lost times into the present. Memory is active, forging its pasts to serve present interests. (p. 3)

The modern world treats memory as a political space where people employ it in search of political identity in that people have accepted the significance and role of memory in the formation of political and national identity. Furthermore, memory has turned into a space in search of one's roots.

In the contemporary times, memory studies has been facing challenges in its research as it bears the two-fold complexities in it: firstly, it call for the need to look back at the history of torment and torture; and, it also frightens people of trauma the memory itself is embedded with in analyzing the past (Hirsch and Spitzer, 2010, p. 391). The remembering the torture of the past certainly puts the people at an uncomfortable space from which to explore the scars that the past has inflicted in one's consciousness. Still, the researchers on memory studies have been trying to cope up with such challenges through the study of literary productions that present the agony and torture in more vicarious ways. The meaning as such emerges out of interaction between the individual and the collective which helps shape the course

of interpretation. As Feindt, Gregor, et al (2014) have argued,

Continuous meaning emerges where rules or patterns provide a social reference point for comparison and lead to their coherent application. It is widely acknowledged that acts of remembering, drawing upon Halbwachs, constitute *faits sociaux*. Thus ensues the genuine social nature of memory without implying either the existence of a collective subject or of a cognitive core, although social frames of remembering remain dependent on individual consciousness as its carrier. If memory refers to the relation between individual and collective memory, it is essential to avoid overemphasizing an alleged polarization between the two. (p. 30)

The present study examines the mode of social interaction as the source of making meaning out of memory. The paper attempts to explore the dynamics of memory in Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) to understand the time, the social context, the post-war effects in European society, and the crises of the Western civilization. Also, the study considers the trauma of the poet as the creative impetus behind writing the literary text.

3. Memory and Amnesia in *The Waste Land*

T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) presents a collage of scattered images across time and space where the native values that once contributed to the making of coherent whole of the Western civilization have eroded after the World War I. In a typical quest for the whole, Eliot brings in Tiresias as the persona of the poem for three reasons: firstly, he has lived the life of both man and woman; secondly, he has remained a blinded man who can see through the space and time; thirdly, his knowledge places him in the most torturous position in the modern world in that he observes everything to suffer from the loss of classical human values. The contradiction of modernism as such is reflected in Tiresias as he suffers from his comprehensive memory. The world undergoes the most painful experience, for its loss of memory: the classically held humane values have been forgotten as the logic of capitalism prevails everywhere in the modern world; the people are burning with the sensory desire and gratification; and they cannot identify the roots that can heal the problems of their time.

Structurally speaking, *The Waste Land* is presented in five sections: The Burial of the Dead, A Game of Chess, The Fire Sermons, Death by Water, and What the Thunder Said. Each section consists of a series of images as the slice of contemporary life, historical/mythical life, and/or an episode from the literary works. The whole poem is built up with twenty-nine images connected with each other: the first section is developed with six of such images; the second section presents four connected images; the third section titled "The Fire Sermons" is made up of twelve images; the fourth section shows the death of Phlebas in a single image and makes the world aware about the nature of material quest; and finally, the concluding sec-

tion comprises of six images that seek “Shantih” in the waste land. Referring to the spiritual dearth in the East, Eliot alludes to an episode in the Hindu scriptures. When the East had lost self-sacrifice, control, and compassion, the Ganga had dried up, causing trouble to the whole civilization. Prajapati communicates the three values through the symbolic gesture of the thunder over the Himvant: he says “*DA*” three times: the gods understand it as the humans as *Datta* (sacrifice), *Damatya* (control), and the demons as *Dayadhvam* (compassion). Eliot’s basic claim lies in the final section where he declares that the West can regain order and achieve the state of peace by following the path of the East.

The poem begins with the allusion of Sybil who symbolizes modern life. She wants to die although she is denied the death that is supposed to bring redemption, emancipation from life in the modern world; however, people cannot have the bliss. In fact, modern people dream of death like Sybil: it has now turned into a luxury after the World War I. The post-war world is filled with the people who live the life of Sybil. What do they want? Eliot clearly indicates the choice of the people in the world where the Spring disturbs them:

April is the cruelest month, breeding

Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing

Memory and desire, stirring

Dull roots with spring rain.

Winter kept us warm, covering

Earth in forgetful snow, feeding

A little life with dried tubers. (lines 1-7)

European civilization is torn asunder after the World War I. Tiresias can see that the people cannot enjoy the presence of the Spring that pushes flowers to bloom, mixing memory and desire. On the contrary, they find the Winter blissful, for they forget everything. Memory and/ or amnesia emerge as the most critical forces in the modern world as they function equally powerful in the life of the people.

As the wisest witness to global history, Tiresias most carefully sifts through the events. As he busies himself “fishing in the dull canal” (line 189), he travels through time and space in the Western civilization in search of the remedy for the erosion of the classical values of sacrifice, control, and compassion in the modern times. Tiresias encounters people losing control over their body and soul. For instance, he hears Marrie talking about her childhood. She says that her cousin “took her out on and sled/ And I was frightened. He said, Marrie,/Marie, hold on tight. And down we went” (lines 14-16). Tiresias does not stay around one particular event for a long time as he attempts to develop a collage out of multiple instances. One specific event leads him to the similar kind of historical scene: he has lived through the

history. In fact, he has himself become an embodiment of memory. On the contrary, the people have forgotten the sacrifice of Christ for their sake. The courage for the self-sacrifice has been lost at present:

There is shadow under this red rock
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust. (lines 25-30)

The rock that carries the stain of Christ's sacrifice has a shadow to remind the world about the courage of a hero ready to sacrifice himself to alleviate the pain in the world. Tiresias knows the fate of the people like Sybil who have the lust for living till eternity. When the sun-god Apollo appeared before her, she asked to live as many years as she had the grains of sand in her fist. Finally, Apollo accepted her request for eternal life: she could not distinguish between eternal youth and eternal life. Now, Sybil has turned into a doll who cannot die now because she wanted to live forever. Living for eternity, she has realized the fear in a handful of dust.

The modern world has advanced the technology of capitalism as the soul of the world. T. S. Eliot completely disagrees with the ways of the world. Through Tiresias, he brings Phlebas the Phoenician sailor to the spotlight in order to remind the world about his tragic death. Just like everyone in the modern world aspiring for success, Phlebas went to the sea that swallowed him up. Eliot writes:

A current under sea
Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the whirlpool.
Gentile or Jew
O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you. (lines 315-321)

The problem of capitalism occurs in the world as the general public fails to learn from the tragedies in history. As long as the history serves as a guide to the way of life at present or it is completely pushed to oblivion from the service of life (Nietzsche, 1957, p. 15), human life greatly suffers the damages because both obsession on the past or complete ignorance of the past fail to guide the life at present. Nietzsche argues for the suprahistorical stand point to develop critical ways of relating to history to better serve the purpose of contemporary life. The common

public has forgotten the aspiration of Phlebas who resembled the people. Tiresias makes political use of his memory for the service of the people in order to rescue them from the traps of ahistoricity.

Eliot realizes that the West has lost self-control as one of the fundamental values of human life. His persona telescopes the activities of the contemporary people through multiple images in collage of the poetic work, *The Waste Land*. For instance, Marrie's cousin cannot control himself when they go on a sledge and he asks her to hold him tightly (lines 8-18). Similarly, Tiresias reports a girl utter these words in the poem:

“You give me hyacinth first a year ago;

“They called me the hyacinth girl.”

-Yet when we came back, late, from the Hyacinth garden,

Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not

Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither

Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,

Looking into the heart of light, the silence. (lines 35-41)

Such images portray the lack of self-control in the people after the World War I in Europe as the cause of the spiritual dearth. In order to universalize the crises, Tiresias views other such instances as well.

The people burn with the craving for physical gratification. The desire arises in the multiple instances in the poem. For instance, a boy and a girl wait for each other like a machine. They plan to repeat it endlessly as Eliot writes, “And if it rains, a closed car at four./And we shall play a game of chess,/ Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door” (lines 136-138). Although the girl wants him to stay after the consummation of their love, he instantly leaves the scene. In addition, Tiresias reports one more such event where a clerk and a typist burn with passion. They quickly ready themselves for the union as Eliot writes, “Exploring hands encounter no defense; /His vanity requires no response,/ And makes a welcome of indifference” (lines 240-242). As soon as the mechanical union ends in the typist's apartment, the clerk quickly exits the scene. Similar event occurs when the boy weeps with the girl after their union. He makes promises for the fresh start (lines 296-306). In fact, Tiresias's memory takes him back to the myth of metamorphosis of Philomel (lines 97-103). Tereus rapes his sister-in-law in absence of his wife and cuts her tongue so that she will not be able to report it to anyone. The quest for bodily gratification could lead to such a prosperous transformation of Philomel in the past: however, the people have now found themselves in the position of St. Augustine who confesses that he came to Carthage burning with carnal desires. Tiresias visions the scene thus:

To Carthage then I came
Burning burning burning burning
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest
burning (lines 307-311)

St. Augustine could find the way of controlling himself in the Bible. The modern world has undergone the erosion of Christian values and thus lost any means to control the passion. As Tiresias recalls the tragedy in the past resulting from lack of self-control, he sees the problems of the modern world through the events in the contemporary world, historical episodes, and the mythical narratives.

People lose compassion and self-sacrifice, resulting in their material quest in the modern world. The poem talks of industrial smoke of brown color in multiple instances (lines 60, 175, 208). The cruelty of the season (line 1) transfers into the people who run as if intoxicated (line 207) in search of more wealth like the Turkish trader Mr. Eugenides. People search for the roots by identifying the red rock (line 25) that symbolizes self-sacrifice. Such things reside in memory of the speaker, Tiresias. Eliot shows cultural amnesia on the part of the people after the war. Consequently, centers of civilization have lost their significance: London becomes an “Unreal City,/Under the brown fog of a winter dawn” (lines 60-61). Tiresias observes the cracks in the civilization itself as he views:

What is the city over the mountains
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
Falling towers
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
Vienna London
Unreal (lines 372-378)

Cultural impurity of the West results from lack of compassion and self-sacrifice as the primary values of the society. Tiresias recalls the purity of the water in the Renaissance when Elizabeth and Leichester would sail on the Thames (lines 279-280). The industrial setup of the society has ended in mechanization of the human heart: people have forgotten their duty to themselves and the world.

The Western society has even obliterated the vision of heroes as the emblem of self-sacrifice. Madame Sosostri is the famous clairvoyant of Europe. She cannot predict the future: Europe is in the most nebulous form in the beginning of the 1920s. Madame Sosostri has forgotten her past: she cannot see the future. Tiresias,

the blind seer identifies amnesia in European public when he tells:

Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,
And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,
Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,
Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find
The Hanged Man. Fear death by water. (lines 51-55)

The one-eyed merchant promotes the ideology of profit and loss. ‘The Hanged Man’ as the emblem of self-sacrifice has been erased from the popular memory of the people. In fact, the rush is centered on the calculation of the profit and loss only. The society that has lost the sense of historicity also loses the course of action to take in the future.

The poem is filled with the quest of the people who seek after the Chapel from which to revive self-sacrifice and self-control, ultimately leading to compassion in human beings. The spiritual quest of the people takes them to a place where they find a chapel where “Only a cock stood on the rooftree/Co co rico co co rico/ In a flash of lightening” (lines 392-394). Eliot’s political objective behind writing the poem is almost realized through the memory of Tiresias when the persona looks at the Eastward to find the remedy of loss of three central values. The East regained through the blessing of Prajapati: *Datta*, *Damatty*, and *Dayadhvam*. So, Tiresias’s question appears very significant one as he says: “I sat upon the shore/Fishing, with the arid plain behind me/Shall I at least set my lands in order?” (lines 424-426). The civilization can revitalize itself: Lil and her husband can enjoy the bliss of conjugal life or Marie can feel safe in the changed context. Moreover, people eagerly wait for Spring as the pleasant time in their life. The life can regain the normal course after the classical values that the world had lost are restored back to their place, whereby ultimately resulting in order, and “Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata./ Shantih shantih shantih” (lines 433-434). Eliot and his persona together fight hard to restore the order in the world by reinstalling the memory of the world in the general public. The loss of memory from the public does not let them understand life as a compassionate act carried out in collectivity. The individualistic game of profit, loss, and pleasure leaves no destination for the people to reach in the modern world.

All the twenty-nine images fit in a single collage in Eliot’s *The Waste Land* giving the ho-listic impression in the readers that the loss of values can be regained through the memory. After the war, Europe was devoid of three fundamental virtues: self-sacrifice, self-control, and compassion. On the one hand, Eliot sets his characters in search of these virtues; on the other, his persona begins to telescope the everyday reality of the people living their life in the world. Since they are burning with carnal desire, they cannot control themselves from physical union. The greed

for more wealth entices them to the sea: as victim of amnesia, they can neither see the plight of Phlebas nor that of Prospero in *Tempest*. The black magic of capitalism has resulted in another evil of the modern world. Tiresias struggles hard to explore the remedy for the loss in the modern world and retrospectively travels within his own soul to arrive at the ways of restoring order in his land. He works through memory in order to impart in the public the sense of the world that was developed in the past. The modern world had developed the ahistoric sense through the quest for pleasure and capital. In the meantime, the world has lost both self-sacrifice and compassion. Tiresias consciously looks eastward and learns from the experience of the Subcontinent: they had also undergone the spiritual dearth long ago and Prajapati had rescued the world by restoring the virtues in the world. Then, the humans learned the art of sacrifice, the demons the art of compassion, and the gods the art of self-control.

4. Conclusions

T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* employs memory as a tool to contemplate on the changing nature of the world. After the World War I, Europe faced crises in the erosion of human values. Basically, the fragmentation of the modern world began with the war that resulted in crises of human self. The classically functioning values were almost dysfunctional now. The centrally governing ties had almost lost their ability to bind things together. In the most nebulous state, Tiresias as the mouthpiece of Eliot delves deep down in his own memory to seek out the root cause of the devastation of the world. He searches for the meaning of human life in the 1910s, identifying the loss of memory in the public as the major cause of the suffering of the people in the world. Tiresias sees decay in the centers of the civilization as he examines the plights of European cities. The people run after sensory gratification, profit and loss, and unending exploitation of the air, land, and water through industrialization. He recalls the serene beauty of the world before the advent of industrialization as depicted in literature, history, and myth. Through the reworking of memory, Eliot and Tiresias together reconstruct the modern world to restore the lost values: sacrifice, control, and compassion in the people. Memory helps Eliot successfully revitalize the ethos of the age by reclaiming the eroded values that had almost jeopardized the whole civilization. The interplay of both memory and amnesia appears as the major dynamics of *The Waste Land*.

References

Phuyal, K. (2023).

- Cole, S. (2009). Enchantment, Disenchantment, War, Literature. *PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 124(5), 1632-1647.
- Crews, B. (1998). Tradition, Heteroglossia and T. S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land'. *Atlantis*, 20(2), 17-25.
- Eliot, T. S. (1922). [The Waste Land.] In M. Ferguson, et al (Eds.), (2005), *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (pp. 1344-1356). 5th ed., W. W. Norton & Company.
- Feindt, G., et al. (2014). Entangled Memory: Toward a Third Wave in Memory Studies. *History and Theory*, 53(1), 24-44.
- Galand, R. (1950). T. S. Eliot and the Impact of Baudelaire. *Yale French Studies*, 6, 27-34.
- Hart, M. (2007). T. S. Eliot and Modernist Studies. *American History*, 19(1), 174-189.
- Hirsch, M., & Spitzer, L. (2010). The Witness in the Archive: Holocaust Studies/Memory Studies. In S. Radstone & B. Schwarz (Eds.), *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* (pp. 390-405). Fordham University Press.
- Levin, H. (1960). What was Modernism? *The Massachusetts Review*, 1(4), 609-630.
- Nietzsche, F. (1957). *The Use and Abuse of History*. Indiana: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.
- Radstone, S., & Schwarz, B. (2010). Introduction. In: Radstone, S. & Schwarz, B. *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*. Fordham University Press, pp. 1-9.
- Soboleva, O., & Wrenn, A. (2017). 'Not a Story of Detection, of Crime and Punishment, but of Sin and Expiation': T. S. Eliot's Debt to Russia, Dostoevsky and Turgenyev. *From Orientalism to Cultural Capital: The Myth of Russia in British Literature of the 1920s* (pp. 271-310). Peter Lang AG.
- Suarez, J. A. (2001). T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land,' the Gramophone, and the Modernist Discourse Network. *New Literary History*, 32(3), 747-768.