

# T.S. Eliot and Josep Carner in Dialogue Allusions to Eliot's Poetry in *Nabí*

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**Abstract** The aim of this article is to show that *Nabí's* poem, written by Catalan poet Josep Carner, contains allusions to the works of T.S. Eliot *The Waste Land* as well as to "Burnt Norton", the first poem of *Four Quartets*. Allusion is a literary resource which is recurrent in both authors, to whom literary tradition is pivotal in the process of poetic creation. A thorough analysis of the main allusions of *Nabí* to these two poems of T.S. Eliot demonstrates that by means of allusion a dialogue between works of different times, languages and authors may be established.

**Keywords** Literary allusion. Josep Carner. Nabí. Poetic dialogue. T.S. Eliot. Literary tradition. Influence.

**Summary** 1 Foreword. – 2 T.S. Eliot and Josep Carner. – 3 The Allusions. – 4 The Dialogue. – 5 Conclusions.



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## 1 Foreword

The Catalan poet Josep Carner began his diplomatic career serving as a vice-consul in the Spanish consulate of Genoa between 1921 and 1924. From the inception of the twentieth century he had played a key role as a writer, translator, publisher and promoter of Catalan language and culture in his native capital city of Barcelona, a task he continued from abroad during the years of his diplomatic mission and later as an exile. Acquainted with Italian culture from his youth, the sojourn in Genoa inspired him to write a series of articles published in the Catalan and Spanish press, sometimes under the title "From Italy". After this experience, he was appointed to perform other duties in America, the Levant and Europe, in such places as Le Havre, Beirut, Brussels or Paris. He always remained very fond of Italy, the Italian language and its writers, and occasionally he chose to write in Italian to his friends, including to some of his close Catalan friends (Serrallonga 1986, 26-8), partly as a way to overcome censorship.

Josep Carner conceived his narrative poem *Nabí*, titled with the Hebrew word for prophet,<sup>1</sup> initially named *Jonàs* (Subiràs 2003), when he was serving as a consul in Hendaye in 1932. In Beirut, during the years 1935 and 1936, he continued to work on it. The poem was finished in the fall of 1938 in Paris, as its author was still holding the post of plenipotentiary minister at the embassy of the crumbling Spanish Republic there, in the latter months of the Spanish Civil War. As Carner himself described one year later to his Mexican friends and defenders (Carner 2002, 41), it was during the sad slope of that autumn in Paris when he, faithful to his native Catalan language and anguished as a patriot and a man "en un mundo abertal" (in a parched world; Author's trans.), wrote the final draft of the poem.

Already in the Parisian summer of 1937, when the literary magazine *Mesures* published what had to become the fourth canto of *Nabí*, in a bilingual, Catalan and French,<sup>2</sup> mirrored edition, the name of the poet had begun to be known in the highest literary European circles. Giuseppe Ungaretti, a member of the editorial board of *Mesures*, felt fascinated<sup>3</sup> by the poem (Carner 2002, 26). A staunch,

**1** Josep Carner used this Hebrew word in the sense of 'dragoman of God,' an interpreter of God's word, as appears in the Scripture, according to the note preceding the poem relating it to his reading of Baruch Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (Carner 2012, 55).

**2** Translated by Étienne Vauthier, a friend of the poet.

**3** In the book, published in 1959, *L'obra de Josep Carner, Volum d'homenatge a cura de setanta-dos autors*, Giuseppe Ungaretti stated (Carner 2012, 34): "Di rado un uomo appare poeta nella vita, nella vita d'ogni momento come Josep Carner. Una lieve ironia dà misura alle sue parole, ma un profondo sentimento illumina il pungere dello sguardo che accompagna le sue parole: *El seny en la fosca reneix*. Iddio conceda a que-

anti-Fascist democrat, Carner started a long exile with his second wife, the Belgian scholar Émilie Noulet, first in Mexico and, after 1945, in Brussels, until his passing in 1970, which marked the conclusion of an era started with the cultural and political resurgence of Catalonia at the beginning of the twentieth century. Ungaretti and other writers and scholars, like T.S. Eliot, François Mauriac, Hans Rheinfelder, Max Rouquette, Heinrich Bihler or Franz Niedermayer, promoted Carner's candidacy to the Nobel prize in literature in the early 1960s (Subirana 2000, 217).

*Nabí* is a religious epic poem about the subject of the human mission, the struggle of man with the events of life, the fight to do what has to be done. A patriotic, brilliant, organized, poignant, refined and profound composition, it has been translated from its original Catalan into Spanish (Carner 2002), French (Carner 1959) and English (Carner 2001). It is written in a mirific language flooded with deliberate, intertwined allusions to Catalan, European or American authors. Carner composes the poem based on the Book of Jonah and other Biblical writings, and interlaces it with Catalan and European traditions and thoughts. It deals, as Carner himself states (Carner 2002, 41), with the ironic and very sweet pedagogy of forgiveness.

The identification between Catalonia and Israel is apparent in *Nabí* and in other later poems of its author. Maria de Loreto Busquets (1980, 39-40) remarks that Israel's destiny was for the poet an insistent image of the fate of his own motherland and that the Jonah of *Nabí*, with no home and no country, the wandering man and yet always the son of the Land of Israel and its faith, incarnates, in some way, the fate of Josep Carner, the poet who was always longing for Catalonia.

## 2 T.S. Eliot and Josep Carner

A widely used technique in the composition of *Nabí* that has remained until now devoid of attention is literary allusion. Identifying the allusions to others' artworks in the poem *Nabí* is an indispensable step in the analysis of the poetry of Josep Carner. The Catalan poet and T.S. Eliot had a similar outlook on culture and the role of a poet regarding his language and his people. They wrote their *œuvres* during the same period and had a similar taste for French poetry. Like Eliot, Carner was a percipient and indefatigable reader of contem-

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sto saggio, a questo poeta che sa quale misura esiga la grande poesia, molti altri anni fecondi" (A man rarely appears as a poet in life, in the life of every moment like Josep Carner. A slight irony gives a measure to his words, but a deep feeling illuminates the sting of the look that accompanies his words: *El seny en la fosca reneix* ['Wisdom is reborn in the dark']. God grant this sage, to this poet who knows what the great poetry demands, many more fruitful years; Author's trans.).

poraneous writers. His endeavour to update Catalan literature and his unobstructed concept of culture as a tacit selection of overlapped borrowings (Carner 1935) make literary allusions an essential part of his resources. He used others' works as a stimulus to his own creativity. To him (Carner 1935), almost nothing is aboriginal, and the invasion of what is excellent is desirable, and the more the better.

During the period between the two world wars, it is not easy to find two authors so coincident in their understanding about the meaning of the task of writing and the cultural tradition like Josep Carner and T.S. Eliot. The latter, from his prominent position in the publishing industry and as an outstanding critic of English literature, and the former as a leading actor and cornerstone in the incipient construction of a Catalan national culture, also during his long exile. T.S. Eliot thought that poetry possessed a representative function to the societies that create it, as he stated in a famous lecture that he gave in 1943:

Therefore no art is more stubbornly national than poetry. A people may have its language taken away from it, suppressed, and another language compelled upon the schools; but unless you teach that people to *feel* in a new language, you have not eradicated the old one, and it will reappear in poetry, which is the vehicle of feeling. (Eliot 1957, 19)

Following their common way of thinking, Carner and Eliot conveyed the image of their respective peoples as a unique whole, different from other peoples. For them, this was characteristic of national poets (Eliot 1957, 18). They both understood universality as emerging from what is truly genuine, and that a national culture combines what is genuine with what is common among nations, cultures and ages. In his speech titled "Universalitat i cultura" (Universality and Culture), Carner argues:

La llengua ha d'ésser particular, i l'esperit incontenible. [...] Però parla una *avara povertà*<sup>4</sup> no pas nostra, i tota emmetzinada, quan se us diu: "Sigueu altrament que no sou". No us en deixeu convèncer. No us vagaria en acabat d'entrar en l'Universal, que és un noble ball de veritats profundes i no pas de disfresses. (Carner 1935)

The language must be particular, and the spirit uncontainable. [...] Even so, an *avara povertà*, certainly not ours, and indeed venomous to the full, speaks when someone tells you: "Be other than you

<sup>4</sup> Allusion to Dante's *Commedia* (*Paradiso*, VIII, 77): "l'avara povertà di Catalogna" (the grasping poverty of Catalonia; Author's trans.). In Italian in Carner's speech.

really are". Do not let it convince you. At the end of the day, you would not be able to enter the Universal, which is a noble dancing of truths and not a masked ball. (Author's trans.)

In the same vein, Eliot, who doubted whether a poet or novelist can be universal without being local, too (Eliot 1965, 56), says:

Here we arrive at two characteristics which I think must be found together, in any author whom I should single out as one of the landmarks of a national literature: the strong local flavour combined with unconscious universality. (1965, 54)

Eliot sustained that the most direct duty of a poet is not to his people, but to his language, first to preserve, and second to extend and improve it (1957, 20). However, also according to him, the man of letters, who differs from other artists in that his medium is his language, is bound by a special responsibility towards everybody who speaks the same language, a particular duty to his people which workers in other arts do not share (1944, 382). Carner was, too, fully aware of the existence of this bond between a writer, his language, and his people. His intense activities in the realm of the cultural policies during the first third of the century in Barcelona, as well as in his exile, are a proof of it. In his old age, Carner stated:

Jo m'he adreçat cada dia al país, el qual respon. Treballo per Catalunya. (in Porcel 1966, 42)

I have addressed my country every day, and it responds. I work for Catalonia. (Author's trans.)

The literary interests of T.S. Eliot and Josep Carner intertwined in an ample common area and this fact boosted the possibilities of a poetic dialogue. Both poets mastered the French language and had a common affection for French poetry, and especially for symbolist poets, from whom Eliot affirmed to have learned the use of his own poetic voice (Eliot 1957, 252).

T.S. Eliot strengthened the foundations of literary modernism and, concretely, of what has been called high modernism (Perl 1984). His outlook on literary creation, very similar to the point of view of Josep Carner, was rooted on the concepts that generations of troubadours established as the basis for the public discourse in Europe. In the literary world of the troubadours, the people involved in artistic production shared a kernel of ideas allowing communication and literary interchange. This was a world of common words and thoughts. T.S. Eliot also admired the ability of Dante to combine several traditions. A consequence of this admiration is the British edition, pub-

lished in 1920, of the second selection of his poetry which he titled, in Old Occitan, *Ara Vos Prec* (Now I Beg You) as a homage to the Provençal words that Dante puts in the mouth of the troubadour Arnaut Daniel in the *Commedia* (*Purgatorio*, XXVI, 145).

Eliot and Carner believed that Europe had been built around this kernel, and that they themselves, as human beings and writers, were a link of the great chain that ties generations, nations, languages and creative concepts. This special understanding of literary heritage explains the large amount of materials from other authors that may be found in Eliot's poetry as well as in the poems of Carner. The latter, in his speech of Barcelona, gave the following definition of culture:

Cultura és obriment sense reserves, contrast de totes les embranzides vivents, unitat humana desinteressada, que hom recerca per mètodes confluents i complementaris. (Carner 1935)

Culture is openness with no reluctance, contrast of all the living endeavors, selfless human unity, which man seeks by means of confluent and complementary methods. (Author's trans.)

The poet of *Nabí* shared with the author of *The Waste Land* a similar notion about the important role of literary tradition in the creation of a new work (Eliot 1975, 119-20). In the poem *Nabí* there is a combination of allusions to authors of the Catalan literary tradition, from Ramon Llull to Jacint Verdaguer or Joan Maragall, and allusions to authors belonging to different traditions and times, which have not yet been identified by the critics. The modernist method of borrowing and alluding, so conspicuous in the works of T.S. Eliot, is also essential in *Nabí*. It is a very allusive poem that contains literary and non-literary allusions in all of its ten cantos. Aside to the literary allusions to leading writers of French, Spanish and Italian poetry, as well as to the Jewish liturgy and texts, there are allusions to the Spanish Civil War and to the figure of the future dictator as a part of two interwoven developments relating Catalonia and Israel. *Nabí* is a poem of war in the same sense in which may be said (Wolosky 1984) that Emily Dickinson's poetry is a poetry at war. In *Nabí*, war and its consequences are clearly apparent, both in detail and in the general meaning of its ten cantos. The adaptation of the Book of Jonah, the scaffolding of the poem, to *Nabí*, as well as of other materials from the Hebrew Bible and other Judaic sources, parallels the adaptations of Biblical, Hellenistic, Indian or Chinese sources by writers like Ezra Pound, James Joyce or T.S. Eliot himself.

In the works of Eliot and Carner the influences of other authors are sought and wanted. Eliot understood literature as an assemblage of interrelated works that highlight their meaning through the connections and the contrasts between one and the other, thus constituting

an organic whole (Eliot 1961, 23-4). He sustained that "a living literature is always in process of change" and that contemporaneous living literatures are always, through one or more authors, changing at the same time each other (1965, 57). On the same grounds, he advised to the young poet to acquire the knowledge of as much of "the best poetry in several languages as he can assimilate" (1965, 83) as the path for them to reach the whole extent of the shared civilization. In parallel, Josep Carner, elaborating on his thought that there is a difference between imitation and genius, held the opinion that this difference is indeed corroborated by the number of sought influences in a given work:

Com tota unitat viva, el poema és orgànic, fet de parts que vivifiquen íntims bescavis. [...] Quant a les influències, es combinen i es disfressen de cara a la unitat nova; com més ens allunyem de la imitació per acostar-nos al geni, més llur nombre augmenta: si la mediocritat té molt poca gana, el geni, en canvi, és voraç. (Carner 1970, 58)

As every living unity, the poem is organic, made of portions that vivify inner exchanges. [...] Regarding influences, they combine and disguise themselves facing the new unity; the more we get away from imitation to get closer to the genius, the more their number increases: if mediocrity has little appetite, genius, instead, is voracious. (Author's trans.)

For coeval authors, an influence is discernible when they conspicuously belong to the same literary movement or share a recognized common literary ground, and this fact is combined with clear statements of their will to be influenced by others through a strong and steady ("voracious") interest in their production and an asserted penchant to respond to it. The textual coincidences, especially if they are numerous and manifest as occurs in this case, then constitute something more basal and firm than a mere array of fortuitous parallelisms. Here, the reiteration of identical concepts and similar forms in the works of the two poets show a drive for relating both texts by means of allusion. In the poetry of Carner and Eliot, two poets possessing a personal and complex method of poetic creation, no coincident word is a random occurrence.

### 3 The Allusions

In *Nabí* there are many allusions to the poems of T.S. Eliot. Some of them are immediately evident: the city in ruins "poblada d'invisibles" (populated by invisibles) in the seventh canto of *Nabí*, which refers to an image of London in the first part of *The Waste Land*, or the sun

in Adam's hair in its tenth canto, related to a similar image of Eliot's *La Figlia che Piange*. Only two of the main allusions to Eliot's works are dealt here. In her essay "The Poetics of Literary Allusion" (1976), Ziva Ben-Porat establishes that literary allusion is not only the influence of a previous text over another text, but the simultaneous activation of meanings prompted when the two texts are read together. Ben-Porat calls markers the meaningful elements that appear in the alluding text, which are always identifiable as elements or patterns belonging to another independent text, the alluded or evoked text. Here, the marked elements are those that somehow have generated the others. Markers and marked elements, in the alluding and the evoked text respectively, maintain among them, principally, relationships of synonymy, antonymy or metonymy, and are the identifiers of the allusion. The core or nucleus of the allusion is where the main markers and the marked elements appear consecutively in a set of a few lines. Before and after this core, it is possible to find, in both texts, similar or coincident subjects, themes, ideas or words. The alluding text and the evoked text are autonomous, in the sense that each one holds its own meaning, independently of the coincidences.

Following Ben-Porat's procedure, a sizable amount of these allusions to lines in poems of T.S. Eliot may be clearly identified in *Nabí*. One of the most remarkable of those allusions points to the poems *The Waste Land* (1922) and *Burnt Norton* – the first of *Four Quartets*, composed in 1935 and published the following year. Concretely, the ninth canto of *Nabí* alludes to the fifth part of *The Waste Land*, perhaps the most emblematic of its sections, titled *What the Thunder Said*, which contains the description of the rocky and mountainous wilderness of the wasteland with its overwhelming absence of water. A rock-strewn place of similar features frames the ninth canto of *Nabí* where Jonah contends with his strange adversary, a Greek-accented being who suddenly has emerged, dream-like, at twilight.

The alluding text is, in this case, the ninth canto of *Nabí*, and the nucleus of the allusion is a section of six lines, from line 78 to line 83, which describe the despair of Jonah before the arrogance of his antagonist, an unbeliever:

I vaig mirar: ningú per l'alta roquetera,  
i al mig del cel no res.  
I en la nit buida que tots sons aplaca,  
més buida per l'absència del llamp responedor,  
emplenà mes orelles la ressaca  
de la meva maror.

And I looked around: nobody by the high rock,  
and nothing in the middle of the sky.  
And in the empty night that quenches all sounds,



yet more empty by the absence of the responding lightning,  
 the swell of my tide  
 flooded my ears. (Author's trans.<sup>5</sup>)

The reference text or source text is the fifth part of *The Waste Land*. The core of this evoked text, to which *Nabí* alludes, are its four lines from 341 to 344:

There is not even silence in the mountains  
 But dry sterile thunder without rain  
 There is not even solitude in the mountains  
 But red sullen faces sneer and snarl

In *Nabí*, the main marker of the allusion is the phrase "llamp respondedor" (responding lightning). The word "llamp" (lightning) is associated as a metonymy to the word "thunder" through a relation of contiguity in time. Carner generates the image of the "llamp respondedor" to the concept of the thunder that sounds in *The Waste Land* and breaks the silence. The assertive thunder in the title of its fifth section, *What the Thunder Said*, may easily suggest the idea of a responding thunder transformed by Carner into a "llamp respondedor". The marker "l'alta roquetera" (the high rocky cliff) is related to the marked element "mountains". The absence of silence because of the thunder in the two first quoted lines of Eliot (ll. 341-342)

There is not even silence in the mountains  
 But dry sterile thunder without rain

yields in *Nabí* (IX, ll. 80-81), by antonymy, the idea of silence that the responding lightning does not break:

I en la nit buida que tots sons aplaca,  
 més buida per l'absència del llamp respondedor.

And in the empty night that quenches all sounds,  
 yet more empty by the absence of the responding lightning.

And Jonah's outburst in the face of the provocation of his antagonist (*Nabí*, IX, ll. 82-83) is linked to Eliot's "red sullen faces":

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<sup>5</sup> There is a known English translation of *Nabí* made by Joan L. Gili (Carner 2001). Here, the Author's literal English version, more suitable to identify the allusions in the text, has been used.

emplenà mes orelles la ressaca  
de la meva maror.

the swell of my tide  
flooded my ears.

Usually, there are secondary coincidences of phrases and concepts around the words forming this nucleus of the allusion. They are not clustered in a specific place and often are of an equally relevant thematic type, with some similar or identical words appearing in both texts. In *What the Thunder Said*, these spread elements are the rock and the road ("Rock and no water and the sandy road", l. 332), the inhospitable rock ("Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think", l. 336), where it is impossible to take a normal position ("Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit", l. 340). These marked elements are the source of the markers in the text of *Nabí*: the mention of the rock, at the beginning of the ninth canto, over which the lonely Jonah is found, with his legs hanging, thinking about the path that he may take (IX, ll. 4-6).

The strange entity, in *The Waste Land*, who partially conceals himself, on whom nobody counted ("When I count, there are only you and I together", l. 361), walking nearby ("There is always another one walking beside you", l. 363), and who appears at his side ("But who is that on the other side of you?", l. 366), has its parallel, as a secondary allusion, in an unanticipated Greek-accented being who emerges behind Jonah, in his other side, as it were, over his back (*Nabí*, IX, ll. 9-11). This is an unexpected entity who challenges Jonah and blasphemes against God and with whom, in a sudden hand-to-hand combat, Jonah walks to the edge of the precipice, and finally throws him down the crag (IX, ll. 90-92). After he has killed his opponent, the prophet finds himself with a total lack of strength (IX, ll. 97-98), defeated, in a hollow of the wilderness, nestled and ensconced (ll. 100-101), more sunken in the depths than the murdered Greek-accented blasphemer who had provoked him (ll. 120-121), in a kind of physical and at the same time spiritual excruciation, prior to his complete repentance.

These lines of secondary references, located around the nucleus of the allusion, are concomitant with what is said in *The Waste Land* near the core of the source text: "After the agony in stony places" (l. 324), "He who was living is now dead" (l. 328), and "We who were living are now dying" (l. 329). Before their combat, this Greek-accented antagonist lectures Jonah on the cosmic whirlwind that incessantly turns and makes man equal to the sand, in a discourse clearly related to the ideas of Heraclitus, the same philosopher quoted in Greek by Eliot in the heading of *Burnt Norton*, a quote already noticeable in the edition of 1936 of the poem (Gardner 1978, 82).

In the last strophe of the tenth canto of *Nabí* there are two different and consecutive allusions to works of Eliot. Carner speaks now about the redemption at the end of days. In the lines from 108 to 115, he sets a primary allusion to *Burnt Norton* close to another primary allusion to *The Waste Land*. The lines 108-110 of *Nabí*

-Salta en mon cor com un infant al raig del dia,  
oh pensament de Déu,  
tu que ajustes els plecs de l'alegria

"Leap in my heart like a child within the beam of the day,  
O thought of God,  
You who adjust the layers of joy" (Author's trans.)

refer, mainly by means of synonymy, to the lines 169-172 of the fifth part of *Burnt Norton*, which say:

Sudden in a shaft of sunlight  
Even while the dust moves  
There rises the hidden laughter  
Of children in the foliage.

Here, the markers and marked elements are, respectively, "raig del dia" (the beam of the day) and "shaft of sunlight", "infant" (child) and "children", "els plecs de l'alegria" (the layers of joy) and "the hidden laughter", and, finally, the sudden and uncontrollable movement of the expression "Salta en mon cor" (Leap in my heart) and the meanings of "sudden" and "rises".

The allusion, in this case chiefly by antonymy, to *The Burial of the Dead*, the first part of *The Waste Land*, appears just after this one. The core of it consists in the lines from 112-115 of the tenth canto of *Nabí*:

Oh jaç, oh font que corre, oh tast de marinada,  
ull d'or mirant per les esclatxes del parral,  
i, a l'hora que estavella la calda empolegada,  
ombra segura d'un penyal.

O bed, O running fountain, O taste of sea-breeze!,  
golden eye watching through the chinks of the vine,  
and, at the hour when the dusty heat crushes,  
safe shadow of a rock. (Author's trans.)

The nucleus of the source text are the lines 22 to 26 of *The Waste Land*:

A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,  
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,  
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only  
There is shadow under this red rock,  
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock).

The allusion is principally founded on antonymous elements. The line "ull d'or mirant per les esclatxes del parral" (golden eye watching through the chinks of the vine) contrasts with its alluded text, the "dead tree" that "gives no shelter", opposed to the vine that constitutes a refuge. The phrase "no sound of water" is the antonymous base for "oh font que corre, oh tast de marinada" (O running fountain, O taste of sea-breeze). In the two texts there are as well expressions related by synonymy: "a l'hora que estavella la calda empolegada" (at the hour when the dusty head crushes) evokes "the sun beats", and "ombra segura d'un penyal" (safe shadow of a rock) relates to "There is shadow under this red rock"; "ombra" (shadow), "penyal" (rock), in *Nabí*, "shadow", "rock" in *The Waste Land*.

Close to the analyzed nucleus of this double allusion to the two Eliot's poems in the tenth canto of *Nabí* are also secondary allusions to both poems. The mention of the song that abridges the mourning appearing in the line 111 corresponds to the mention of music and words that move in time, followed by an affirmation related to the concepts of life and death, in *Burnt Norton* (ll. 137-139). Line 111 of the tenth canto of *Nabí* is precisely in the middle of the double allusion. In this same canto, after referring to the first garden and the law of God, there is "l'home" (the man) who "diu" (says) that in death we come back to the dust, never to return from it. In *The Burial of the Dead* appears the "son of man" who cannot "say", or "guess", for he knows only a heap of broken images. Jonah also says, in this tenth canto, that his body is leaning to the repose under pebbles and pine-needles, that is, to be buried, a similarity with the title of this first section of *The Waste Land* and with the image of the earth feeding a little life with dried tubers that appears in the lines 6 and 7 of *The Burial of the Dead*.

#### 4 The Dialogue

According to Mikhail Bakhtin (1986, 89), the utterances that form the speech of each individual are filled with others' words, with varying degrees of otherness. The words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone which each individual assimilates, reworks, and re-accentuates. This same phenomenon occurs

in creative works. Powerful and profound creativity is largely unconscious as well as polysemic and needs the understanding of the other's work to be able to reveal, supplemented by consciousness, the multiplicity of its meanings. Understanding, which is active and creative by nature, supplements the other's text and evaluates it so that in the act of understanding "a struggle occurs that results in mutual change and enrichment" and the creative reader who understands approaches the work of the other with "his own already formed world view, from his own viewpoint, from his own position" (Bakhtin 1986, 142). This reader's position determines his evaluation to some extent, but it itself does not remain the same as it is influenced by the artwork of the other, which always introduces something new (1986, 142). From here a kind of hidden dialogue (1984, 199) is generated in the text containing the reflected discourse of another text, traceable in the new literary creation that is the fruit, at least in part, of the stimulus produced by that evaluative reading of the other's text.

Literary influence, which becomes evident in the allusion, is a process through which the later text struggles, as it were, to overcome the meaning of the previous text (Bloom 2003). A new poetic stance, twisting the text that is prompting the allusion, is thus created. The new text may totally differ from the previous one. Thus, in the allusion, there is an implicit response to the source text. It goes beyond what is a thematic parallelism because the literary allusion contains the position and the creative reader's evaluation of the source text. When a literary allusion occurs, the new text refers to the source text in order to provide a different layer of meaning.

Carner responds to the Eliot that he finds in *The Waste Land*, in *Burnt Norton* and in other poems of the Anglo-American author. The main conversations in this dialogue revolve around the subjects of war, the defeat of Europe, repentance, and man's return to God. Besides those referring to the poems of Eliot, in *Nabí* there are allusions to other contemporary writers. This array of allusions is the major piece, but not the only one, of the puzzle that this dialogue constitutes. In the implicit answer which is in all of these allusions, Carner confronts the prevalent paganism and anti-religiosity in the European stage of the interwar period, as well as the disenchantment and despair of these days. He also opposes, in some way, a kind of established religiosity excessively focused on power-driven endeavors.

In comparing the two great poets, we may say that T.S. Eliot composes in his *Four Quartets*, his more significant work, an Anglican poem using universal ideas and tenets. Instead, Josep Carner writes a universal work, *Nabí*, mainly based on Jewish foundations and a strong acquaintance with the Hebrew sources which he deploys through a clear identification of Catalonia with Israel. Upon the philosophy conforming the special recreation of the Book of Jonah that *Nabí* is, Carner speaks, and shows an exit path for that critical mo-

ment of Catalonia and Europe. He develops in his major poem his thoughts on the human mission and, sweetly and at the same time with anguish, he addresses his beloved people, the people of Catalonia. It has been said that the scope of Eliot's poetry goes beyond the personal and involves the history of a nation, England, and its Church (Gardner 1978, 57-8). Josep Carner fits Eliot's definition of a national poet: indeed, he saw himself as the bard of Catalonia, a Catalonia mirroring Israel in his poem. *Nabí* is surprising, especially for a poetic work finished during the fall of 1938, because of its incorporation, from a universal point of view, of the Jewish thinking, about which Carner had already spoken in 1935:

S'ha parlat en els dies moderns del sagrat egoisme de les nacions. Sentiment d'*amateurs* si ho compareu amb la força ferrissa i el protagonisme implacable del poble hebreu. El qual, no gens menys, va convertir el seu Déu exclusiu en Déu de tots en el captiveri, tot planyent-se sota les arbredes fluvials de Babilònia. El monoteisme, origen del principat de la consciència, alliberador de l'esperit científic, causa eficient de la fraternitat humana, és la gran i vencedora resposta d'Israel a la persecució. (Carner 1935)

In modern days, everybody speaks on the sacred egoism of the nations. This is an *amateurish* sentiment if compared with the unyielding strength and the implacable leadership of the Hebrew people. Who, notwithstanding, made its exclusive God the God for everybody during their captivity, wailing under the river trees of Babylon. Monotheism, the origin of the principality of the conscience, the liberator of the scientific spirit, the efficient cause of human fraternity, is the great and winning answer given by Israel to persecution. (Author's trans.)

Delving into this idea, the philosopher Jean Wahl (1959), in the preface of the French edition of the poem published in 1959, sees *Nabí* as the representation of a poetic landscape that has emerged from the depth of Catalonia, from the depth of Israel, from the depth of humanity (Carner 1959).

## 5 Conclusions

The level that can be called referential or alluding in the poetic language of Josep Carner, the level of the literary allusions to texts of other authors, is essential for the comprehension of the profound devices of his poetry. Literary allusion is one of the resources more used in the poem *Nabí* and in many of the poems of its author. The analyzed allusions show the influence of the works of T.S. Eliot in the

poem *Nabí* of Josep Carner and give proof of the existence of a hidden dialogue, inherently linked to the allusion, which clarifies and enriches the meanings of the poem.

Émilie Noulet (1971) held that the poetry of Josep Carner is a poetry of responses. The expression of Carner poeticizes in a personal way the Europe of his time. Remarkably, the poem *Nabí* is the center of this dialogue between Carner and the authors of his generation. A thorough analysis of the features of this dialogue shows the philosophic and literary stances of Carner and, by contrast, also those of the other authors, and paves the road to understand *Nabí* in all its multiple resonances and in its deeper philosophical, moral and patriotic meaning.

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