

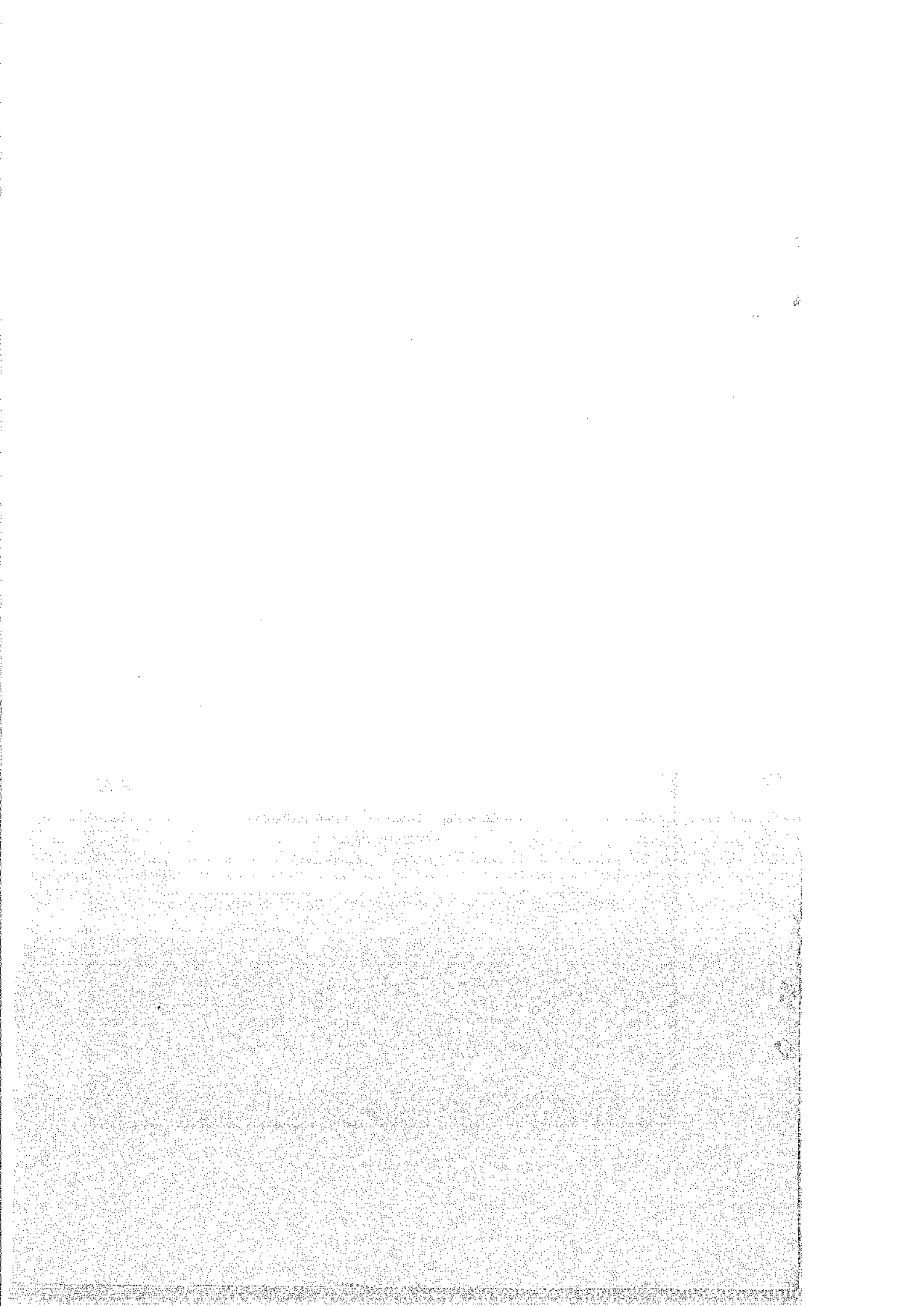


**A Stylistic Analysis of The "Paradox
Technique in T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets:
Emphasis on "Burnt Norton"**

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Introduction

Language is an instrument of communication according to which messages with the aim of ordering, persuading or informing are to be transferred from one to another. In this regard, Smith describes language as 'a medium or channel through which a speaker ... transmits information to a receiving ... listener' (1). A literary work is a medium of linguistic communication between author and implied reader.

That is, the artist adjusts language to his own purposes, and, to do so, he uses various linguistic devices to ensure that his aims would be achieved. In other words, a work of art is a craft in language and a manipulation of words, and, on a larger scale, syntactic structures.

The analysis of discourse is necessarily the study of language in communication. Such study involves contextual considerations and so it necessarily belongs to that area of linguistics called pragmatics.

Pragmatics is concerned with the three-termed relation which unites linguistic forms and the communicative functions these forms are capable of serving with the contexts or settings in which given linguistic forms can have certain functions. In other words it is the study of the use and meaning of utterances in relation to their situation.

Doing discourse analysis, Brown and Yule argue, certainly involves doing syntax and semantics but it primarily consists of doing pragmatics; (2) pragmatic facts are frequently necessary for explaining syntactic and semantic facts.

(1) B. Smith, *On the Margins of Discourse* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 1

(2) Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, p. 26

Discourse:

The term discourse applies to any sample of language used for any purpose.(1) Thus the analysis for discourse is essentially the study of language in communication, whether in a speech act, an advertisement, a news item or work of art. This analysis goes beyond the description of linguistic forms to the purposes and functions these forms are designed to serve. The functions of language generally fall in two major categories - transactional and interactional. It is not always the case, however, that any one language is entirely transactional or entirely interactional, but there is often an overlapping between the two functions.

A language, which is primarily transactional, is a language used to convey factual or propositional information. Here the speaker / writer is primarily interested in the efficient transference of information: What matters most is to convey the message clear and to the point. Thus the language of an army commander explaining to his personnel how to lay an ambush for an enemy convoy is a primarily transactional language. And so is the language of a brochure reading instructions about the use of a washing machine. Other examples of primarily transactional language could be found in the language used by a scientist describing an experiment, a football trainer explaining to a player how to shoot a penalty kick or a pilot reporting to an air control post a failure in one of his plane's engines.

(1) Geoffrey Leech, Margaret Deuchar and Robert Hoogenraad, English Grammar for Today: A new Introduction (London: Macmillan Publishers LTD, 1982).

Interactional language, on the other hand, is primarily used to maintain social relationships rather than giving information. It is to be noted here that the establishment of common viewpoints is characteristics of interactional language. The great part of spoken language is interactional. This function, however, is not totally absent written language, as there are some written genres whose purpose is not to inform, but rather maintain social relationships, e.g. thank-you letters and love letters. (1)

Linguistics and Literature :

The linguistic approach to the study of literature is based on the rationale that language is the medium through which literature is entirely realized. In this regard, Coulthard maintains that literature is the art form realized entirely through language and although evaluation and interpretation are the provinces of the literary critic, it is reasonable to suggest that a detailed analysis of authorial technique and stylistic features can be more successfully achieved within a rigorous linguistic framework(2). Relatedly, Freeman states that linguistics is as much entitled to a place in the baggage of the literary critic as history, biography, bibliography, or psychology- all disciplines which contribute new facts, new ways of looking at facts, and new kinds of theoretical commitments to the craft of studying, explaining, and evaluating literary art(1). In

(1) Gillian Brown and George Yule, *Discourse Analysis* (Cambridge: University Press, 1983).

(1) M. Coulthard, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis* (London: Longman, 1977), p. 170.

this regard, Leech and Short point out that

Examining the language of a literary text can be a means to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the writer's artistic achievement(2).

Approaches to Studying Language:

On one hand, formalists tend to regard language as a primarily psychological phenomenon and, accordingly, linguistic universals are derived from a common genetic linguistic inheritance of the human species. On the other hand, functionalists tend to regard language as primarily societal. They tend to explain language universal as being derived from the universalities of language uses in societies. In this regard, Leech maintains that :

To take one point of difference it would be foolish to deny that it is a psychological phenomenon, and equally foolish to deny that it is a social phenomenon ... The correct approach to language is both formalist and functionalist(3)

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- (1) D. Freeman, *Linguistics and Literary Style* (New York: Holt, 1970), p. 3
 - (2) G. Leech and M. Short, *Style in Fiction* (London, New York, 1981), p. 5
 - (3) G. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics* (London and New York, 1983) p. 46

This means that arguments of both approaches should be borne in mind without holding one school superior to the other. Also, any balanced approach to language must give as much weight to meaning as to form. Jacobs and Rosenbaum point out that the speaker of a language intuitively associates meanings with particular language forms.(1)

Literary Texts and Stylistics:

The importance of conducting a study of literary language by means of linguistics has taken the form of 'Discourse Analysis'. In fact, the application of linguistic characteristics to literary texts has proved that literature has linguistic form and that some sort of harmony exists between linguistics and literature. Stylistics which is a branch of linguistics investigates the relationship between style and literary function or the application of linguistic characteristics to literary language.

Stylistic analysis of a given text which functions through linguistics, aims at the analysis of discourse in such text. In this regard, Chapman states that the distinctive usages of languages are known as styles and 'Linguistic study of different styles is called stylistic'(2) .

The function of stylistics is to expound interpretations already existing within the

(1) R. Jacobs and R. Rosenbaum, Transformations, Style, and Meaning (Toronto, 1971), p. 1.

(2) R. Chapman, Linguistics and Literature (London, 1973), p. 11

context of a comprehensive unit of linguistic performance. Although it is a branch of linguistics, stylistics differs from linguistics. Linguistics is concerned with the examination of a sentence while stylistics focuses on the investigation of a bigger unit of linguistic performance incorporated within the framework of discourse or an overall text. In this regard, Leech states that style is 'the linguistic characteristic of a particular text' (p. 12). This means that style indicates the route in which language operates in a given context. It is a term used to show the function of language in spoken and written discourse as well as in the literary and non literary fields. In its wide sense, the word 'style' also covers the way of writing of any author. It is an instrument by which a linguist could examine the choices worked out by an author in a particular context. Commenting on the importance of style, Leech (1983) quotes Wesley saying that:

Style is the dress of thought;
a modest dress, neat, but not
gaudy, will true critics
please (p.18).

Carter points out that there are two branches of stylistics, namely linguistic stylistic and literary stylistics. The first branch studies ways of analyzing samples of style and language, especially the non-literary language. The second branch studies methods of conceiving, interpreting and estimating the literary works, by virtue of criticism. In this regard, Leech (1981) states that stylistics is simply defined as the linguistic study of style (and) simply (is) an exercise in describing what use is made of language' (p. 13).

Any kind of style to be undertaken by an

author is to be called 'register'. In this regard, Chapman (1973) maintains that it is highly important that a writer chooses registers aligning the situations they depict.

Moreover, two major things are to be investigated in the processing of texts; the first is the universe of discourse, that is relevant to the world of the writer and his expectations about the extent with which the reader is to be in touch with his world. The second is the words and expressions used in a text.

Register can be subdivided into three categories of language use - mode, tenor and domain.(1)

Mode

Mode has to do with the effects of the medium through which the language is transmitted. A distinction could thus be made between the auditory and the visual medium, that is, between speech and writing.

The view that written language is better than spoken language has become no longer valid. From the linguistic point of view, written language is not basically more or less superior to spoken language, but each has different functions to perform, uses different forms and shows different linguistic features.

Writing has the advantage of allowing for a wider range of communication over time and space, as it stores and accumulates knowledge

(1) See a discussion on the applicability of the three categories of language use to the analysis of literary texts in John Spencer and Michael J. Gregory, "An Approach to the Study of Style," Linguistics and Style, pp. 87-91.

over ages in records independent of the memories of those who keep the records. It is this function -storage- which has led to the development of societies and the promotion of intellect since early times, and without this advantageous function for both the writer and the reader society would have never worked as it currently does. The writer can carefully plan and revise what he wants to communicate. The reader, on the other hand, can process the written material at leisure, rereading parts and omitting, a characteristic which is not available in spoken language.

In literate cultures, speech is used to maintain social relationships and integrate individuals into social groups. Yet there are instances when speech is used to transmit factual information. A news bulletin on the radio, for example, is not meant to maintain social relationships of any kind, but is aimed at the efficient transference of information, and the language is often straightforward.

Whereas speech allows for quick and direct communication with an immediate feedback from the addressee, the writer cannot monitor the effect of his message on the reader and simply has to imagine his reaction.

To sum up, the major difference between the function of speech and the function of writing is that speech is essentially meant to be transitory, while writing is meant to be relatively permanent.

Spoken and written language also differ from each other in terms of manner of production. A speaker, for example, can make use of such features as rhythm, intonation, voice quality effects including sighs and laughter, and postural and gestural systems, which are absent in written language. Written

language, on the other hand, makes use of such features as punctuation, paragraphing and the capitalization of letters, all of which lack in speech.

As for as linguistic forms are concerned, speech differs from writing in many respects. At the lexical level, the vocabulary used in speech is generally simple and more informal than that used in writing. It is because speech is mostly used in informal situations that its vocabulary tends to be more informal.

The grammatical structures used in speech also differ from those used in writing. Leech and Svartvik remark that "the grammar of spoken sentences is simpler and less strictly constructed than the grammar of written sentences".(1) Spoken language for example generally contains less subordination and a smaller number of clause elements compared to written language. Another grammatical feature to be considered in the comparison of spoken and written discourse is the noun phrase structure. In written English it is quite common to use heavily premodified noun phrases whereas in speech it is rare to find more than two premodifying adjectives, and speakers tend to construct short chunks of speech so that only one predicate is attached to a given referent at a time:

In spoken a biggish cat +
tabby + with torn ears".(2)

In spoken language, the occurrence of passive constructions is generally restrained

(1) Geoffrey Leech and Jan Svartvik, A Communicative Grammar of English (English Language Book Society and Longman Group Ltd, 1979), p. 23.

(2) Brown and Yule, Discourse Analysis, p. 16.

and active declarative sentences are normally found. In written language, the use of passive sentences which allows non-attribution of agency is common. In speech, active constructions with indeterminate group agents are noticeable.

The organization of writing is different from the organization of speech, and this is reflected in both types. In spontaneous speech, it is usually difficult to delimit sentences, whereas in writing complete linguistic units are normally discernible. Constructions in speech are often incomplete and unfinished, yet understandable to the addressee. This use of incomplete structures could be attributed to the fact that the shared knowledge of the participants in a conversation make complete structures rather unnecessary. Brown and Yule remark:

The Speaker is typically less explicit than the writer :
I'm so tired (because) I had to walk all the way home. In written language rhetorical organizers of larger stretches of discourse appear, like firstly, more important than and in conclusion. These are rare in spoken language.

The inexplicitness mentioned in the quotation above could be attributed to several reasons. First, a speaker can make full use of the paralinguistic features and voice quality effects to convey extra information. Second, by pointing to objects or people or even by a gaze direction, a speaker can supply his intended referent without using language explicitly, a speaker, for instance, may say "terrific", looking at a car, and can be

understood by his addressee. Third, the speaker relies more on the hearer's understanding of the context and on his ability to interrupt if he fails to understand. This consideration is absent in written language since an immediate feedback from the reader is not accessible to the writer, who has to imagine the reaction of his addressee. Inexplicitness is reflected in the speakers' extensive use of rather generalized vocabulary such as "that sort of thing, stuff, kind of, things like that, alot of, got, do, thing, nice, etc...." Also, the frequent use of pronouns such as 'it', 'this' and 'that' marks the speakers' tendencies towards inexplicitness.

In written language, on the other hand, a set of metalinguistic markers is used to define relationships between clauses (when, while, besides, moreover, however, in spite of, etc ...). In spoken language, it is normal to find a large number of prefabricated fillers. Such fillers like "erm, um, erll, I think, of course, you know," mark the speaker's hesitation as to what he is going to say next. By using them, the speaker attempts to prevent his interlocutor from intervening and taking his conversation turn. These fillers are naturally absent in writing, as the writer has no fear of his addressee interrupting him.

Another aspect of comparison between speech and writing is repetitiveness. Brown and Yule remark that:

The speaker frequently repeats the same syntactic form several times over, as this fairground inspector does: I look at fire extinguishers + I look at fire look at fire exits + I look at what gangways are available + I look at electric cables what + are they properly earthed + are they properly covered.

Repetitiveness in speech is not confined to the same syntactic structures being repeated over, but to the information packed as well. This is mainly due to the typical transitory nature of speech and to the fact that the addressee cannot refer back to what has gone before.

Speech also tends to exhibit more interactional features than writing. These features invite the active participation of the addressee, such as in tag, questions, imperatives, second-person pronouns, etc....

e.g. : You know my address Ali, don't you ?

In speech there are false starts which are corrected by the speaker as he goes on. These occur when the speaker changes his mind about an idea he was going to say. Conversely, in normal writing, there are no false starts, as the writer can cross out a word or a phrase in the privacy of his study when he happens to change his mind. Another related point is that speech sometimes fails to track down grammatical structures to the end, and the result is often a grammatical blend like: Would you please tell me where did Smith go ? Here the sentence ends in a direct question although it starts as an indirect question.

Tenor

The tenor of discourse is generally concerned with the relationship between the addressor and addressee in a given situation, and with the degree of formality governed by this situation. The notion of tenor is particularly important in analyzing novels, since a particular tenor chosen by a writer to define his relationship with the reader incurs particular linguistic features that characterize his work. The narrative is a case in a point. First - person narrative in the

novel inclines the language more towards the informal than does third - person narrative. Besides, a change in tenor in dialogue marks a change in the relationship between characters; and, as Spencer and Gregory remark "since tenor of discourse is situation-tied the linguistic markers characteristic of particular points on the tenor scale can be used to evoke situations and define relationships."(1)

The tenor of discourse can be described in terms of formality, politeness and impersonality.

Formality characterizes the tenor when the relationship between the addressor and the addressee is distant and official, as in a legal document, whereas a tenor will be informal if the relationship between the addressor and addressee is close and intimate, as in a conversation between a man and his wife. The notion of formality should better be seen as a continuum or scale, with no points between the two poles of extreme formality and extreme informality that can be defined with any precision. In literature, the tenor can be formal or informal pending the author's intended relationship with his reader. According to James D. Gordon:

The literary style varies according to the writer's purpose and his reading public. Therefore it is sometimes formal, that is, very obviously self conscious and mannered, scrupulously

(1) Spencer and Gregory, "An approach to the Study of Style," Linguistics and Style, p. 89.

preserving the standard spelling and employing variety of complexity of sentence structure. At other times it is informal, approaching within limits the ease and familiarity of the speech of educated people.(1)

The above quotation point out to the structural complexity of formal language. In formal language, the vocabulary is often polysyllabic and calssical and there is a tendency to use words of Latin origin. As for the syntactic structure of formal language, the sentences are generally complex with clause elements, the noun phrases often include many modifiers in addition to heavy subordination. Informal language, on the other hand, is characterized by simpler monosyllabic and native vocabulary. "Get" is used in informal English rather than "obtain".

Like formality, politeness and impersonality have an effect on the language used in communication. Familiarity between the addressor and addressee govern the scale of politeness. If the speaker and hearer do not know each other well, they will tend to use polite language. Respectful terms of address which are commonplace in polite language, such as "Sir" are normally absent in the language used between friends or people familiar to each other. Direct requests in familiar language are used rather than the indirect requests common in polite language. For example, "Give me that book" is to be found in familiar tenor, while "Would you be so kind as to give me this book?" would be found in a polite tenor.

(1) James D. Gordon, The English Language: An Historical Introduction (New York: Thomas J. Orwell Company, Inc., 1972), p. 5.

Domain

The term domain is concerned with how language varies according to the function it fulfills and the activity in which it plays a part. The term has been referred to by some linguists as field and province. The domain of a text relates to its subject-matter and the linguistic features which may be associated with it. Such features would be found to recur regardless of the nature of participants in the communication act. It has already been mentioned that the functions of language generally fall in two major categories, transactional and interactional. The term transactional has been referred to as representative, referential, ideational and descriptive, while the term interactional has been referred to as expressive, emotive, interpersonal and social-expressive.(1) A close look at language, however, will reveal that language is not merely used to convey information or maintain social relationships among people, but it is used to fulfill a variety of functions. According to Leech, Deuchar and Hoogenraad:

Language can be used to convey information, express feelings, persuade someone to do something, make contact with someone else, write poetry or talk about language itself. These functions can be called respectively referential, expressive, conative, phatic, poetic or metalinguistic.(2)

(1) Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis* p. 1.

(2) Leech, Deuchar and Hoogenraad, English Grammar For Today, p. 150

Language can fulfill a variety of functions at the same time. For example, "it's pretty cold in here," could be referential, expressive and conative: it conveys information, expresses a feeling and aims at persuading someone to turn on a heater or close a window. Generally, the language used in a given situation has a dominant function and other subordinate functions. In the previous example, the dominant function is referential and the subordinate expressive and conative. Various domains of language may be cording to their dominant functions. The dominant function of journalism, for instance, is referential, while the dominant function of advertising is conative. In non-literary texts, the domain shows marked influences upon grammar and lexis. The notion of domain is important in examining the language of literature, as the literary artist can draw upon all possible domains and in some cases wishes to use the linguistic resources of certain specialized domains to achieve a poetic or dramatic effect. Referring to the applicability of the domain dimension to literary texts, Gregory and Spencer observe :

Since the literary artist is free to draw upon all possible fields of discourse, and in certain instances may wish to utilize the linguistic resources of certain specialized fields for dramatic, poetic or evocative purposes, this dimension may need to be applied in examining the language of literature. In long texts, there may be shifts in the field of discourse, and these will have linguistic consequences.(1)

(1) Gregory and Spencer, "An Approach to the Study of Style," Linguistics and Style, P. 87.

"Paradox" : What is it ?

Paradox as a concept has become a recognized technique that is firmly established in English literature, especially in the field of poetry. The Metaphysical poets were the first to apply the concept as an instrumental medium in their poetry. They intensified its use to the extent that it became an inherent quality that eventually became related by name to the kind of poetry they wrote.

In the twentieth century and due to the ever-growing complexities of our modern life, poets turned to the concept and used it as an expression of their inner and outer conflicts. The growing awareness of the conflicting nature of modern thought led to the preoccupation of poets and critics to resolve the disparate attitude in modern literature :

The movement of twentieth century philosophy from casual modes of thought towards an acceptance of contraries and oppositions, seems to be reflected accurately in the present critical preoccupation with paradox in literature.(1)

Paradox is originally a Greek term : para, against; doxa, opinion. This original meaning of the term implies that it involves contradiction. That which is "against opinion" is in direct contradiction to common sense and logical modes of thinking. However, the use of paradox as a statement which is merely contrary

(1) R. Carter, A Question of interpretation ... (Theo D'haen. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1983) P. 51.

to common opinion or belief has been rare since the seventeenth century and afterwards. This means that the technique has since been used differently. Its application has been altered to express different meanings other than absolute contradiction of opinion or belief.

Definition (2) a of paradox in the Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language states that it is "a statement or sentiment that is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense and yet perhaps true in fact." In this respect, a paradox is only apparently contradictory and that when deeply investigated is likely to contain a profound or higher truth. This is the conception of paradoxical usage which has been applied since the Metaphysical era until the twentieth century. In most English poetry, the technique of paradox has been used not merely to express contradictory ideas, but to endeavour to reach, through this medium, ulterior or hidden truths. This is largely true of Eliot's Four Quartets in which the paradoxical statements are apparently contradictory and it is the reader's task to resolve these contradictions in meanings in order to reach profound truths. In other words, in each paradox there is an apparent contradiction which the reader should endeavour to reconcile.

The apparent contradiction of a paradoxical statement and the profounder truth which underlies this contradiction is expressed further by the Oxford English Dictionary in its second definition of paradox :

A statement or proposition which on the face of it seems self-contradictory, absurd or at variance with common sense, though, on investigation or when explained, it may prove to

be well-founded (or, according to some, it is essentially true).

Another definition which enhances the apparent contradiction of paradox on the one hand, and its underlying truth on the other, states that a paradox is "a statement which, though it appears self-contradictory, contains a basis of truth which reconciles the seeming opposition."

Related to the technique of paradox is the term oxymoron. An oxymoron is a type of paradox. In word combination, it is different from paradox, yet in function, it is quite similar. It has its origin in the Greek language: oxys, sharp; moros, foolish. It was so called because an oxymoron appears "sharp" and "foolish" at first sight e.g. "cruel kindness".

The Webster's International Dictionary defines oxymoron as follows:

a combination for epigrammatic effect of contradictory or incongruous words (as cruel kindness, laborious idleness).

This definition, however, is partly true because the contradiction is only apparent and that, like paradox, there is an underlying truth behind the use of this medium. The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, on the other hand, accurately, defines the term as "a figure of speech which combines two seemingly contradictory elements. It is a form of condensed paradox." The two elements of an oxymoronic expression are, therefore, only "seemingly contradictory" as the encyclopedia remarks. The term is, moreover, referred to as "a form of condensed paradox" which means that

in use there is a hidden truth which must be resolved from the apparent contradiction of the two words which constitute its structural whole.

Paradox in Poetry:

The technique of paradox has witnessed a growing appreciation in modern poetry. Critics have come to regard the technique as a medium which is capable of delving into hidden truths that are indispensable to human experience :

paradox is so intrinsic to human nature and life that poetry rich in paradox is valued as the reflection of central truths of human experience.

Although this statement is somewhat far-fetched, it is true in light of the instrumental role which the technique of paradox performs in poetry. Poets, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, were eager to find a language which is suitable for revealing the hidden, deeply-felt truths behind common, everyday situations. In his preface to the second edition of Lyrical Ballads Wordsworth states that his purpose is to "choose incidents and situations from common life" and to treat them so that "ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect." It is clear that wordsworth was conscious of the paradoxical aspect of life and the necessity to manipulate language in order to reveal that the common could have a fresh aspect and that prose could be used poetically in order to show that new aspect of life.

The functional role of paradox is aptly stated by El-Batanouny as follows:

A paradoxical expression reconciles contradiction, blurs distinctions of conventional

epistemology, or dissolves traditional categories of ideas in order to get at an underlying truth, a higher level of truth.(1)

The effect of this will be a mature awareness of life and its machinations; a further step on the road to comprehending the incomprehensible and conceiving the inconceivable. In this sense, a paradox, placed within a multi-levelled context, can produce more than one possible interpretation.

Paradox has a further function apart from resolving and giving expression to the ever-growing complexities of our life. This function is also provided by El-Batanouny (1990).

.... The obtrusive nature of self-contradiction calls the attention of the reader to the paradoxical expression as a literary device and thus produces an aesthetic distancing.

The force of paradoxical expression prevents the reader from being completely absorbed into the work of art. In this way, The reader manages to retain the power of his concentration which in turn enables him to probe the ulterior meanings within both the paradoxical expression and the whole work of art.

(1) G. El-Batanouny, Readers' responses to paradoxical expressions in literature: A Linguistic Analysis and Pragmatic Interpretations, (ph. D Thesis, University of Lancaster, 1990), p. 83.

T.S. Eliot and the Paradox "Technique"

Two Greek epigraphs are given by Eliot to signal the complex bulk of the *Four Quartets*.⁽¹⁾ The second of these epigraphs is paradoxical in structure. Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher, is quoted as saying that "the way up and the way down are one and the same". This paradoxical epigraph is important in the sense that it foreshadows the series of paradoxes that are to follow and which will constitute the basic language structure of the poem. Also, it throws light on vital themes and patterns, some of which are paradoxical in nature, and which are to figure largely in the course of the poem's development.

This epigraph of Heraclitus "presumably refers to the transmutation of the four elements in a constant cyclical movement : all things are in perpetual flux".⁽²⁾ Heraclitus believes that the world is made up of four elements : air, earth, water and fire and that these elements undergo constant change.

There does seem, however, little relationship between this theory of the transmutation of the four elements and Heraclitus' epigraph, "the way up and the way down are one and the same". But the relationship is pertinent if the matter is pursued further. Heraclitus clarifies the point concerning the constant permutation of the four elements:

Fire lives in the death of earth,

(1) In *The complete Poems and Play and Collected Poems 1909- 1962* the two epigraphs appear immediately below "Burnt Norton". In the published edition of the *Four Quartets*, however, they are used to designate the whole poem.

(2) Bay-Petersen, "T. S. Eliot and Einstein".

and air lives in the death of fire;
water lives in the death of air,
earth in the death of water. (1)

In this sense, Heraclitus' four elements "move perpetually through the scale, downward from fire to air to water to earth, and upward from earth to fire". (2) So, the way up of the four elements on a scale of importance from earth to fire is exactly similar to the way down of these elements. Each element lives on the destruction of the other element. It both destroys one element on the way up and is destroyed by another on the way down. Thus, destruction is inevitable on both ways. This is how Heraclitus manages to resolve his paradoxical statement which Eliot uses as an epigraph to the *Four Quartets*.

In movement II of "Little Gidding", Eliot makes use of the destruction of Heraclitus' four elements in relation to other themes :

The death of hope and despair,
This is the death of air.

Immediately following these lines, Eliot continues :

Dead water and dead sand
Contending for the upper hand
The parched eviscerate soil
Gapes at the vanity of toil,
.....

(1) Quoted in Reibetanz, *A Reading of Eliot's Four Quartets*, p. 21.

(2) Reibetanz, *A Reading of Eliot's Four Quartets*, p. 21.

This is the death of earth.

Also, referring to the destructions of pastures and buildings caused by water and fire, Eliot comments :

This is the death of water and fire.

These elements, whether the cause of destruction or are themselves destroyed, combine in this part of the poem to be the victims of man and his actions. Wars, building constructions, the pulling down of old houses and air pollution are consequences of man's interference with the elements of nature. So, Heraclitus' statement which refers to the "tension that exists as a result of the upward and downward pulls in nature"⁽¹⁾ is used here by Eliot to signify the role of man, no doubt essential, in implementing the forces which bring about these "upward and downward pulls in nature".

This understanding of Heraclitus' statement leads to a further examination of the significance of the four elements in the poem. Each of the four sections in the *Four Quartets* corresponds to one of the elements : "Burnt Norton" to air; "East Coker" to earth; "The Dry Salvages" to water and "Little Gidding" to fire :

[Eliot] had come to see the seasons and the four elements as an organizing element in the sequence of four poems, and that the underlying theme of the last poem was to be Pentecostal. (1)

(1) B. Rajan (ed.), *T. S. Eliot : A Study of His Writings by Several Hands* (New York : Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1949), p. 100.

Of the four elements, Heraclitus views "fire as the highest and most important, to which the others return cyclically".⁽²⁾ In the poem, Eliot also adheres to the same view. Fire is the most important element which he chooses to develop in the last section. It is the primary substance which controls all the other elements. It also assumes various symbols, some of which are instrumental to the formulation of the concept of paradox in this section.

The paradoxical statement of Heraclitus evolves another pattern in the *Four Quartets*. The constant change which results from the permutation of the four elements is counterbalanced by another theory: the idea of a fixed, stable eternity. In the midst of a world marked by perpetual flux, Eliot manages, through moments of illumination, to achieve a state of eternity. The experience of a moment of illumination triumphs over time and change through achieving a moment of complete fixity and stillness. The flow of time ceases to exist as the moment of illumination is captured.

Eliot, moreover, uses Heraclitus' paradoxical statement to evoke the soul's relation to God as exemplified in the doctrines of St. John of the Cross, the Spanish mystic. St. John uses the figure of a ladder to describe the relation of the human soul to God :

Communications which are indeed of God have this property, they humble the soul and at the same time exalt

(1) Gardner, *The Composition of Four Quartets*, p. 157.

(2) H. Z. Maccoby, "A Commentary on 'Burnt Norton', II, *Notes and Queries*, Vol. CCXV (February, 1970), p. 55.

it. For upon this road to go down is
to go up and to go up to go down;
for he that humbles himself is
exalted and he that exalts himself
is humbled. (1)

So, the image of a ladder offers possibilities of ascent and descent, and both movements are paradoxically similar to the soul's progression towards God. The statement of Heraclitus, "the way up and the way down are one and the same" is similar to the description of St. John's concerning the divine communication of the soul.

Though Heraclitus' statement does, therefore, refer to the permutation of the four elements, as shown earlier, Eliot uses it also to shed light on St. John's conception of the soul's relationship to God. Eliot, in "Burnt Norton" V, mentions St. John's "Figure of the ten stairs", but not to describe the soul's progress towards divine union. He refers to it in relation to one's progression towards experiencing the moment of illumination. Just like the soul's divine communication, the moment of illumination, which is to capture the essential truth of a particular moment or of an entire existence, can also be achieved either through reaching out for this moment which is the way up, or abandoning oneself to it which is the way down.

Eliot's use, therefore, of Heraclitus' paradoxical statement as an epigraph is multi-levelled. It refers to diverse themes and

(1) Quoted in Raymond Preston, *Four Quartets Rehearsed* (New York : Haskell House Publishers Ltd., 1972), p. 20.

Also, cf. Donne's "Hyime to God my God ..." in which the poet says : "Therefore that he may raise, the Lord throws down".

doctrines which he treats in the *Four Quartets*.

"Burnt Norton" opens with a series of paradoxes:

Time present and time past

Are both perhaps present in time
future,

And time future contained in time
past.

If all time is eternally present.

All time is unredeemable. (1)

The philosophical nature of those paradoxes render them difficult to apprehend at first sight. The problem arises from an inability to account for the co-existence of different aspects of the time sequence. How can the present and past exist in the future? How can the future be "contained" in the past? Also, how can all time be "eternally present"? We, as human beings bound to time, experience only the present moment. The past exists behind us and the future is yet to come. It is, then, impossible to experience the three basic units of time simultaneously.

One possible interpretation for this dilemma is that Eliot, in these lines, is presenting "a mechanistic view of time sequence, what the poet later calls 'the enchainment of past and future'". (1) Everything is pre-determined. The past contains the seeds of all future events. In this respect, the present and future pre-exist in the past and in consequence, the past exists

(1) All references to the *Four Quartets* throughout the thesis are taken from Helen Gardner, *The Composition of Four Quartets* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1978).

in the future.

If this interpretation is valid, however, then it is presented here to be repudiated by the following vision in the rose garden in which time sequence ceases to exist. The vision of the rose garden is the moment of illumination; the moment in which the determinism of time is conquered. This is not an experience peculiar to Eliot alone. It is, to a large extent, true that "we all have experienced special moments of understanding and vision from a perspective quite beyond time".⁽²⁾ So, the visionary moment of illumination in the rose garden in which a fixed, eternal moment is captured, is contrasted to the deterministic theory of time which is presented in these opening lines.

Another possible interpretation is that the poet is dislocating the three basic units of time in order to achieve a state of eternity:

Time is sometimes linear or progressive, sometimes cyclical, sometimes chaotic; it is often understood, though not necessarily experienced, as a function of eternity.⁽¹⁾

Here, time is experienced, not merely understood "as a function of eternity". This state of eternity is the moment of illumination which, as mentioned before, is experienced in a moment which exists on a higher scale than the natural flow of time. So, the simultaneity of time, stated in the opening lines, marks the visionary insight experienced by the individual in rare moments.

In this respect, the opening lines match and

(1) Reibetanz, *A Reading of Eliot's Four Quartets*, P. 23.

(2) Reibetanz, *A Reading of Eliot's Four Quartets*, p. 24.

lead to the moment in the rose garden. Both are visionary experiences in which Eliot "collapses the divisions of time, giving us the eternal presence of all time, or the aspect of eternity."⁽²⁾

It is possible that Eliot may have been influenced by St. Augustine in writing the opening lines of "Burnt Norton". The interrogative form which St. Augustine uses to comment on the three basic units of time suggests the difficulty to acknowledge the idea of the co-existence of time:

Who will see that all time is driven
back by the future, that all the
future is consequent on the past,
and all past and future are created
and take their course from that
which is ever present?⁽¹⁾

It is Eliot who endeavours to "see" this implied simultaneity of time which St. Augustine suggests. Through the moment of illumination which surpasses time, he tries to achieve a state of eternity.

However, the last two lines of the opening series of paradoxes, "If All time is eternally present/All time is unredeemable", are Eliot's rein against any further development in the understanding of the simultaneity of time. Although we may acknowledge the co-existence of past, present and future, through experiencing a moment of illumination, "we must not go further

(1) Karl Malkoff, "Eliot and Elytis : Poet of time, Poet of Space," *Comparative literature*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 3 (Summer, 1984), p. 239.

(2) George Williamson, *A Reader's Guide to T. S. Eliot : A poem-by-Poem Analysis* (London : Thames and Hudson, 1980), p. 211.

and deny time altogether."⁽²⁾ If we do, then we confirm the non-existence of any development in our personal history or the history of the world it means that we do not even grow older as time progresses which, of course, is absurd. The simultaneity of time must be viewed within the context of Eliot's subject matter.

Another powerful paradox occurs a few lines later:

What might have been and what has been

Point to one end, which is always present.

The paradox underlying those two lines stems from the possibility that the "might have been" can influence the present. How can events which we wished to achieve, but failed to, along with what actually happened determine the course of our lives? The majority will agree to the fact that "'What might have been', according to the usual notion of time as succession, should by definition be impossible, for its moment of possible fulfilment is gone".⁽¹⁾ One, then, cannot possibly go back to a particular moment of time and choose a different road than the one which he did then and which has brought him where he is now.⁽²⁾

By these paradoxical lines, Eliot is implying that "the might have been" attains a kind of existence just as palpable as "what has been" and that both have come to influence the poet's present life:

(1) Quoted in Rotsaert, "The Force of an Influence," p. 147.

(2) H.Z. Maccoby, "A Commentary on 'Burnt Norton'," *Notes and Queries*, Vol. I (1968), p. 50.

'What might have been' is what was not but should have been, and 'what has been' ought not to have been but was and is. The past and the consequences of what was not, as well as what was, cannot be avoided. (1)

Through the imaginative power of the moment of illumination, Eliot captures "the missed opportunity" (2) of his past life and concretizes it through his experience in the rose garden. The ecstasy and thrill of the rose garden are the unfulfilled possibilities which the poet now regrets and tries to capture through the moment of illumination.

In the rose garden, which is the "might have been", the poet undergoes an ecstatic vision which transfers him into an entirely new form of existence; an existence in which past, present and future converge into one. The poet suddenly finds himself in an imaginary rose garden with a companion, possibly a female companion, who probably is the concretization of his unfulfilled love. Then, a bird, which evidently is a subjective symbol for the moment of illumination, cries: "find them, find them.". The bird most probably is here referring to the unfulfilled desires of the poet and his companion. As they walk in the garden, they witness creatures, "dignified" yet "invisible". Again, this is probably a reference to the "might have been". The air is vibrant, the music unheard, the eyebeam unseen, the pool dry and

(1) Smith, T. S. *Eliot's Poetry and Plays*, p. 258.

(2) C. A. Bodelsen, *T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets*, Second Edition (Copenhagen : Rosenkilde & Bagger, 1966), p. 44.

the next moment it is "filled with water out of sunlight." The experience in the rose garden is shadowy and indistinct because it never took place, but is evoked through the moment of illumination. So, the poetry is not clearcut or definite, but "speculative and wishful, loaded with an intense nostalgia for something that never happened."⁽¹⁾ "Go, Go, Go, " the bird then says to the poet and his companion. The visionary experience has ended and the poet has to leave the "what might have been" and return to present existence.

After this experience, the poet repeats the previous paradoxes:

Time past and time future

What might have been and what has been

Point to one end, which is always present.

The paradoxes here, however, occur after the poet has taken valid steps towards resolving them. The past and future are reconciled by the moment of illumination in the present because it is only in the present that this vision can be fulfilled. Also, Eliot has demonstrated, through the experience in the rose garden, that the missed opportunity and what actually happened can have the same impact on one's present life. The more the poet realizes the sense of regret involved in missing a past opportunity, the more regretful he feels about it.⁽²⁾

Harry, in *The Family Reunion*, expresses a similar paradoxical attitude towards the "what

(1) R. L. Houghton, "Eliot's First Quartet," *The Cambridge Quarterly*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3 (1989), p. 246.

(2) Gardner, *The Composition of Four Quartets*, p. 57.

might have been" and "what has been":

I was not there, you were not there,
only our phantasms

And what did not happen is as true
as what did happen

O my dear, And you walked the little
door

And I ran to meet you in the
rose-garden. (1)

Here, as in "Burnt Norton", the protagonist is speculating on what his life would have been like, if at some earlier point of time, he had opened another door." (2)

The details of the experience in the rose garden are paradoxical. For a moment that has no actual existence, but is evoked through the visionary power of illumination, what medium can better explore its nature than the concept of paradox !

We sense dignity in presences that are invisible, and we sense movement but without pressure. The air is vibrant with music, but the music exists on some plane that we can sense, though we cannot share. So the music remains hidden in the shrubbery and unheard, but we know that the bird is singing in response

(1) David Perkins, "Rose Garden to Midwinter Spring : Achieved Faith in Four Quartets," *Modern Language Quarterly*, Vol. XXII, XXIII (1981 - 82), p. 43.

(2) Houghton, "Eliot's First Quartet," p. 242.

to it. (1)

These are paradoxical details experienced by the poet and his companion. They enhance the shadowy aspect of the experience and help to create an indefinite and mysterious atmosphere.

In this respect, the paradoxes in the experience of the rose garden are instrumental in conveying its true meaning:

In the description of this garden the center of its meaning is found in the antitheses and paradoxes of the heard and the unheard, the seen and the unseen, the contradictory sense of something experienced and something missed. (2)

However, the detailed description of the rose garden and the experience of the two lovers in it are not the result of introspective indulgence or wishful thinking on the part of the poet. Immediately preceding the moment in the rose garden Eliot states:

But
to what purpose
Disturbing the dust on a bowl of
rose-leaves
I do not know.

Rekindling past memories and thoughts of the "what might have been" will not be of much avail. The poet is aware that "the past cannot be changed, however vividly its memory and the

(1) T. S. Eliot, *The Family Reunion* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1969), p. 151.

(2) C.A. Bodelsen, "Two 'Difficult' Poems by T. S. Eliot," *English Studies*, Vol. XXXIV (1953), p. 20.

"memory" of what might have been are present to him."⁽¹⁾ This experience is evoked to see if the "what might have been" can determine the course of the poet's life in the same way as the "what has been" did. Actually, Eliot comes to understand that "the experience in the rose garden remains as a guide to transcendence."⁽²⁾

In the first movement of "Burnt Norton" Eliot explores his experience of the moment of illumination. In the second movement he provides the poetic definition for that moment. This occurs in the form of a powerful paradox at the beginning of the second section of this movement:

At the still point of the turning
world.

This is the main paradox in this movement out of which spring the subsequent paradoxes. A turning world can have a "still point": its axis. But although this axis is "still" while this world rotates around itself, this is not the case when this same world rotates around a controlling star like the sun, for example. But Eliot's "still point" is paradoxically fixed all the time. Its position is never altered or changed.

The "still point" is the moment of illumination, the vision which is experienced in the midst of an ever-changing and "turning world". It is a moment experienced by the poet in order to "reconcile time with eternity and motion with stillness."⁽¹⁾ In this way, the "still point" is the moment in which a state of eternity is reached and in which our temporal time ceases to exist. This is opposed to the

(1) Reibetanz, *A Reading of Eliot's Four Quartets*, p. 27.

(2) Williamson, *A Reader's Guide to T. S. Eliot*, p. 212.

change and transience which marks our present world.

A few lines later in this section, Eliot remarks that through the "still point" the individual experiences "both a new world/And the old made explicit", "the completion of ... partial ecstasy", "The resolution of ... partial horror". So, the "still point" can charge the individual with a new perceptive quality:

It enables him to experience a higher reality, where happiness has a completeness which ordinary life does not offer; where reality is grasped as a oneness, and not fragmentarily as in our ordinary existence; and where the horror of evil and suffering is resolved because it is seen to be only a fragment of the whole?⁽²⁾

The paradox of the "still point" evokes the image of the wheel with which Eliot was so much fascinated. The circular movement of the wheel describes the time flow of our mortal existence, while the axis of the wheel designates the moment of illumination which functions in a state of fixity and stillness:

The moving rim of the wheel symbolizes the cyclical process of change in the temporal world, which is transmuted at the still point into an unchanging pattern of divine harmony. Thus in a sublime paradox,

(1) Houghton, "Eliot's First Quartet," p. 246.

(2) Jewel Spears Brooker, "F. H. Bradley's Doctrine of Experience in T. S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land' and 'Four Quartets'," *Modern philosophy*, Vol. 1, No. 77 (August, 1979), p. 157.

the still point reconciles the flux with the eternal, matter with spirit, end with beginning, and death with birth. (1)

Several negative paradoxes, then, qualify the "still point". They accumulate consecutively. The "still point" or the moment of illumination occurs in a state which is "Neither flesh nor fleshness". In other words, not in our overtly materialistic world or in meaningless void. It occurs on a third plane of existence only felt by the individual who experiences it alone.

It occurs "Neither from nor towards". It is not tied to past, present or future and, therefore, does not function within time-bound reality. It transcends temporal time and attains an eternal state of existence.

In experiencing the "still point", there is "neither arrest nor movement" because it "takes place in a sphere where there is no time, and where therefore the idea of movement, or conversely, fixity, has no meaning." (2)

Through the power of the moment of illumination, the "past and future are gathered". Different aspects of time cease to exist and consequently past and future can be experienced simultaneously.

There is "neither ascent nor decline". No physical movement is involved in experiencing the moment of illumination. No spiritual preparation is involved either. The moment is

(1) H. Z. Maccoby, "A Commentary on 'Burnt Norton', III, IV, V," *Notes and Queries*, Vol. CCXV (December, 1970), p. 458.

(2) Bodelsen, *T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets*, p. 49.

sudden and the individual is instantly transferred into another sphere of existence.

The "still point" is finally referred to paradoxically in this section as "a white light still and moving". Experiencing a moment of illumination is "still" because it attains a state of eternity where time ceases to exist. Yet, it is "moving" because although the individual achieves a state of eternity through the moment of illumination he is still living in a world "moving" through time. Actually, this paradox paves the way for one of the beautiful paradoxes in the poem: "Only through time time is conquered".

Through this intensified use of paradox Eliot tries to "expand our awareness of what the still point is".⁽¹⁾ But against, this awareness is never concrete or definite. It remains shadowy and elusive which is an alluring quality for a poet, who, it appears, is not demanding clearcut shapes to probe.

Continuing to define the state of the individual during a moment of illumination, Eliot presents a seemingly strange paradox:

To be conscious is not to be in time
From our life experience, it is understood that an individual is conscious when he is aware of the surroundings and events around him which, in turn, are bound to time sequence. Now, the individual who is aware of the different aspects of time and lives according to the dictates of clock time is very much in a state of consciousness, according to ordinary living measures.

On the other hand, if a person is under

(1) Bay-Petersen, "T. S. Eliot and Einstein," p. 148.

(2) Bodelsen, *T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets*, p. 51.

anaesthesia, he is not conscious of time just as he is not conscious of pain or his surroundings. It is, then, awkward and paradoxical when Eliot refers to the state of not being in time as one of consciousness.

In fact, what Eliot probably means here is that "the only real consciousness is that which is afforded by the illuminated moments".⁽¹⁾ To be really conscious is not to live in the ordinary time of worldly existence, but to transcend it into the higher sphere of eternity. This is achieved through the moment of illumination which enables the individual to be "conscious" of visions like the rose garden which are detached from common time. Immediately before this paradox, Eliot states:

Time past and time future

Allow but a little consciousness

The past and future offer "little consciousness" because, for Eliot, they exist on an inferior level than the moment of illumination.

This leads to another paradox which is connected with time. This paradox, however, is prepared for by a few lines which are useful to quote in full:

But only in time can the moment in
the rose-garden,

The moment in the arbour where the
rain beat,

The moment in the draughty church at
smokefall

Be remembered; involved with past
and future.

(1) Reibetanz, *A Reading of Eliot's Four Quartets*, p. 37.

Only through time time is conquered
(my emphasis).

All of the above-mentioned moments are visionary insights experienced in rare moments of illumination. These moments, as stated earlier, transcend our present reality and exist in a state where time ceases to exist. However, although a moment of illumination represents an "escape from time, it is only made possible by time: it only becomes part of our conscious selves because it is remembered on our return to the time-bound sphere" (1) The act of being transferred from this world into another through the moments of illumination is achieved through time. Even as one enjoys the sense of timelessness during this moment, this feeling is experienced in time while the individual is living in a time-bound reality. It is only through the moment of illumination that time can be conquered through time.

By this paradox, it is clear that Eliot is giving credit to our life. Despite its many flaws, it is only through this life that one can experience the moment of illumination:

To say that 'only through time time is conquered' is therefore to assert the validity of our ordinary life; to deny that our life is worthless apart from the occasional flashes of vision. On the contrary, the flashes of vision would be worthless if they remained uninvolved with past and future. The musical notes are important, as well as the melody. The flesh, despite its 'weakness', is as important as the spirit. (1)

(1) Bodelsen, *T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets*, p. 50.

At the end of the fourth movement, the paradox of "the still point of the turning world" occurs again. But here, the paradox is mentioned within the context of a lyric on the inevitability of death. The lyric mourns the brevity of human life and how the human being is not remembered after death, not even by the elements of nature.

At the end of the lyric, the poet says:

After the
kingfisher's wings
Has answered light to light, and is
silent, the light is still
At the still point of the turning
world.

One critic understands these lines as follows:

After life which is the flash of
light reflected from the bird, there
is death. The grave is motionless in
an otherwise ever-moving
universe. (1)

This is a valid interpretation, but it is inconsistent with the development of ideas in the poem, especially with the use of the paradox of the "still point" in the second movement.

Although the poet is lamenting human life because of its brevity and loneliness after death, he finds hope in the moment of illumination which is eternal although death may eventually conquer the body. "Death", therefore, "does not matter, for real life consists of illuminated moments, and these are out of time, and therefore eternal." (2) The "still point", in this respect, redeems death because through the moment of illumination one can achieve a state

(1) Bodelsen, *T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets*, p. 49.

of eternity.

The next paradox is art-related. It is the only paradox of its kind in "Burnt Norton". It occurs six lines from the beginning of the fifth movement:

Only by form, the pattern Can words
or music reach

The stillness, as a Chinese jar
still

Moves perpetually in its stillness
(my emphasis).

The paradox here stems from the ability of the jar to move perpetually while it is still. Practically, such movement is impossible.

Eliot begins the fifth movement with the idea that poetry and music are arts which belong to our temporal existence. Both are controlled by time and, therefore, must perish:⁽¹⁾

Words move, music moves

Only in time; but that which is only
living

Can only die.

One quality alone redeems art and music from perishing: "the form, the pattern". If a work of art possesses form or pattern, then it attains a perpetual existence.

Thus, the poet declares:

Only by the form, the pattern,

Can words or music reach

The stillness, as a Chinese jar
still

Moves perpetually in its stillness.

(1) Maccoby, "Commentary on 'Burnt Norton', II," p. 58.

Eliot here exemplifies this point by the paradox of the Chinese jar. Though the jar is by nature still, it does, however, "move" through time by impressing generation after generation by its form which, in turn, is its main source of beauty. The form of the jar "conquers time, i.e. stays alive perpetually."⁽¹⁾ Because of its form, the jar continues to triumph over time and prove a source of admiration to its onlookers:

... the jar moves perpetually with the time-line, instead of being relegated to the past, so that it continues to be the same source of joy as when it issued from the potter's hands.⁽²⁾

Another interpretation is presented if the verb "moves" is understood to mean something other than motion. The verb can mean to influence the emotions and thoughts of the individual. So, the paradox would convey the meaning that the jar, in its stillness, "moves" the onlookers' feelings and emotions as they admire its form.⁽³⁾

The jar in its form is similar to language in its historical development. Words continually change their dictionary meanings because of successive usage throughout the course of human history. But it is through art that words can retain their original meanings especially in their relations to other words:

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- (1) G.W. Arms, "Eliot's Four Quartets : Burnt Norton, IV," *The explicator*, Vol. VIII, No. 2 (1949), p. 1.
 - (2) Bodelsen, *T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets*, p. 54.
 - (3) El Batanouny, "Responses to Paradoxical Expressions",

The word itself, like the note in music, has meaning only in relation to other words. It exists in time and in usage; and since contexts and usages change, the life of a pattern is a continual death. Yet within a pattern, in a poem, the word's life is preserved almost miraculously by art, in a kind of true life beyond its life in speech; it is there stable, not in life, but in its relations to all the other words in the poem, which in turn are held to their meaning by their relations to it. (2)

(1) Reibetanz, *A Reading of Eliot's Four Quartets*, p. 46.

Conclusion:

The technique of paradox has evolved through the course of this research as an instrumental medium in the development and understanding of "Burnt Norton". Its impact as a poetic technique capable of playing a pivotal role in such a difficult poem as this, testifies to its poetic versatility. Eliot has managed to understand the full artistic potential of the technique of paradox and how to explore it to its utmost depths. He managed to find in its application the perfect form of language structure which can best suit the nature of the different themes in the poem.

The various themes tackled in the poem through the technique of paradox have evolved into one striking paradoxical pattern. This paradoxical pattern centres around the theme of the moment of illumination. The series of paradoxes related to this theme begin from the first lines in the poem: "Time present and time past / Are both perhaps present in time future".

The nature of the moment of illumination which transcends temporal time is first given expression here. Once this theme is introduced it acquires momentum as Eliot endeavours to provide a palpable shape for it. This is achieved by the paradoxes of "the still point of the turning world", "To be conscious is not to be in time" and "The mind is conscious but conscious of nothing" which endeavour to locate the unearthly sphere in which such a moment is experienced.

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