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**T.S Eliot's Modernism as Exemplified in the " Waste
Land"and The Love Song of L Alfred Prufrock**

**الحدثاء عند الشاعر تي أس اليوت متمثلا في قصيدتي:
الارض اليباب وأغنية الغرام للفريد بروفروك**

A thesis Submitted for the Degree of MA in English Literature

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DEDICATION

To my family

Acknowledgments

All praise is to Allah, who has sent to his servant the book so that it may be an admonition to all creatures and take them out from darkness into lights and peace be upon His messenger Mohammed(PBUH).

I owe particular debt to all those who supported me in achieving this study. I would like to express my gratitude to Sudan University of Science and Technology and the College of Postgraduate and I wish to express my respect and gratitude to my supervisor Dr. *Mahmoud AliAhmed* who generously undertook the heavy burden of reading, guiding, criticizing and encouraging me along the course of this study.

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Abstract

The term modernism refers to a specific period in literature that extent between 1890-1970. Modernism as a literary movement refers to the radical shift in aesthetic and cultural sensibilities evident in the art of the First World War. Modernism is characterized by experimentation of new styles and methods. This movement is influenced by many factors, the most important is the First World War. The second factor is the scientific discoveries and the theories put forward by famous psychologists such as Sigmund Freud and Karl Jung. One of most famous founders of the movement are is T.S Eliot and many like Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. In order to abandon the rigidity typifying the classical forms of Arabic poetry, Arab poets were ever in quest for new moulds of poetry. A number of Arab poets from Egypt, the Gulf, Syria and Iraq have made early contacts with Western poets particularly those who have emigrated to the West. They were able to incorporate into the classical body of Arabic poetry the literary traditions of the West that depends mainly on critical approach. Some of the techniques they were able to borrow was the one called the “the free verse”, which helped them triumph over the shackles of the classical forms. Badr Shakir Al-Sayyab’s contribution in this respect is unmistakably manifest in his famous poem “A City without Rain”. In this poem he was able to inject varied images within the context of the major theme “rain” in emulation of the Babylonian myth Ishtar.

Key words: *modernism, free verse, western traditions, classical forms, critical approach*

المستخلص

إن مصطلح الحداثة يشير إلى الفترة المعنية في الأدب التي امتدت بين (1890 - 1970). والحداثة هي حركة أدبية توصف التحول الراديكالي في الحاسبة الإجمالية الأدبية والتي ظهرت في أدب ما بعد الحرب العالمية الأولى.

وتتميز حركة الحداثة بالتجارب في الأساليب والطرق الحديثة والثورة ضد أساليب كتابة القرن التاسع عشر، وقد أثرت على هذه الحركة العديد من العوامل أهمها: الحرب العالمية الأولى والتغيرات في المجتمع ما بعد الحرب.

أما العامل الثاني فكان الاكتشافات العلمية والنظريات التي قدمت بواسطة علماء النفس مثل سينموند فروند وكارل يونغ ومن رواد حركة الحداثة فرجينيا وولف وجيمس جويس وبرزهم اليوت.

وبالمثل كان هناك شعراء عرب من أي وقت قضى سعيًا لقوالب جديدة من الشعر، وقد تمكن عدد منهم من مصر والخليج وسوريا والعراق اتصالات مباشرة مع الشعراء الغربيين ولاسيما أولئك الذين هاجروا إلى الغرب أنهم صاروا قادرين على حقن الجسم الكلاسيكي للشعر العربي بالتقاليد الأدبية للغرب الذي يعتمد أساسًا على المقاربة النقدية وكان بعض التقنيات أنهم كانوا قادرين على الافتراض واحد يسمى "القافية الحرة" أو "شعر التفعيلة" التي ساعدتهم على الانتصار على أغلال الأشكال الاستقلالية، ومساهمة بدر شاكر من الأسباب في هذا الصور الواضحة لا ليس فيها في قصيدته الشهيرة "مدينة مطر" وفي هذه القصيدة كان الشاعر قادرًا على ضخ الصور المتنوعة في إطار لموضوع الرئيسي "المطر" في محاكاة الأسطورية البابلية "عشتار".

مفتاح: الحداثة، شعر التفعيلة، التقاليد الغربية، الأشكال الكلاسيكية، المقاربة النقدية

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter provides a description of the theoretical framework of the study with special focus on the statement of the problem, study questions, hypotheses, objectives and the methodology of the study.

1.1 Context of the Study

It was in the early 1950s that Anglo- Saxon writers began to impinge on Arabic. Foremost among them was T.S. Eliot, whose influence was eruptive and insistent. This influence came at first through his early poetry and was partly possible for the great change that has since overtaken Arabic poetic forms. In the 1940s and after, universities across the Arab World were teeming with American and British professors and Eliot's *Waste Land*, the poem of the century which no serious reader could ignore, was received with unique enthusiasm and admiration, spurring Iraqi poets and writers to rediscover their ancient myths: Adonis, Ishtar, and other Babylon mythical characters were alluded to in Eliot's poem. For Arab intellectuals, Eliot was a modernist leading an experiment with a new poetic form and style and reviving the use of dramatic verse.

Modern Arab poets have always looked for new forms of poetry that would enable them to express themselves freely and to do away with Classical Arabic forms. In other words, they were questing for a new kind of poetry which differs from the rigid Classical Arabic forms in terms of form and content, and which meets the new demands for dealing with a variety of issues, such as the social, national and even political problems related to the spirit of their time.

Arab poets' constant quest for new forms of poetry has led them to seek some of the Western poetic forms. In this respects, S. Moreh has pointed out that the incapability of the Classical Arabic poetry to meet the demands of modern Arab poets has led them to seek new forms of poetry

through their contact with the West, that is, by imitating different forms and models of Western poetry, such as the sonnet, the ode and even prose poems (Moreh, 1976: 218). This means that through imitating some Western poetic forms and models, modern Arab poets were seeking to develop a new form of poetry which will enable them to go beyond the restrictions of Classical Arabic forms.

Imitation is considered to be an important factor in the process of development, since according to J. T. Shaw's theory of influence "imitations have often been used as a pedagogic device in an artist's development" (Shaw, 1961: 89). Accordingly, under the influence of genuine Western poets like T.S. Eliot (1888-1965), modern Arab poets as Badr Shakir Al-Sayyab (1926-1964), Abdul- Wahhab Al-Bayyati (1926-1999) and Nazik Al-Mala'ika (1922-2007) have "led Arabic poetry beyond the constraints of classical Arabic forms" (Frangieh, 1990: 1). This change in Arabic poetry has taken place because of the emergence of a new form of poetry called free verse and because of the modern Arab poets' adoption of Eliot's new complicated techniques.

In his essay "Modern Arabic Literature and the West," Jabra I. Jabra (1971: 6) points out the two major factors related to the change that has overtaken the Arabic poetic form. The first one is related to Eliot's early works which were partly responsible for the "eruptive" change in Arabic poetry while the second is related to the fact that those who translated Eliot's works were the leading Arab poets of the new generation, such as al-Sayyab, Yûsuf Al-khal (1917-1987) and Buland al-Haidari (1926____), who managed to bring a change to Arabic poetry through their "reworkings" (Weisstein, 1973) of Eliot's poetic works. This means that change in Arabic poetry is related to Eliot's influence on modern Arab poets which stems from their reworking of his early poetic works, such as "The Waste Land" (1922). This reworking has not only contributed to the development of modern Arabic poetry but also led new Arab poets to contribute to the literary tradition and to add to Eliot.

The first step that led modern Arab poets, like al-Sayyab and many others, to be influenced by Eliot is related to their translation of some of his early poems, such as "The Waste Land." In this respect, translation

itself becomes a creative act; modern Arab poets managed to bring new works which are written in another language, such as "The Waste Land," into their native literary tradition. Accordingly, Shaw states that "translation is itself a creative act; the translator brings into his contemporary native literary tradition a work written in another language and often at a different time" (Shaw, 1961: 88). Moreover, translation is considered to be a creative act for it helps to bring into the native literary tradition new models which serve to be a main source of imitation. Therefore, modern Arab poets have managed to bring into their native literary tradition new models, as "The Waste Land," which then became their main sources of imitation, that is, the main sources of their poetic development. It is worth noting in this context that the reader should not misconceive imitation since it does not mean copying. Imitations, according to Shaw's theory of influence, "have often been used as a pedagogic device in an artist's development" (Shaw, 1961: 89). One concludes that such reworking, translation and imitation of Eliot's early works have influenced modern Arab poets.

Another important factor that led new Arab poets, like al-Sayyab, to be influenced by Eliot is related to his concept of tradition. In this respect, Jabra indicates that Eliot has developed a dynamic concept of tradition. According to him, tradition is revived by the interaction between the old and the new through the individual talent (Jabra, 1971: 81). This means that the individual talent can lead the poet to contribute to the literary tradition. In this respect, modern Arab poets, through using their talent in translating and imitating some works within the literary tradition, such as "The Waste Land", have become able to add to those who have influenced them, such as Eliot. Moreover, in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Eliot demands from the poets a historical sense, that is, an awareness of the change and this is exactly what the modern Arab poets insisted that they had (Jabra, 1971: 83). Therefore, owing to their awareness of the necessity of change, modern Arab poets have attempted adopting the complicated techniques employed by Eliot in "The Waste Land," through molding them into a new form of poetry called free verse.

T. S. Eliot, perhaps one of the most controversial poets of modern times, wrote what many critics consider the most controversial poem of all, The

Waste Land. The Waste Land was written using a fragmented style. This is a style that is evident in all of Eliot's writings. There are several reasons for his using this approach, from a feeling of being isolated, to a problem articulating thoughts (Bergonzi 18, Cuddy 13, Mack 1745, Martin 102).

What influenced Eliot the most in writing poetry was a book he read written by the English critic, Arthur Symon, titled *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*. This book is about French symbolist writers of the 19th century. From this book, the author who had the greatest influence on Eliot is by far Jules Laforgue. Laforgue's influence is evident in many of Eliot's poems, sometimes to the point of plagiarism. Like Laforgue, Eliot uses dialogue between men and women that doesn't seem to communicate a thing. Other author's had an influence on Eliot as well, like Henry James and Joseph Conrad. All of these poet's had the common themes of estrangement from people and the world, isolationism, and the feeling that they were failing to articulate their thoughts (Bergonzi 7, 50, Cuddy 30, Mack 1743, Martin 41, Unger 8).

Henry James influence on Eliot's poetry is evident in the Jamesian qualities he uses. For example, the opening verse of *The Waste Land* ends with the Jamesian note, "I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter" (Mack, 1751). Although Lafourge, Conrad, and James were used as sources for Eliot when he composed poetry, there is still a distinct Eliotic quality whenever his work is read (Bergonzi 7, 50, Cuddy 55, Mack 1743, Martin 41, 97, Unger 10).

When Eliot began to compose *The Waste Land*, he used all the different themes, techniques, and style's he had been developing to this point. *The Waste Land* is developed entirely using fragments and quotations. This is symbolic of his despair in succeeding in ever fully articulating meaning. Although it is fragmented, it also reveals moments of continuity and wholeness quantified with recurrent themes of time, alienation, isolation, and articulation. Because Eliot used fragmentation as his style when writing this poem, it survived being cut in half by the editing of Ezra Pound. Many author's argue that Ezra Pound could have edited many more parts out, without effecting the meaning Eliot was trying to convey (Bergonzi 11, Mack 1743, Martin 20-22, 110, Ricks 9, Unger 18).

T. S. Eliot's use of estrangement in poems is his way of expressing feelings between himself and the world. His inability to give himself to, or to possess others is an example of the greater problem of isolation. The isolation theme is prevalent throughout the *Waste Land*, with many of his characters entwined. This is probably related to his problem of articulating. Whatever his reason for using isolation it caused him to turn towards god for answers. In 1927 he was accepted as a member of the Church of England. Prior to this time he used isolationism and alienation throughout all his poems and plays, up to, and including *The Waste Land* (Mack 1745, Martin 16, Unger 12, 18).

Perhaps it was Eliot's religious convictions, or his ideals towards culture, religion, and sex that had the greatest impact on the development of *The Waste Land*. He felt that if all of man had set a common goal to unite culture, religion, and sex that it would solve the ills of civilization. His feelings towards sex was that casual sex is "having sex for the sake of sex" (Martin 108). It is evident in *The Waste Land* that sex has been dehumanized, no one enjoys it, and it appears to be portrayed as a chore. This is obvious in verses II and III. In verse I, "The Burial of the Dead", Eliot allows an exception. In this verse I see the hyacinth girl as a woman of beauty and sensuality. However, in verses II, "A Game of Chess" and III, "The Fire sermon", I fail to see where anybody is enjoying sex. It appears that they are having sex for the duty and not the pleasure, even though there appears to be no reason, such as bearing a child (Martin 16, Ricks 90).

"A Game of Chess", begins and ends with fragments from Shakespeare's plays. The next fragment I saw was an abrupt switch to the story of Philomel, who was raped by a "barbarous king". Then it switches to a story of a woman with bad nerves. It is obvious that she is waiting for something, but I do not know what. Now the verse switches to a scene in a bar where Lil and a friend are talking about Albert who was just released from the army. Albert had given Lil, some money for new teeth; however, Lil spent the money on pills that would induce miscarriages. Lil took five of these pills indicating she had five miscarriages. A side effect of these pills was that they added thirty years to Lil's looks. I believe that

Lil will stay with Albert due to this effect. Perhaps Albert is the only man who will have her (Mack 1753, Martin 108).

The beginning verse of “The Fire Sermon” is indicating a change. The nymphs of old are departed, nobody believes in them anymore. The Thames river is not the same. It is now polluted, losing its sense of serenity. Then it switches to another reference to the rape of Philomel before changing to the scenes with Tiresias. Tiresias, who is a blind prophet, has been both male and female (bisexual?). He tells a story of more devalued sexual relations about a liaison with a typist. I see the typist, who I think is supposed to appear as an erotic object, as someone without any erotic appeal. Her surroundings are very uninviting. Her “stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays” (Mack 1758) are piled on the divan, yuck! There is no excitement, no energy. I am sure this has a direct bearing on Eliot’s feelings towards sexuality. After this scene Eliot switched back to fragmentary writing. Within these fragments there are some echoes of the typist and then the verse ends with one word, “burning” (Mack 1760) standing all alone on the page (Cuddy 30, Mack 1750, Martin 109).

The 4th verse, “Death by Water”, is entirely symbolic of death followed by rebirth. It tells of the corpse that is deteriorated by the sea. The current rising and falling implies regeneration, or hope, for humankind (Kenner 80, Mack 1760).

In the 5th verse, “What the Thunder Said”, I see thunder as a promising of rain, which is symbolic of rebirth. There is also symbolic of Christ’s renewal when Eliot refers to the “third man” who is walking beside the man in the lead, but when counted can only count two. And then again when he refers to the rooster crowing which is connected to the story Christ told of Peter’s betrayal. The rooster could also indicate the coming of morning and new hope (Kenner 110, Mack 1761, Ricks 70).

For me understanding and comprehending “The Waste Land” would have been impossible without the notes supplied at the end of each page in our text book. Although I have read many different books on this poem it is still impossible for me to entirely comprehend it. I believe Eliot summed it all up when he said “In The Waste Land, I wasn’t even bothering

whether I understood what I was saying” (Martin, 42). To me this was very obvious. The way he jumped from point to point, and quote to quote, there was obviously no reason nor rhyme. But then again, it is very obvious that Eliot knew exactly what he was doing and the impact that he would have on modern literature.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Most modern Arab poets were greatly influenced by Eliot particularly his complicated techniques. They were looking for something new to help them renovate the structure of the Arabic *qasida*. The highly complicated technique adopted by Eliot, more particularly his famous poem the *Waste Land* have been most influential of all. The use of the new poetry, free verse, has led to an "eruptive" change in the history of Arabic poetry in terms of form and content. In terms of form, modern Arab poets managed to do away with the unrhyme and unimeter scheme of the Classical Arabic forms, as the classical *qasida*, by their use of any desired number of foot within a single verse. Thus, this act has led them to the free practice of enjambment which gave the poem a great sense of unity and coherence.

3. Significance of the Study

This study derives its significance from the fact that it explores the poetic world of the great English poet who has influenced modern Arab poets, foremost of them was Badr Shakyr El Sayab. Al-Sayyab was influenced by the English romantic poets like Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats. He dedicated poems to them and even translated some of their works and incorporated them in his work (Baidoun 44-45). However, modernists like Eliot influenced him more, especially in his mature poetic stage. He was influenced by English poetry and “an admirer of T.S. Eliot and Edith Sitwell” (Haidar 8).

His internalization of modernist themes and techniques does not surprise us because modernism was an international movement in range, conception, and impact. As the most distinctive voice of Arab modernism, Al-Sayyab developed “a hybridized poetics” addressing "the new realities" emerging in the Arab region "in the post-WW II era" (Gohar “Eliot's Modernism” 42, 47). He laid down the origins of modernism in Arabic poetry through his eloquent use of articulate diction and (the Eliotic) free verse style. Azouqa acknowledges the impact of

Eliot and his poem *The Waste Land* poem on modern Arabic poetry like that of Al-Sayyab, Al-Bayati, and Al-Mala'ikah, a poetry that breaks with the tradition of classical poems, adopts free forms of verse, uses myth, and employs metaphorical expressions using imagery and symbolism ("Metapoetry" 47-48).

4. The Research Questions

1. To what extent has the English poet Eliot influenced the Arab poets and invigorated the movement of Arab modernism?
2. To what extent the *Waste Land* had an impact on modern Arab poets?

5. Hypotheses

1. The great English poet T.S.Eliot has greatly influenced Arab poets and accelerated the pace of modernism movement.
2. The *Waste Land* was such a poem that has had a powerful impact on Arab poets.

6. Methodology

The type of method usually followed in such kind of research, is descriptive analytical. The researcher will also give special consideration to all critical views and opinions in this domain. Eliot is such a wide-read poet and hence is widely criticized. Therefore, handling such a poetic edifice is not an easy affair.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

CHAPTER TWO

INFLUENCE OF ARABIC LITERATURE ON LITERARY WORLD'S HERITAGE

2.1 Arabic literature

Arabic literature comprises the corpus of written works produced in the Arabic language. The tradition of Arabic literature stretches back some 16 centuries to unrecorded beginnings in the Arabian Peninsula. At certain points in the development of European civilization, the literary culture of Islam and its Arabic medium of expression came to be regarded not only as models for emulation but also, through vital conduits such as Moorish Spain and Norman Sicily, as direct sources of inspiration for the intellectual communities of Europe. The rapid spread of the Islamic faith brought the original literary tradition of the Arabian Peninsula into contact with many other cultural traditions—Byzantine, Persian, Indian, Amazigh (Berber), and Andalusian, to name just a few—transforming and being transformed by all of them. At the turn of the 21st century, the powerful influence of the West tended to give such contacts a more one-sided directionality, but Arab litterateurs were constantly striving to find ways of combining the generic models and critical approaches of the West with more indigenous sources of inspiration drawn from their own literary heritage.

2.2 General considerations

Both terms in the title of this thesis are in need of elaboration. The use of the term *literature* in English to imply those writings that are susceptible to aesthetic analysis (as opposed to everything that is written) is of relatively recent vintage, and the development of a field of study devoted to it is yet more recent (with the study in the West of non-Western literary traditions being even more so). In Arabic the term for “literature” in the narrow English sense is *adab*, best translated by the French term *belles-lettres* (“beautiful letters”), which conveys the combination of the

aesthetic and didactic elements found in *adab* more effectively than does the English term *literature*. However, it is important to observe that, as is the case with many literary traditions, the origins of this Arabic term in the premodern period lie in the realms of correct behavior (“polite letters”).

The English language, unlike many other European languages, uses several adjectives—Arab, Arabic, and Arabian—to depict phenomena of the particular region and people that are linked to the notion of “Arab,” a word that has the original sense of “nomad.” For the purposes of this article, the term Arabic will be used to refer only to the Arabic language. The sections that follow will be concerned only with literature that has been composed in Arabic; it thus excludes works written by Arabs in other languages.

2.3The Arabic language

The Arabic language in its earliest phases was relatively well protected from the forces of rapid change by the peninsular environment within which it developed. It is the best-preserved model of the Semitic languages. Its syntax and morphology—recorded and systematized as part of the massive research endeavor that followed the production of an authoritative version of the text of the Qur’ān in the 7th century (although this date is a matter of controversy)—provide evidence of early features of the Semitic languages.

These features have since disappeared from sister languages, of which Hebrew is perhaps the most prominent. As the history of the revelation, memorization, and eventual recording in written form of the Qur’ān makes clear, the society of Arabia was one that relied to a large extent on human memory to preserve details of important events and principles and to pass on such information and artifacts to succeeding generations. That very reality makes it extremely difficult to pinpoint precise details regarding the earliest development of the Arabic language and its literary tradition. What has survived as the earliest examples of Arabic literary compositions consists of a highly elaborate system of poetic composition and a series of oratorical and often homiletic utterances, all couched in language of a variety and at a level that was to be later reflected in the

style of the Qur'ānic revelations themselves. It is unclear, however, whether this apparently elevated language (perhaps reserved for special occasions, such as poetry competitions) was ever the means of spoken communication for any particular group.

2.4 Context

Whatever may have been the linguistic environment of pre-Islamic Arabia, the rapid spread of the faith across Africa and into Asia soon created a situation in which written and spoken Arabic inhabited opposite ends of a linguistic spectrum. At one end was the language of written communication and Islamic scholarship, which regarded the language of the Qur'ān as its inimitable yardstick; from this belief developed the later critical doctrine of *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* (the “inimitability of the Qur'ān”), which resulted in a written (literary) language that has undergone remarkably little change over the centuries. At the other end was the spoken language of Arabs, which from Spain (known as Al-Andalus during the Moorish period) and Morocco in the west to the Arabian Gulf and Iraq in the east displayed—and continues to display—enormous variety, hardly a surprising linguistic phenomenon in view of the great distances involved and the wide variety of cultures with which Islam came into contact.

The Arabic literary tradition began within the context of a tribal, nomadic culture. With the advent and spread of Islam, that tradition was carried far and wide during the course of the 7th to the 10th century. It initially sought to preserve the values of chivalry and hospitality while expressing a love of animals and describing the stark realities of nature, but it proceeded to absorb cultural influences from every region brought within the fold of “Dār al-Islām” (“Abode of Islam”). Early contacts with the Sasanian empire of Persia (present-day Iran) led to a noisy but fruitful exchange of cultural values. The foundation in 762 of Baghdad, built expressly as a caliphal capital, brought about further expansion to the east and contacts with the cultures of India and beyond; one of the results of such contact was the appearance in the Middle East of the world's greatest collection of narrative, *Alf laylah wa laylah* (*The Thousand and One Nights*). In that same capital city was founded the great library Bayt al-Hikmah (“House of Wisdom”), which, until the sack of the city by the

Mongols in 1258, served as a huge repository for the series of works from the Hellenistic tradition that were translated into Arabic. Al-Andalus became to the rest of Europe a model of a society in which the religions and cultures of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism could work together and create a system of scholarship and teaching that could transmit the heritage of older civilizations and the rich cultural admixture of Andalusian society. Western science, mathematics, philosophy, music, and literature were all beneficiaries of this fascinating era, of whose final stages the fabulous Alhambra palace complex in Granada, Spain, remains the most visible token.

By the 10th century, the political fragmentation of the larger Islamic community was evident in the existence of three separate caliphates: that of the 'Abbāsids in Baghdad, that of the Shī'ite Fāṭimids in Cairo, and that of the Umayyads, in Spain at this time after having been earlier removed from power in the eastern regions by the advent of the 'Abbāsids. Ironically, this fragmentation worked to the advantage of literature and its practitioners; the existence of a continuing series of petty dynasties provided ample opportunity for patronage at court, which was the primary means of support for poets and scholars. However, literary production and creativity were inevitably marked by the ongoing series of Crusades, carried out by Christians from western Europe, the Mongol invasions and later those of the Turkic conqueror Timur (Tamerlane), the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453, the fall of Granada in the Reconquista in

1492, and the fall of Cairo to the Ottomans in 1517. It has been customary in surveys of the Arabic literary tradition to write off the era between 1258 and 1800 by declaring it a "period of decadence." However, a more nuanced analysis of the situation would acknowledge the political turmoil that characterized many regions and periods and would also suggest that a degree of caution is needed in applying Western criteria for literary evaluation to a period in which the aesthetic yardsticks were clearly different.

The nature of "the modern" in the context of Arabic literary history involves twin processes: first, renewed contacts with the Western world, something that was considerably accelerated by European imperial

incursions during the 19th century, and, second, a renewed interest in the classical heritage of the Arabic language and Islam. Particularly in analyzing the earlier stages in the process known as *al-nahḍah* (“renaissance”), Western historians have for a long time placed much more emphasis on the first of these factors. It is certainly true that the 19th century witnessed a vigorous translation movement that introduced to the readership of Arabic literature examples of genres such as the novel, the short story, and the drama. All these genres were subsequently produced within the literary milieu of Arabic, although the chronology and pace of that process varied widely in different regions. However, as Arab literary historians endeavoured to trace the development of a modern literary tradition in different regions and as creative writers themselves strove to find indigenous sources of inspiration and modes of expression, a perceived need to incorporate the second category mentioned above—that of the linkage between the classical heritage of the Arab past and the creativity of the present—became more pressing and led in many regions to a reexamination of the balance between these two forces.

At the turn of the 21st century, the Arab creative writer operated at a local level within a social environment that, more often than not, constrained freedom of expression and indeed subjected literature to strict forms of censorship. Many prominent Arab authors spent large segments of their life in exile from their homelands for political reasons. More broadly, the confrontation between secularism and popular religious movements, which might in the best of circumstances provide for a fruitful interaction of opinions, instead—because of local, regional, and global factors—created an atmosphere of tension and repression that was often not conducive to creative thought. This confrontation also prompted Arab litterateurs to view the global environment with considerable circumspection.

2.5 The Glorious Qur’ān

The revelation of the Qur’ān to the Prophet Muhammad, beginning at some point early in the 7th century ad, is the foundational event in Islam. It separates the period before Islam (known as the *Jāhiliyyah* [“period of ignorance”]) from the Islamic era and provides the Muslim community

with its most significant monument, the word of God revealed to humanity. Its message is conveyed in a language of great beauty, something that is regarded as an inimitable miracle. Its contents are the primary basis for the formulation of Islamic law and the designation of conduct by Muslims, both as individuals and as a community. However, beyond the Qur'ān's central position within the Islamic faith, the aftermath of its revelation led to a lengthy scholarly process that traced its precedents and analyzed the Arabic language system; as such, its revelation also needs to be viewed as the event that marks the initial stages in the recording and study of the Arabic literary tradition.

The word *qur'ān* means “recitation,” illustrating a major difference between it and the sacred scriptural sources of Judaism and Christianity: the Qur'ān is primarily an oral phenomenon, something to be recited and intoned (the latter involving a highly elaborated skill known as *tajwīd*). The textual version of the Qur'ān was to become the focus of a vast repertoire of scholarship—devoted to the interpretation of the text and to the codification of the dogmas, regulations, and ethical prescriptions that it contains and the system of language that it represents—but from the beginnings of Islam to the present day the sounds of the Qur'ān have played a major part in the daily lives and practices of all peoples living within the dominions of Islam.

2.6 Revelation, compilation, and structure

"Recite in the name of your Lord Who created— From an embryo created the human". This opening verse from the 96th sura (chapter) of the Qur'ān is believed to be the first revelation to Muhammad (as translated by Michael Sells in *Approaching the Qur'an*). God in the first person addresses Muhammad directly in the second person; those who listen to the revelations delivered in Arabic from Muhammad's mouth are designated as “they.” During the course of Muhammad's lifetime, these revelations were memorized and recorded in written form. This activity was carried out in Mecca until 622 ce and—following the *Hijrah* (the migration of Muhammad and his followers)—in the oasis town of Yathrib, later to be known as Medina, where Muhammad remained from 622 until his death in 632. But these revelations were not organized in any systematic fashion. It was only after Muhammad's death, when many

of those who had memorized the revelations were themselves dying, that the Muslim community realized the urgent need to establish a canonical version of the Qur'ān. That was achieved during the reign of the third caliph to rule after Muhammad's death, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān. Thereafter the text of the Qur'ān that had been prepared under 'Uthmān was declared the only authoritative version, and all variant versions were ordered destroyed.

Apart from the short opening sura, Al-Fātiḥah ("The Opening"), which is regularly used by Muslims as a prayer and at the conclusion of contracts (including that of marriage), the suras of the Qur'ān are arranged in order of length: the longest (Al-Baqarah ["The Cow"], with 286 verses) is second while a selection of very short suras comes at the end of the Qur'ān, with the six verses of Al-Nās ("The People") as the final—114th—sura. These short suras belong to the Meccan period of revelation, while the lengthier suras are made up of collections of revelations from both the Meccan and Medinan periods.

Each sura begins with a listing of its title, the number of verses it contains, the venue in which its particular revelations were received, and its placement in the order of suras. This method of compilation allows for certain sections and narratives to be presented as unified wholes; for that reason, Yūsuf (the 12th sura, the Qur'ānic version of the Joseph narrative) has long been a favourite object of study by Western scholars. However, in the context of a history of Arabic literature, it is important to recognize that the Qur'ān's oral origins and its modes of compilation led to the emergence of a text in which revelations from different periods are interwoven. As a result, revelations devoted to a single topic may be dispersed among several different suras. Since the Qur'ān plays such an enormously important role as a model for Arabic literary discourse, this feature of the text is of central importance.

2.7 Message and Impact

The primary message of the Qur'ān is the absolute and indivisible oneness of God, reflected in the first part of the *shahādah* ("statement of faith"): there is no deity but God. His attributes are reflected in the 99 "beautiful names," adjectives used within the text: *merciful*, *powerful*,

forgiving, great, and so on. The message imparted to humanity via his chosen prophet, Muhammad, is that this world is but a preparation for the next and that believers must live their lives with that fact in mind. God has provided clear “signs” (*āyāt*) regarding the fates of peoples, such as ‘Ād and Thamūd (sura 7, verses 65–79), who ignored this message. Muslims are urged to live their lives in such a way that on the Day of Judgment, when their deeds are weighed in the balance, they will earn a place in paradise.

The message of the Qur’ān is often illustrated with a variety of homiletic narratives. The most famous is the story of Joseph, in the middle of which he, while imprisoned, delivers a sermon on the oneness of God. Sura 18, Al-Kahf (“The Cave”), is also notable for its reference to the story of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (verses 9–26), who fall into a prolonged sleep and wake to find themselves in an era of Christian belief, and to the story of Moses (verses 60–83), who is severely tested by the strange behaviour of the mysterious, legendary figure al-Khiḍr (al-Khaḍir).

With the emigration of Muhammad to Medina and the establishment of a Muslim community, the revelations assume a somewhat different tone. The oral nature of the communication between Prophet and community is reflected in the many revelations on doctrinal and behavioral issues that take the form of responses to questions. These revelations incorporate the phrase “They will ask you about...” as part of the text itself. Such pronouncements provide the source for Islamic law regarding such matters as inheritance, usury, diet, gambling, and marriage and divorce.

The Qur’ān is thus the primary and central authority for the community of Muslim believers throughout the world, and, as such, its sounds are heard and its message is read by millions of people on a daily basis. Within the realm of Arabic literature, the Qur’ān has played a foundational role and continues to serve, much as the Bible does in the history of Western literatures, as the major stylistic yardstick for literary expression in the Arabic language and as a major source of intertextual reference. Today the availability of modern media has expanded still further the reach of the Qur’ānic message, with the muezzin’s call to prayer amplified across Islamic cities and with television and radio devoting significant portions

of their broadcasts to recitations of the sacred text and commentaries on them.

2.8 Poetry

“The register of the Arabs” (*dīwān al-‘Arab*) is the age-old phrase whereby Arabs have acknowledged the status and value that poetry has always retained within their cultural heritage. From the very earliest stages in the Arabic literary tradition, poetry has reflected the deepest sense of Arab self-identity, of communal history, and of aspirations for the future. Within this tradition the role of the poet has been of major significance. The linkage between public life and the composition of ringing odes has remained a direct one from the pre-Islamic era—when the poet was a major verbal weapon, someone whose verses could be invoked to praise the heroes of his own tribe and to pour scorn on those of their enemies—through the premodern period—when poetic eulogies not only extolled the ruler who patronized the poet but reflected a pride in the achievements and extent of the Islamic dominions—to the modern period—in which the poet has felt called upon to either reflect or oppose the prevailing political mood. In times of crisis it has always been, and still remains, the poet’s voice that is first raised to reflect the tragedies, the anger, the fears, and the determination of the Arab people.

The tribes of the Arabian Peninsula in the pre-Islamic period (pre-7th century ce) provided the social venue for the earliest examples of Arabic poetry. The poet’s performances of his odes were a powerful tool at the tribe’s disposal, arousing its heroes to battle against their enemies, extolling the chivalry and generosity of its men and the beauty of its women, and pouring scorn on the foibles of opposing tribes. Fallen heroes were commemorated in the *marthiyyah*, or elegy, and it is in this role that the voice of the female poet is prominently heard, as, for example, in the verses of the 7th-century poets al-Khansā’ and Laylā al-Akhyāliyyah. Many of the earliest male poets became renowned as warriors and lovers, and around their careers (or, perhaps, their “personae”; the historical existence of several poets remains unverified) elaborate traditions of narrative developed, as, for example, with the pre-Islamic cavalier-poet ‘Antarah and the hapless love poet Majnūn Laylā (literally, “He Who Was Driven Crazy by Love for Laylā”). Such was the

status of the poet as spokesman for the virtues of the tribal community that a kind of anticomunal persona was developed in reaction by the so-called *ṣuʿlūk* (“brigand”) poets, who were depicted as living a life of solitude and hardship in the desert accompanied only by its fiercest denizens (the snake, the hyena, and the wolf). Taʿabbāṭa Sharran (“He Who Has Put Evil in His Armpit”) and al-Shanfarā are among the best known of the *ṣuʿlūk* poets.

This tradition of poetry, composed by poets and passed on through the memories of bards from one generation to the next, emerged in the 7th century as the primary linguistic precedent to the Arabic of the newly recorded text of the Qurʾān. As such, it became the focus of a great deal of attention as scholars began the lengthy process of compiling, anthologizing, and analyzing the corpus of an oral tradition of poetry that stretched back several centuries to distant, unknown beginnings.

During the Islamic centuries (post-7th century), poetry came to occupy a central place within the courts of the caliph and of the sultans, emirs, governors, and other potentates who ruled over the various regions of the Islamic world following its breakup into smaller, more local dominions. Poetry by itself rarely, if ever, provided a sufficient living for even the most gifted crafter of verses, and that remains as much the case today as it did during the premodern period. A large percentage of poetry (especially panegyrics) was inspired and often commissioned by the ruling authorities for public recitation on many sorts of “state occasions,” and the poet would expect to be rewarded for such celebrations of the glories of Islam and its rulers. Furthermore, a number of prominent figures—caliphs (Al-Walīd ibn Yazīd, for example, and Ibn al-Muʿtazz), ministers, philosophers, and theologians—were prominent contributors to the poetic tradition. However, the variety of other genres and subthemes that have been preserved in collections of poetry make it clear that there were other occasions that were less public and more informal at which poetry of a less official stamp would be recited.

2.8 Metre and Rhyme

The recording of the earliest-known Arabic poetry provided future generations with examples of recitations by bards of 7th- or 8th-century versions of poems whose original composition and performance date back perhaps centuries. The collections reveal an already elaborate prosodic system, the earliest phases in the development of which remain substantially unknown.

The various types of poem are marked by particular patterns of rhyme and syllabic pulse. Each line is divided into two half-lines (called *miṣrāʿ*); the second of the two ends with a rhyming syllable that is used throughout the poem. In order that the listening audience may internalize the rhyme that is to be used, the first line (which is often repeated) uses the rhyme at the end of both halves of the line; thereafter the rhyme occurs only at the end of the complete line.

The great 8th-century philologist al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad developed a system whereby the differing stress patterns that he heard in poetic recitations were subdivided into 15 separate metres (later expanded to 16). While al-Khalīl (who also wrote treatises on music and compiled an Arabic dictionary) clearly stated that his system merely set down one method for the metrical analysis of Arabic poetry and while later scholars have suggested different systems, it is remarkable that al-Khalīl's prosodic system remained the standard—and, indeed, constituted one of the modes of defining what was poetic and what was not—until well into the 20th century.

2.9 Categories and forms

Two additional forms that have occasioned the most interest among scholars originated in the Iberian Peninsula: the *zajal* and the *muwashshah*. There is a great deal of controversy regarding almost every aspect of these two forms—their early history, their performance practices, their metrics, and their linkage to the early history of Western lyric poetry. What is clear, however, is not only that they provide a wonderfully accurate picture of the rich multicultural environment found in Al-Andalus during the Islamic period (8th–15th centuries), but also

that, following their migration across North Africa to the Mashriq (as the eastern regions of the Islamic world were termed), they contributed significantly to both the elite and popular traditions of Arabic poetry.

A major change in the form of the Arabic poem occurred in the late 1940s, when two Iraqi poets, Nāzik al-Malā'ikah and Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb, almost simultaneously decided to abandon the system of prosody that the critical establishment had for centuries imposed as a principal method of identifying the poetic, choosing to adopt in its place a system that used variable line length and patterns of assonance and repetition in place of end rhyme. While it should be noted that there had been previous attempts to break out of the rigid strictures of traditional metrics (especially in colloquial poetic genres that were for the most part ignored by critics), it was this gesture in the 1940s that ushered in a new era for Arabic poetry, one that moved beyond the notion of variable metre and line length to the prose poem and other experiments in form and poetic discourse. With all that, however, the traditional form of the *qaṣīdah* continued at the hands of certain poets to hold an important place in the hearts of those many Arabs who still enjoyed listening to the form. In the latter half of the 20th century, Al-Akḥṭal al-Ṣaghīr (pen name of Bishārā al-Khūrī), Badawī al-Jabal (pen name of Muḥammad al-Aḥmad), and Muḥammad al-Jawāhirī were notable *qaṣīdah* poets.

2.10 Genres and themes

Alongside these methods of categorizing poetry and poets, some classical critics identified three principal “purposes” (*aghrāḍ*) for the public performance of poetry: first, panegyric (*madḥ*), the praise of the tribe and its elders, a genre of poetry that was to become the primary mode of poetic expression during the Islamic period; second, praise’s opposite—lampoon (*hijā'*)—whereby the poet would be expected to take verbal aim at the community’s enemies and impugn their honour (most often at the expense of women); and third, praise of the dead, or elegy (*rithā'*).

Panegyric’s function as a means of extolling the virtues of the tribe and its leaders was easily transferred, albeit within a very different political

and social context, from the pre-Islamic period to the Islamic. Hyperbolic expressions of satisfaction and delight with the ruler were intended to bolster the ruler's sense of self-esteem; this goal, the poet hoped, would not only illustrate the prestige of the Muslim community as a whole but also, on a more practical level, encourage the presentation of largesse to the poet. The great master of the genre, and arguably Arabic's most illustrious poet, al-Mutanabbī ("He Who Claimed to Be a Prophet"), is quite unsubtle in making this point in a famous ode in praise of the great 10th-century ruler of Aleppo, Sayf al-Dawlah:

To you belongs the praise regarding the pearls that I pronounce;
You are the giver, but I am the arranger.

The very continuity of the repertoire of imagery in this genre can be gauged by comparing two lines written more than three centuries apart. The first is by the pre-Islamic poet al-Nābighah addressing his ruler:

You are the sun itself, other monarchs are star
When your light shines bright, the other stars vanish.

The second is another of al-Mutanabbī's lines, written after Sayf al-Dawlah was restored to health after illness:

Light is now returned to the sun; previously it was extinguished,
As though the lack of it in a body were a kind of disease.

Panegyric was adopted immediately in the cause of Islam. The 6th- and 7th-century poet Hassān ibn Thābit, often referred to as "the Prophet's poet," composed panegyrics in praise of Muhammad, recording his victories in strident tones and initiating a tradition of poems in praise of the Prophet of Islam that continued throughout the ensuing centuries. With the first dynasty of caliphs, the Umayyads, panegyric became a major propaganda device. The Christian poet al-Akhtal, for instance, extolled figures who were now not merely spiritual but also temporal rulers:

When nobility and number are taken into account, you hail from a house
that has no peer.

This widespread use of panegyric to glorify Islam and its successes through public performances of poems that record the policies and victories of rulers continued into the ‘Abbāsīd period. Indeed, with the gradual fragmentation of central authority beginning in the 9th century, the process was enhanced: rival caliphates and dynasties flourished in widely scattered parts of the Islamic world, and around them courts provided venues for the stentorian boasts of poets. The Andalusian poet Ibn Hānī undoubtedly enraged the ‘Abbāsīd caliph in Baghdad when he referred to the capture of Cairo by the Fāṭimid dynasty:

“Has Egypt been captured?” the sons of Al-‘Abbas will ask. Inform them that indeed the entire matter has been concluded.

As an important source of patronage, the panegyric—now assuming a more bipartite structure, extolling both the state of the people ruled and the glory of the ruler’s own personage—became the major mode of expression in *qaṣīdah* form until the 20th century. The volumes of collected poetry (divans) of all the greatest poets contain sections devoted to *madh*; beyond those poets mentioned above, a short list of other great classical figures would have to include Bashshār ibn Burd, Abū Tammām, al-Buhturī, and Abū Firās. With Abū Tammām in particular the panegyric genre became the supreme (or, some critics claimed, the extreme) manifestation of a trend in poetic creativity toward elaboration in imagery and diction that was subsumed under the heading of *badī* (innovative use of figurative language), a development that rapidly became a primary focus of critical debate.

During the ensuing centuries poets carried on this tradition, and it was not until the second decade of the 20th century that a severe critical analysis by the Egyptian critic ‘Abbās Mahmūd al-‘Aqqād of an ode by Egypt’s most illustrious modern poet, Aḥmad Shawqī, suggested that the forms, functions, and imagery of the occasional poem, not to mention the role of the poet, were themselves in a process of change.

Critical analyses of the Arabic poetic tradition point out that the vigorous practice of lampooning is the obverse of panegyric: by verbally flattening one’s foes, the ground is open for the glorification of one’s own tribe or community. The themes of *hijā* (“lampooning”) and *fakhr* (“boasting”)

thus often occur together, and poets noted above for their contributions to the panegyric were equally at home with the lampoon. Al-Mutanabbī, in particular, is also famous for his withering attacks on Abū al-Misk Kāfūr, the Ethiopian slave who was regent in Egypt in the 10th century. Having quit the court of Sayf al-Dawlah, the poet arrives full of hope and hyperbolic praise:

O father of musk, the visage for which I have been yearning
The precious moment that is my dearest wish.

But, when those hopes are dashed, the poet leaves behind him a set of lampoons that are bywords for the lampoon genre:

Never did I expect to witness time
When a dog could do me ill and be praised for it all the while.

The ability of words to hurt and to shame is present in the Arabic poetic tradition from the outset. The pre-Islamic poet ‘Amr ibn Qamī’ah is specific on the point:

Many’s the tribal bard loaded with hatred whom I have tamed,
So his folk have felt belittled and ashamed.

While defeat in battle is, of course, a primary focus of derision in this type of poetry, the honour of the community and the family has resided to a major extent in the protection of its women. Al-Hārith ibn Hillizah’s contribution to the tribal and poetic joust between himself and ‘Amr ibn Kulthūm’, recorded in Al-Mu‘allaqāt, demonstrates one form of insult within such a context:

We turned our attention to the Banū Tamīm tribe. As we marked the truce month,
Their daughters were our maidservants.

During the Umayyad caliphate, a number of poets indulged in a series of poetic jousts in Al-Mirbad, the central square of the city Al-Baṣrah (Basra). Collected as *Al-Naqā’id* (“Flytings”), these contests—involving principally Jarīr and al-Farazdaq but also al-Akhṭal and al-Ṭirimmāh—took the level of invective to new heights (or depths):

Al-Farazdaq's mother gave birth to a fornicator; what she produced
Was a pygmy with stubby legs.

As with panegyric, the instinct for lampoon found no shortage of targets in the ensuing centuries. The great poet Abū Nuwās seems to be aware of the risk he can take when he even teases the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd over a scandal concerning the caliph's sister:

If you get some pleasure from the removal of some rascal's head,
Do not kill him by sword; marry him to 'Abbāsah!

While such poetic barbs may have been part of the cut and thrust of political life in the premodern period, the realities of life in the Arabic-speaking world during the 20th century rendered most attempts at lampoon a life-threatening exercise. This, however, did not prevent a courageous figure such as the Iraqi poet Muẓaffar al-Nawwāb from taking potshots at the rulers of Saudi Arabia:

The son of Ka'bah is having sex.

The world's prices are on hold...The celebration of the life and courage of a tribal comrade fallen in battle is the occasion for the earliest elegies in Arabic. After an account of the death itself, these elegies include an appreciation of the hero's virtues, thus providing yet another occasion for the community to express its unifying principles. In her contributions to the genre, al-Khansā' mourns the loss of two of her brothers, one named Ṣakhr:

On that day when I was forever parted from Ṣakhr, Ḥassān's father,
I bade farewell to all pleasure and converse. Ah, my grief for him, and my mother's grief! Is he really consigned to the tomb morning and night?

This combination of personal grief and communal mourning, with its underlying currents of pride and aspiration, survived in the early schisms within the Muslim community during the Islamic period, which came to replicate the conflicts of earlier times. In the elegies of those poets who adhered to groups such as the Shī'ites or the Khārijites can be found much the same spirit. A 7th-century Khārijite poet, for instance, laments Zayd, one of the group's fallen heroes:

To God I protest that, from every tribe, battle has destroyed the cream of men.

So long as the sun shines to the East, may God quench Zayd's thirst,
And grant him a haven in the gardens of Paradise.

Like panegyrics and lampoons, the elegy was adaptable to the expectations of the ever-expanding Muslim community and itself became a further means of public affirmation—mourning the dead, to be sure, but also finding solace in the strength of Islam and its rulers. Poetic divans of all eras are filled with elegies of rulers and important figures. A particular topic of communal mourning is the fall of an entire city to enemy forces. The renowned elegy of the 9th-century poet Ibn al-Rūmī on the fall of Al-Baṣrah to an army of slave labourers is a case in point:

My heart is seared with grief for you, dome of Islam, a grief that extends
my agony, My heart is seared with grief for you, haven from distant lands,
one that will linger For years to come.

The great philosopher-poet Abū al-‘Ala’ al-Ma‘arrī combines his grief over the loss of a relative with observations on the ephemerality of this life: Soften your tread. Methinks the earth's surface is but bodies of the dead,

Walk slowly in the air, so you do not trample on the remains of God's servants.

As human conflicts continued unabated through the 20th century and into the 21st, so the elegy continued to fulfill its generic purposes as an expression of personal sorrow and broader communal grief and steadfastness. “Wa-‘āda...fī kafan” (1964; “And He Came Home...in a Shroud”), by the Palestinian poet Mahmūd Darwīsh, is a modern example:

In our land they relate, In grief they relate, How my friend who departed
Came home in a shroud. His name was... No, don't mention his name.
Leave it in our hearts, Don't allow the word To be swept away by the wind... like ashes.

To these three poetic genres—panegyric, lampoon, and elegy—was added at an early stage another category that was quite different in focus and yet reflected a very vigorous aspect of the Arabic poetic tradition from the outset: description (*wasf*). Analysts of the earliest poetry chose to devote particular attention to the ways in which poets depicted animals and other aspects of nature and often indulged in complex patterns of imagery that likened attributes of one animal to those of another. The images of camels and horses—the two mainstays of the tribe’s mobility—of the pre-Islamic poets are justifiably well known. Imru’ al-Qays describes his horse:

He has the loins of a gazelle, the thighs of an ostrich; he gallops like a wolf
and canters like a young fox.

Ṭarafah’s camel is

Sure of foot and firm, as thin as the planks of a bier; I quicken her
Pace over paths long-trodden, as varied as a striped shirt,
Able to outpace the swiftest camels, even of noblest stock,
With her hindlegs speeding behind her forelegs along the beaten path.

The scenes and images that are so characteristic of the earliest poems—animals, storm clouds, evenings of revelry, places of recollection of the beloved—linger within the Arabic poetic tradition as a whole, to be invoked by Arab poets in quest of links to a nostalgic, idealized view of the past. In 11th-century Spain, for example, Ibn Khafājah could still return to the images of the Arabian Peninsula for inspiration:

O oryx of Najd, through destiny’s decrees many are the hardships,
but few indeed are the loyal.

Spain provides the poet with a very different environment from that of Arabia, of course, and the same Ibn Khafājah could also depict the kind of gardens for which Andalusian palaces (including the Alhambra) are still renowned:

In a garden where the shade was as dark as ruby lips and blossoms grew,
as white as pearly teeth.

The strong link in Islam between the garden and paradise ensured that elaborate descriptions of attempts by temporal rulers to replicate within their own palaces the pleasures of the life to come would remain a prominent theme of Arabic poetry. The theme and the imagery were later adopted by the romantic poets of the 20th century, as in ‘Alī Maḥmūd Ṭāhā’s poem “Ughniyah rīfiyyah” (“Rustic Song”):

As water plays with the shade of the trees
And clouds flirt with the moonlight...
There in the darkness stands a willow
As though unnoticed in the dusk.

2.11. Later genres

As the ceremonial *qaṣīdah* during the Islamic centuries became more and more the realm of panegyric, other themes within the pre-Islamic tradition—wine, hunting, love, and maxims—emerged as separate genres in their own right. At least by the time of Abū Nuwās, who wrote during the 8th and 9th centuries, the collected works of a poet would contain sections that included, among other categories, *khamriyyāt* (wine poems), *tardiyyāt* (hunt poems), *zuhdiyyāt* (ascetic poems), and *ghazal* (love poems).

2.12 Wine poetry

The earliest poetry in Arabic contains much description of wine and revelry. The opening lines of the *mu‘allaqah* of ‘Amr ibn Kulthūm are a famous instance:

Up there, maiden, and bring us a morning draught in a goblet;
Do not hold back on the prize vintages of ‘Andarīn!

The pre-Islamic poet al-A‘shā was especially recognized for his wine poetry. As such he became a focus of special attention in a famous work composed by al-Ma‘arrī in the 11th century, *Risālat al-ghufrān* (“The Epistle of Forgiveness”; Eng. trans. *Risalat ul Ghufuran: A Divine Comedy*), in which a sheikh travels to paradise to ascertain the treatment of prominent pre-Islamic figures in the light of Islamic codes of behaviour, and Al-A‘shā and other pre-Islamic poets are made to justify their graphic depictions of pre-Islamic revelry and wine drinking. The

Qur'ān's injunctions against wine drinking—e.g., sura 5, Al-Mā'idah ("The Table"), verse 90—provide the context of such discussions. These firm injunctions are an expression of Islamic orthodoxy, but the very number of poetic divans that contain sections devoted to wine poetry illustrates the extent to which poetry could be used to confront such religious attitudes. One of the Umayyad caliphs, al-Walīd ibn Yazīd, was a notable wine poet, and the spirit of challenge to orthodoxy reached its height with Abū Nuwās, who, far from concealing his bibulousness, was determined to flaunt it:

Ho, pour me a glass of wine, and confirm that it's wine!
Do not do it in secret, when it can be done in the open.

With Abū Nuwās, the wine poem (*khamriyyah*) acquires a set of actors—the publican, the companions, the wine pourer (*sāqī*), the curvaceous wine bottle—all of whom tilt against the fates. The poetry of Abū Nuwās and his successors is a clear challenge to Islamic orthopraxy (correctness of practice), and at the same time it offers a revealing glimpse of the private proclivities of the ruling elite.

This same set of images within the wine poem provides the framework for poetry of an entirely different purpose: that of the Sufi (mystical) poets. While the Persian tradition, with world-renowned figures such as Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī and Hāfez, provides peerless examples of the genre, the Egyptian poet and Sufi master Ibn al-Fārīd also utilizes the imagery of the genre to great effect. The opening line of his mystical *khamriyyah* mentions not only wine (now acting as a symbol for the achievement of a transcendent state) but also the ancient theme of the absent beloved. However, the vintage of this particular wine precedes human awareness:

In remembrance of the beloved we drank a wine, Through which we were
drunk before the vine was ever created.

2.13. Hunt poetry

The many hunt scenes to be found in the earliest Arabic poetry—one of the most notable is in Imru' al-Qays's *mu'allaqah*—illustrate the love of this sport among the Arabs of the desert, one that continues to the present

day. As the pre-Islamic *qaṣīdah* continued to furnish poets during the Islamic period with themes for separate categories of poem, it is to be expected that a separate type of hunt poem (*ṭardiyyah*) would emerge. Indeed, such were the leisure interests of many of the Umayyad and ‘Abbāsīd caliphs that the new genre thrived.

In these poems the scene of the morning departure is still present, having been carried over from the opening section (*naṣīb*) of the *qaṣīdah*, and the speaker’s companions are the saker falcon (*ṣaqr*) and the hunting dog. Both are often portrayed in luxuriant detail and often become the poem’s heroes. Abū Nuwās’s divan contains many examples of this category:

When afox emerges at the foot of the mountain,
“Up!” I yell to my hound, and he rushes away like a hero.
Brave-hearted he is, a splendid worker, well trained,
And perfect in every way.

The caliph, poet, and critic Ibn al-Mu‘tazz clearly reflects his personal interests and experience in his own contributions to the hunt poem: The trainer brought out a lithe saluki-hound that he had often used..., She snatches her prey without hesitation, Just as a mother hugs her children.

2.14 Ascetic poetry

The pre-Islamic *mu‘allaqah* poet Zuhayr finishes his long poem recounting tribal warfare and attempts at reconciliation with a series of reflections and maxims:

Life’s experience has taught me the happenings of yesterday and today;
As for the morrow, I admit to being totally blind.

The proclivity, often indulged in by the Arab poet, for homiletic advice and contemplation found a fruitful source in not only the Qur’ān’s pointed comments on the ephemerality of this life in comparison with the next (as in, for example, sura 11, Hūd, verses 15–16) but also the Islamic community’s quest for a more individual mode of access to the

transcendent. As is the case with other religions, the latter is closely linked to the advocacy of an ascetic life, a call in which the Qur'ānic message is proclaimed by the life and sayings of a figure such as al-Hasan al-Baṣrī. While many poets contributed to the repertoire of the ascetic poem (*zuhdiyyah*), it is Abū al-ʿAtāhiyah whose name is most closely associated with the genre. In poem after poem he concentrates on the mortality of humanity; as part of that theme there is frequent allusion to the *ubi sunt* (Latin: “where are”) motif, asking what has happened to the great historical figures of yesteryear and pointing to their common abode in the grave:

Note well! All of us are dust. Who among humanity is immortal?

With the poetry of al-Maʿarrī, the homiletic aspect is blended with philosophical contemplation and pessimism. For him life is not merely a brief period of preparation for what is to come but an experience of sheer misery. In one of his most famous lines he states:

Would that a babe could die at the hour of its birth And never suckle from its mother in her confinement .Before it can even utter a word, it says to her: All you will Glean from me is grief and trouble.

With al-Maʿarrī these expressions of asceticism and rejection of this world and its values were coupled with a vigorously iconoclastic attitude toward Islamic orthodoxy of his time and toward those who advocated its tenets.

Like the hunt poem discussed above, the ascetic poem as a distinct genre seems to have been the product of a particular era in the development of Islamic thought and its expression in literary form. That is not to say, of course, that its motif—an exhortation to abandon the ephemeral ties of this world—has not retained its homiletic function in Arabic poetry to the present day, but rather that the theme of humankind's mortality is now subsumed within poems with a variety of purposes. The modern Egyptian poet Salāh ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr, for instance, depicts a rural preacher in his “*Al-Nās fī bilādī*” (1957; “The People in My Country”):

So-and-so constructed palaces for himself and raised them up...
But one weak-echoed evening arrived the Angel of Death...
And down into Hell rolled the soul of So-and-so.

2.15 Love poetry

The theme of love has been present in the Arabic poetic tradition since the earliest poems committed to written form. The bulk of the love poetry that has been preserved was composed by male poets and expresses love and admiration for women. (Whatever early tradition there may have been of women's poetry has not survived, although women have always played a major role in funeral rituals, including the composing and reciting of elegies, for which al-Khansā' and Laylā al-Akhyāliyyah are best known.) The examples of a homoerotic tradition of love poetry that have been preserved belong in the main to the later centuries of the classical period, beginning in the 9th century.

The earliest Arabic poems reveal distinctly different attitudes to the theme of love. The desert environment, the nomadic lifestyle, and the need for constant travel all contribute to a poetic vision that focuses on absence, departure, lack, and nostalgia. In the majority of poems the beloved is absent; memories of her belong to the past, and future encounters are dependent on the dictates of fate. During the Islamic period, this desert-inspired approach to love was adapted and transformed into a strand of love poetry called 'Udhri, named for the tribe to which the poet Jamīl, one of its best-known practitioners, belonged. In these poems the lover spends a lifetime of absence and longing, pining for the beloved who is tyrannical and cruel (aiming arrows at the heart and eye) and yet remains the object of worship and adoration. 'Udhri poetry belongs to a courtly love tradition, and indeed many scholars have suggested it as a precedent to the development of a similar strand in Western literatures during the Middle Ages. The early centuries of recorded Arabic poetry are replete with collections of poetry written by 'Udhri poets, all of whom are known by a name that incorporates their beloved's: Jamīl Buthaynah, Majnūn Laylā, Kuthayyir 'Azzah; the story of Majnūn in particular became the subject of folkloric narratives and other artistic media, such as miniature painting, drama, and song.

Alongside this attitude to love in early poetry, however, there is in the *mu‘allaqah* of Imru’ al-Qays a much different one, in which the poet’s persona is engaged in encounters with the fair sex that are considerably different:

One day I entered ‘Unayzah’s camel-litter: “Damn you!” she protested, “you’ll force me to dismount.” The litter kept swaying all the while. “You have hobbled my camel, Imru’ al-Qays,” she said, “so dismount now!”

Imru’ al-Qays poem is a clear precedent to another strand of love poetry that emerged in Arabia’s urban centres (including the city of Mecca) early in the Islamic era. It is termed ‘Umarī, named for the poet ‘Umar ibn Abī Rabī‘ah, whose poems reveal much closer contact with the beloved and reflect a strongly narcissistic attitude on the part of the poem’s speaker.

With the passage of time, elements from these two strands were blended into a unified tradition of the Arabic love poem (*ghazal*); images from the ‘Udhri repertoire were particularly favoured by the Sufi poets in their mystical verses. Al-Bashshār ibn Burd’s divan contains love poems of both types, but it is once again Abū Nuwās who makes major innovative contributions. His love poetry affords insight into the tolerant approach of ‘Abbāsīd society to varying sexualities, as he composes verses involving homosexual and bisexual relationships:

“Hello,” said the Devil swooping down. “Greetings to onewhose penitence is sheer delusion!...What about a sensuous virgin-girl with wonderful breasts?...“No!” I replied. “Then what about a beardless youth, onewhose plump buttocks are all aquiver?”.... “No!” I replied again....

The genres of *zajal* and *muwashshah* that originated in Muslim Spain had love as their primary theme. Often blending both ‘Umarī and ‘Udhri themes with songs and popular poems in Romance dialects, they present a blend of images and motifs that is representative of the cultural environment in which they were created.

Unlike some of the other genres already mentioned, the *ghazal* has remained popular into the modern period. While the romantic movement in the early 20th century provided an impetus for many poets, the quest for new identities in postindependence societies and, in particular, the increasing prominence of works by women produced significant change in Arabic love poetry. The Syrian diplomat and poet Nizār Qabbānī managed in a single career to become the Arab world's primary love poet and a commentator on political controversies:

Ah, my love! What is this nation of ours that can treat love like a policeman?

The Kuwaiti poet Su'ād al-Ṣabāḥ expresses her frustration with the continued echoes of the earlier tradition: I'm bored by *ghazal* of the dead... Sitting down for dinner each night... With Jamīl Buthaynah... Please try to deviate from the text just a little And invent me.

2.16 Modern Arabic poetry

The penetration of poetry into the fabric of Arab-Islamic society in the premodern era was a major factor in the continuing vigour that the neoclassical school was to display well into the 20th century. Al-'Aqqād's criticism of an ode by Aḥmad Shawqī (*see above Genres and themes: Panegyric*) and the popularity of the odes of Badawī al-Jabal and Muḥammad al-Jawāhirī reflect a trend that retained its position alongside the new initiatives in imagery and mood fostered by romantic poets such as Khalīl Jubrān (more commonly known in the West as Khalil Gibran), Ḫiyyā Abū Mādī, Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbī, and 'Alī Maḥmūd Ṭāhā.

The major break with tradition and, many critics would maintain, the onset of a genuine sense of modernity came in the aftermath of World War II. The quest for independence and the creation of the State of Israel were two political factors that, along with many others, stimulated a cry for a more “committed” approach to literature, with poetry fulfilling a central social function in such a context. The metrical experiments undertaken by the Iraqi poets Nāzik al-Malā'ikah and Badr Shākīr al-Sayyāb in the 1940s, combined with the translation into Arabic of the Middle Eastern segments of Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough: A*

Study in Comparative Religion and T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*, were more aesthetically based stimuli to the development of an entirely new outlook on the form and content of the poem and the role of the poet.

The Palestinian people were a continuing source of inspiration for politically committed poets across the Arab world during the second half of the 20th century, especially for Palestinian poets. Tawfīq Zayyād, Fadwā Ṭūqān, Samīḥ al-Qāsim, and Rāshid Ḥusayn all addressed themselves to the injustices they saw in Palestinian daily life. But Mahmūd Darwīsh's poetry, penned during a lengthy career that continued into the 21st century, best encapsulates the fate of his fellow Palestinians through vivid depictions of their losses, their defiance, and their aspirations. Other poets, such as the Iraqi ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, expressed their commitment to the cause of revolutionary change on a broader canvas, a posture that led al-Bayātī (like so many other modern Arab poets) to a life of exile far from his homeland.

The 1950s in the cosmopolitan city of Beirut witnessed the creation of the poetry group Shiʿr ("Poetry"), whose magazine of the same name was an influential organ of change. At the core of this group were Yūsuf al-Khāl and Adonis (the pen name of ʿAlī Ahmad Saʿīd), arguably the most influential figure in modern Arabic poetry. In its radical approach to poetic form (including the prose poem) and its experiments with language and imagery, this group was emblematic of the many new directions that Arabic poetry was to follow in the latter half of the 20th century. Poets such as the Lebanese Khalīl Ḥawī and the Egyptian Salāḥ ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr, both as well acquainted with the classical canon of Arabic poetry as they were with recent trends in the West, left behind them divans that, like that of al-Sayyāb, are already acknowledged as 20th-century classics of Arabic poetry.

While Adonis continued with his experiments in every aspect of his art, an entire generation of poets across the Arabic-speaking world at the turn of the 21st century were taking poetry in a variety of new directions. Among the notable poets were the Syrian Muḥammad al-Māghūt, the Moroccan Muḥammad Bannīs, the Iraqi Saʿdī Yūsuf, and the Egyptians Muḥammad ʿAfifī Maṭar and Amal Dunqul. In the 21st-century world of global communication and of television, video, and the Internet, Arabic

poetry struggled to find a place within the public domain, but, when political crises loomed, it was the voice of the poet that continued to express the conscience, the agony, and the aspirations of the Arab people.

Chapter Three

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This chapter attempts to discuss and analyze Thomas Stern Eliot's two poems; *The Waste Land* and *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*.

3.1 The First Section

The first section of *The Waste Land* takes its title from a line in the Anglican burial service. It is made up of four vignettes, each seemingly from the perspective of a different speaker. The first is an autobiographical snippet from the childhood of an aristocratic woman, in which she recalls sledding and claims that she is German, not Russian (this would be important if the woman is meant to be a member of the recently defeated Austrian imperial family). The woman mixes a meditation on the seasons with remarks on the barren state of her current existence (“I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter”).

The second section is a prophetic, apocalyptic invitation to journey into a desert waste, where the speaker will show the reader “something different from either / Your shadow at morning striding behind you / Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you; / [He] will show you fear in a handful of dust” (Evelyn Waugh took the title for one of his best-known novels from these lines). The almost threatening prophetic tone is mixed with childhood reminiscences about a “hyacinth girl” and a nihilistic epiphany the speaker has after an encounter with her. These recollections are filtered through quotations from Wagner’s operatic version of *Tristan und Isolde*, an Arthurian tale of adultery and loss.

The third episode in this section describes an imaginative tarot reading, in which some of the cards Eliot includes in the reading are not part of an actual tarot deck. The final episode of the section is the most surreal. The speaker walks through a London populated by ghosts of the dead. He confronts a figure with whom he once fought in a battle that seems to conflate the clashes of World War I with the Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage (both futile and excessively destructive wars). The speaker asks the ghostly figure, Stetson, about the fate of a corpse planted in his garden. The episode concludes with a famous line from the preface to

Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal* (an important collection of Symbolist poetry), accusing the reader of sharing in the poet's sins.

3.2 Form

Like "Prufrock," this section of *The Waste Land* can be seen as a modified dramatic monologue. The four speakers in this section are frantic in their need to speak, to find an audience, but they find themselves surrounded by dead people and thwarted by outside circumstances, like wars. Because the sections are so short and the situations so confusing, the effect is not one of an overwhelming impression of a single character; instead, the reader is left with the feeling of being trapped in a crowd, unable to find a familiar face.

Also like "Prufrock," *The Waste Land* employs only partial rhyme schemes and short bursts of structure. These are meant to reference—but also rework—the literary past, achieving simultaneously a stabilizing and a defamiliarizing effect. The world of *The Waste Land* has some parallels to an earlier time, but it cannot be approached in the same way. The inclusion of fragments in languages other than English further complicates matters. The reader is not expected to be able to translate these immediately; rather, they are reminders of the cosmopolitan nature of twentieth-century Europe and of mankind's fate after the Tower of Babel: We will never be able to perfectly comprehend one another

3.3 Commentary

Not only is *The Waste Land* Eliot's greatest work, but it may be—along with Joyce's *Ulysses*—the greatest work of all modernist literature. Most of the poem was written in 1921, and it first appeared in print in 1922. As the poem's dedication indicates, Eliot received a great deal of guidance from Ezra Pound, who encouraged him to cut large sections of the planned work and to break up the rhyme scheme. Recent scholarship suggests that Eliot's wife, Vivien, also had a significant role in the poem's final form. A long work divided into five sections, *The Waste Land* takes on the degraded mess that Eliot considered modern culture to constitute, particularly after the first World War had ravaged Europe. A sign of the pessimism with which Eliot approaches his subject is the

poem's epigraph, taken from the *Satyricon*, in which the Sibyl (a woman with prophetic powers who ages but never dies) looks at the future and proclaims that she only wants to die. The Sibyl's predicament mirrors what Eliot sees as his own: He lives in a culture that has decayed and withered but will not expire, and he is forced to live with reminders of its former glory. Thus, the underlying plot of *The Waste Land*, inasmuch as it can be said to have one, revolves around Eliot's reading of two extraordinarily influential contemporary cultural/anthropological texts, Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* and Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. Both of these works focus on the persistence of ancient fertility rituals in modern thought and religion; of particular interest to both authors is the story of the Fisher King, who has been wounded in the genitals and whose lack of potency is the cause of his country becoming a desiccated "waste land." Heal the Fisher King, the legend says, and the land will regain its fertility. According to Weston and Frazer, healing the Fisher King has been the subject of mythic tales from ancient Egypt to Arthurian England. Eliot picks up on the figure of the Fisher King legend's wasteland as an appropriate description of the state of modern society. The important difference, of course, is that in Eliot's world there is no way to heal the Fisher King; perhaps there is no Fisher King at all. The legend's imperfect integration into a modern meditation highlights the lack of a unifying narrative (like religion or mythology) in the modern world.

Eliot's poem, like the anthropological texts that inspired it, draws on a vast range of sources. Eliot provided copious footnotes with the publication of *The Waste Land* in book form; these are an excellent source for tracking down the origins of a reference. Many of the references are from the Bible: at the time of the poem's writing Eliot was just beginning to develop an interest in Christianity that would reach its apex in the *Four Quartets*. The overall range of allusions in *The Waste Land*, though, suggests no overarching paradigm but rather a grab bag of broken fragments that must somehow be pieced together to form a coherent whole. While Eliot employs a deliberately difficult style and seems often to find the most obscure reference possible, he means to do more than just frustrate his reader and display his own intelligence: He

intends to provide a mimetic account of life in the confusing world of the twentieth century.

The Waste Land opens with a reference to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. In this case, though, April is not the happy month of pilgrimages and storytelling. It is instead the time when the land should be regenerating after a long winter. Regeneration, though, is painful, for it brings back reminders of a more fertile and happier past. In the modern world, winter, the time of forgetfulness and numbness, is indeed preferable. Marie's childhood recollections are also painful: the simple world of cousins, sledding, and coffee in the park has been replaced by a complex set of emotional and political consequences resulting from the war. The topic of memory, particularly when it involves remembering the dead, is of critical importance in *The Waste Land*. Memory creates a confrontation of the past with the present, a juxtaposition that points out just how badly things have decayed. Marie reads for most of the night: ostracized by politics, she is unable to do much else. To read is also to remember a better past, which could produce a coherent literary culture.

3.5 The Waste Land

The Waste Land first appeared in October 1922, in the *Criterion*, a periodical founded and edited by Eliot. In November of the same year it was published in the *Dial*, an American publication. At a later date it was published as a book with notes added.

The poem also appeared in numerous anthologies which were written in 1922, the peak of "high modernism," of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* has been considered as a paradigmatic modernist crisis poem that thematically and formally embodies its struggle over the "break of the covenant."

In fact, the famous Ezra Pound played an important role in the production of *The Waste Land*, acting as an editor and reducing the poem into something significantly and shorter than the original work. Eliot wrote: "It was in 1922 that I placed before him in Paris the manuscript of a sprawling chaotic poem called *The Waste Land* which reduced to about half of its size, in the form of which it appears in print. I should like to think that the manuscript, with the suppressed passages, had disappeared irrevocably; yet, on the other hand, I should wish the blue penciling to be preserved as irrefutable evidence of Pound's critical genius".

Because of his wide-ranging contributions to poetry, criticism, prose, and drama, some critics consider Eliot as one of the most influential writers of the twentieth century. *The Waste Land* can arguably be cited as his most influential work. When Eliot published this complex poem in 1922, it set off a critical firestorm in the literary world. It is commonly regarded as one of the seminal works of modernist literature. Indeed, when many critics saw the poem for the first time, it seemed too modern. In addition to this in the place of a traditional work, with unified themes and a coherent structure, Eliot produced a poem that seemed to incorporate many unrelated, little-known references to history, religion, mythology, and other disciplines. He even wrote parts of the poem in foreign languages, such as Hindi. In fact, the poem was so complex that Eliot felt the need to include extensive notes identifying the sources to which he was alluding, a move so unusual for a poet, that it caused some critics to assert that Eliot was trying to be deliberately obscure or was playing a joke on them.

Yet, while the poem is obscure, critics have identified several sources that inspired its creation and helped determine its meaning. Many see the poem as a reflection of Eliot's disillusionment with the moral decay of post-World War I Europe. In this sense of disillusionment manifests itself symbolically through a type of Holy Grail legend. Eliot cited two books from which he drew to create the poem's symbolism: Jessie L. Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* (1920) and Sir James G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (1890).

The 1922 version of *The Waste Land* was also significantly influenced by Eliot's first wife Vivien and by his friend Ezra Pound, who helped Eliot edit the original 800-line draft down to the published 433 lines.

Collectively, the episodic scenes in lines 1 through 18 discuss the natural cycle of death, which is symbolized by the passing of the seasons. The first seven lines employ images of spring, such as "breeding / Lilacs," and "Dull roots with spring rain." In line 8, Eliot tells the reader "Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee." The time has shifted from spring to summer.

The reference to Starnbergersee—a lake in the south of Munich in Germany has been linked to various aspects of Eliot's past. To Eliot's readers when the poem was published, it has stuck out for other reasons when the World War I had fairly recently ended. During the war Germany was one of the main opponents of the Allied forces which

included both the United States and England— Eliot’s two homes. By including German references which continue in the next several lines and culminate in a German phrase, Eliot is invoking an image of the war. Questions such as: Who are the dead that are being buried in this section?.who are the soldiers and casualties who died during World War I ? are raised.

The German phrase leads into a conversation from a sledding episode in the childhood of a girl named Marie. The season has changed again, to winter. Marie notes, “In the mountains, there you feel free,” implying that when she is not in the mountains, on a sledding adventure, she does not feel free. In other words, Marie feels trapped, just as humanity feels trapped in its own waste land. In line 19 Eliot starts to give some visual cues about the waste land of modern society. “What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow / Out of this stony rubbish?” the poet asks. In response, Eliot refers to a biblical passage, addressing the reader as “Son of man.” The poet tells the reader that he or she “cannot say, or guess” what the roots of this waste land are, because the reader knows only “A heap of broken images” where “the dead tree gives no shelter.”

These and other images depict a barren, dead land. But the poet says in line 27, “I will show you something different.” In lines 31 to 34 Eliot reproduces a song sung by a sailor in the beginning of Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*. Eliot is inviting the reader to come on a journey, a tour of this modern waste land. The song—which asks why somebody is postponing a journey, when there is fresh wind blowing toward a homeland— indicates Eliot’s desire to regenerate this barren land. In fact, his use of the word “Hyacinths,” which are symbolic of resurrection, underscores this idea.

Furthermore, in line 43, Eliot introduces the character of Madame Sosostriis, a gifted mystic with a “wicked pack of cards,” or tarot cards. She pulls the card of “the drowned Phoenician Sailor,” another image of death and also a direct reference to a fertility god who, according to Sir James Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*, was drowned at the end of summer. Again, these images collectively illustrate the natural cycle of death. Following the Madame Sosostriis passage, Eliot, beginning in line 60, introduces the “Unreal City, / Under the brown fog of a winter dawn, / A

crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many.” These lines suggest a similar description of the modern city by Baudelaire. The image of brown fog is dismal, as is the next line, which notes “I had not thought death had undone so many.” Eliot here is describing a waking death. These people are alive in the physical sense, but dead in all others. It is a sad city, where “each man fixed his eyes before his feet.”

In line 68, Eliot notes there is “a dead sound on the final stroke of nine,” which refers to the start of the typical work day. In other words these people trudge along in a sort of living death, going to work, which has become an end in itself. Within this procession, however, the poet sees someone he acknowledge, “Stetson,” who was with the poet “in the ships at Mylae!” Mylae is a reference to an ancient battle from the First Punic War, which by extension evokes an image of death on the civilization scale. The poet asks his friend if the “corpse you planted last year in your garden” has “begun to sprout?” Here again Eliot is invoking the idea of resurrection, and of the natural cycle of death and life. First, when dead people decompose, their organic matter fertilizes the ground, which loops back to the first line of the section, in which April, “the cruellest month,” is breeding flowers, which presumably are feeding off this decomposed flesh. But in a more specific way, this passage refers to Frazer’s book, which details a primitive ritual whereby in April these primitive civilizations would plant a male corpse, or just the man’s genitals, in order to ensure a bountiful harvest. This harvest, which can be interpreted symbolically as the rebirth of civilization, is potentially threatened by “the Dog,” which has been interpreted as the lack of meaning in life.

Mineola (1998; 31-42) wrote that the varied perspectives or lack of a central, continuous speaker uproots “The Waste Land” from previous forms of poetry, with the intention of espousing modernist philosophy that requires the interpretation of juxtaposed, irreconcilable points of view in order to find meaning. The first stanza illustrates this point. Within the first seven lines, the reader is presented with a “normal” poem that conforms to an ordered rhyme and meter. Suddenly, the German words “Starnbergersee” and “Hofgarten” are introduced, readjusting the reader's own view of the poem, before throwing it completely off-course

in line 12: "Bin gar keine...." Just as quickly, though, the lines revert to a previous pattern with the use of "And I...", "And down...", "And when...." "Discontinuity, in other words, is no more firmly established than continuity,". Michael Levenson (A Genealogy of Modernism) writes in his analysis of the initial eighteen lines, it becomes apparent that no clear conclusion may be drawn as to who is speaking, or how many speakers are present. There are several methods of unifying the disjointed speaker(s), all of which conflict with each other although they may be equally true. Thus faced with this paradox, the reader is privy to one of the modernist themes in the work: individuals are permanently estranged, each bearing a unique identity, yet they are able to connect with each other to create a kind of coherence, however temporary.

Matthew Arnold wrote something very similar in *To Marguerite: Continued*, but up until Eliot's *The Waste Land*, this "truth" was never illustrated in the lyrical construction itself.

Eliot also employs the usage of fragments in the work, further articulating his modernist ideas. These fragments are sometimes used to blur the lines between speakers, but also serve to blend opposing strands of knowledge. Trying to singularly categorize the usage of fragments is as difficult as finding a unified meaning in the poem and that is the entire point. Yet, in keeping with modernist thought, can there exist an "entire point"? The answer is inevitably fragmented. In lines 307-311, "To Carthage then I came/ Burning burning burning burning/ O Lord Thou pluckest me out/ O Lord Thou pluckest/ burning", the words of St. Augustine from his *Confessions* and the Buddha's *Fire Sermon* are crammed together to form a new, incongruous whole. This synthesis hints at some sort of "truth" that may be discovered by joining these ancient bits of wisdom, two differing perspectives. However, if one assumes that something meaningful can be created from these fragments as referred in line 430 then an ultimate, final truth will never be reached since there will always be more fragments to append and assimilate. This idea is derived from the content of the text in addition to the actual fragmented form it utilizes. What separates this, then, from Classical Hegelian philosophy (thesis, antithesis, synthesis)? Again, the "answer" is in fragments. Hegelian philosophy is objective and acts as an end-all, be-all answer to

the workings of the universe. However, in keeping with its own ideas, there must be an antithesis to this mode of thought, which came forth in the Romantic and, later, modernist works. In this way, one is presented with the subjective core of modernism that truth will always be relative to the perspective from which it originates, be it Eastern religion, Catholicism, or any combination, the result is still a subjective fragment.

Looking on a more "superficial" level, therefore it must be relative that Eliot's poem also describes the modern world in his own words. Throughout *The Waste Land*, the reader is affronted with seemingly banal verses. Such examples can be recognized in the expression such as "London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down" or in line 199, "O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter" and other quotes ripped straight from popular songs of the time are side by side with allusions to *Tristan and Isolde* and *Kyd's Spanish Tragedy*. That is the essence of modern life. All the trivialities of the era, a period of time still mired in war and pettiness, though it considered itself Enlightened, a hypocritical age, were infused into *The Waste Land*, a portrait of modern society. Furthermore, advances in anthropology fueled Eliot. Beforehand, myths were thought to be just the quaint byproduct of the cultures they sprang from.

However, in the early 20th-century these myths took on a universal nature. They defied rationality, yet defined our humanity. Some have wondered if Eliot deals with the profane, how can he point out the hypocrisy of the age when he suffers from it?. Where does his authority lie? The modernist response is that the authority lies in the sub rational or irrational, outside of modern society, which has strayed from its primitive roots, from its original myths and arts and cultures.

Perhaps no true conclusion can be made. The human experience is fragmented and defies logic, and in order to fully convey this, modernist poets such as Eliot had to bend and break conventions, and their own expressions may culminate in something which is not fully expressible within modern society, though modern society was used as an indirect means of getting at this "Inexpressible." A better way of putting it could be that Eliot's *The Waste Land* was a direct way of getting at something indirect from the modern world, for it required a reinvention of poetics

and the very use and meaning of language. Since the modern period is said to extend to this day (it's debated whether it's post-modern or not, since both elements survive), any final say on the matter is difficult. What can be said is that Eliot's poetry, as misinterpreted, misread, and misunderstood as it may be, is a quintessential cornerstone in modernist thought, a fragment in the puzzle, which may yield an emergent whole, though it may not be fully grasped.

Like many modernists, Eliot was highly self-conscious about his relationship to literary tradition. In a well-known essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), Eliot described how the modern poet, when truly original, enters into a dialogue with tradition. He claimed that a great poem makes it necessary to understand all earlier poetry of the same tradition in a new light.

A brief survey of the allusions in the first section of *The Waste Land* shows some of Eliot's techniques for incorporating fragments of tradition into his own work. Aided by his own notes and comments, scholars have identified allusions in this first section of 76 lines to many writers, critics and scholars some of which may be listed below: the Book of Common Prayer, Geoffrey Chaucer, Rupert Brooke, Walt Whitman, Théophile Gautier, Charles-Louis Philippe, James Thomson, Guillaume Apollinaire, Countess Marie Larisch, Wyndham Lewis, nine books of the Bible, John Donne, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Richard Wagner, Sappho, Catullus, Lord Byron, Joseph Campbell, Aldous Huxley, J. G. Frazer, Jessie L. Weston, W. B. Yeats, Shakespeare, Walter Pater, Charles Baudelaire, Dante, Ezra Pound, James Joyce, and John Webster—about one allusion every two lines.

These allusions are in fact heavily weighted towards the nineteenth and early twentieth century's, Eliot's immediate precursors, but they include several ancient, medieval, and Renaissance sources, thus establishing a retrospective tradition that seems to run, say, from Sappho down to Pound, Eliot's friend and mentor, who himself drastically edited the manuscript of *The Waste Land* and arranged for its publication in *The Dial*. Eliot's technique of allusion serves various functions: 1- to give symbolic weight to the poem's contemporary material, 2- to encourage a sort of free association in the mind of the reader, and 3- to establish a tone

of pastiche, seeming to collect all the bric-a-brac of an exhausted civilization into one giant, foul rag and bone shop.

The first lines of the poem position it as a monument in a specifically English tradition by alluding to Geoffrey Chaucer, the first major poet of the English language, whom Dryden called “the Father of English Poetry.” Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* begins with a description of April’s “sweet showers,” which cause the flowers of spring to grow. The natural cycle of death and rebirth traditionally associated with the month of April appears tragic to Eliot’s speaker:

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.

For Eliot’s speaker, April’s showers are cruel, not sweet. Pronoun “us” in line 5—“winter kept us warm”—seems to associate Eliot with the earth that is covered with snow. These opening lines, then, pose the question of the poet’s originality in relation to a tradition that seems barely capable of nourishing the “dull roots” of the modern poet’s sensibility. The poet lives in a modern waste land, in the aftermath of a great war, in an industrialized society that lacks traditional structures of authority and belief, in soil that may not be conducive to new growth. Even if he could become inspired, however, the poet would have no original materials to work with. His imagination consists only of “a heap of broken images,” in the words of line 22, the images he inherits from literary ancestors going back to the Bible.

The modernist comes to write poetry after a great tradition of poetry has been all but tapped out. Despite this bleakness, however, the poem does present a rebirth of sorts, and the rebirth, while signifying the recovery of European society after the war, also symbolizes the renewal of poetic tradition in modernism, accomplished in part by the mixing of high and low culture and the improvisational quality of the poem as a whole.

The poet’s struggle to make a new poem out of the inherited language of tradition seems to be mirrored in the unevenness of the poem’s language and form. The opening lines vary between five and nine

syllables each. Five of the seven lines end with a single verb in participial form, following a comma (which marks a caesura, or pause, in the poem's rhythm). These lines seem uneven—as if the poet had started to write iambic pentameter but not completed the lines or as if he had intended to write shorter lines with three or four beats each but felt compelled to add the words that appear after the commas. Each of the participles introduces an enjambment—in which a unit of meaning carries beyond a line-ending into the next line.

The poem makes sparing use of end-rhyme, which is associated with completion and closure. Yet the participial verb forms that end five of the first seven lines perform something like the function of rhyme, linking together the various underground motions of winter and spring: breeding, mixing, stirring, covering, feeding: indeed, “breeding” and “feeding” do rhyme. There is also the use of alliteration—the repetition of consonants—in phrases such as “lilacs out of the dead land,” “mixing / Memory,” “winter kept us warm,” and “a little life.” Alliteration is an older poetic technique than rhyme and typical of Old English poetry, which, like these lines, was heavily accented.

Eliot adopted these Old English poetic techniques from Pound, who had translated the Anglo-Saxon poem “The Seafarer” into alliterative modern English. These suggest that Eliot is drawing on resources even older than Chaucer's Middle English. Even as he describes the decay of modern civilization, he seeks power in the primitive resources of the English language. The caesuras and enjambment give the verse a ritual air, as if we were witnessing a “rite of spring,” such as Stravinsky celebrated before the war.

The title of this first section, “The Burial of the Dead,” from the funeral service in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, reinforces this ritual quality. The participial phrases emphasize the continual activity that underlies the winter's “forgetful snow” and the spring's “dead land”: life is breeding and stirring; dry roots are soaking up water; the emotions of the past and the future, memory and desire, are mixing in the rebirth of spring.

For Eliot's protagonist, this rebirth is cruel, because any birth reminds him of death. The soil out of which the spring plants grow is

composed of the decayed leaves of earlier plants. April is the month of Easter, and Eliot is invoking here both the Christian story of the young god who dies in order to give new life to the rest of us and the many other versions of this myth chronicled by Sir James Frazer in his anthropological work *The Golden Bough* and Jessie Weston in her *From Ritual to Romance*. Frazer and Weston explored the links among the mythology of the ancient near east, the Christ story, fertility rites, folk customs like May Day, and degenerate modern forms of magic such as the Tarot deck.

What made Frazer's and Weston's discoveries shocking to some of their first readers were the evidence that many Christian myths and rituals had their origins in ancient, pagan forms of magic. Eliot was particularly interested in the myth of the Fisher King, most famously embodied in the Arthurian story of the quest for the Holy Grail. The Fisher King is impotent, his lands infertile and drought-stricken; one cause of this infertility is a crime, the rape of some maidens in the King's court. Only the arrival of a pure-hearted stranger (Perceval, Gawain, or Galahad in different versions of the Arthurian tales) permits the land to become fertile again. Weston emphasized the sexual symbolism of the story, notably the grail (a cup said to have been used at the last supper) and the lance (said to have pierced Christ's side), which can be interpreted as symbols of the female and male genitalia. These images refer clearly to the ancient practices of imitative magic, including ritual marriages intended to encourage the plants to grow.

Symbolism: Much of the symbolism of *The Waste Land* suggests these ancient fertility rites, particularly in such modern instances as the fortune-teller Madame Sosostris, whom Eliot drew from *Crome Yellow* (1921), a satirical novel by Aldous Huxley.

Many myths attribute the death of winter and the rebirth of spring to the death and rebirth of a god with human attributes, who in some ancient practices is a man ritually murdered and in others an effigy buried or thrown into the sea to guarantee fertility or to bring rain.

In *The Waste Land*, however, the god himself is conspicuously absent, except in debased forms like the (missing) Hanged Man in the Tarot pack or the drowned Phoenician Sailor, who returns as "Phlebas the

Phoenician" in the fourth section, "Death by Water." Other, more modern versions of the Christ story find a place in the poem.

The Waste Land echoes Whitman's "When Lilacs last in the Door-Yard Bloomed" (1865), in which Whitman makes use of a similar mythology to commemorate Abraham Lincoln, who was assassinated at the end of the American civil war on Good Friday, 1865. Eliot probably also had Rupert Brooke's poem "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester" (1912), in mind. It begins with, "Just now the lilac is in bloom." Brooke himself combined the roles of poet and martyr when he was transformed into a mythical figure of the English "poet-soldier" after his death.

In the more immediate past, W. B. Yeats had recently published "Easter, 1916," celebrating the martyrs of the Easter rebellion. Chaucer drew on this same mythological structure in the *Canterbury Tales*: his pilgrims are headed to Canterbury, "the holy, blissful martyr for to seek, / He who hath helped them when they were sick." Eliot would later write a play, *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), about the death of Thomas à Becket, Chaucer's "holy, blissful martyr." Spring, the season of rebirth, is also a season for celebrating martyrs, and Eliot's speaker seems to align himself with such martyrs as Christ, Becket, Lincoln, Brooke, and the war dead.

The poem ultimately does promise a new beginning, but Eliot's speaker appears, perversely, to prefer winter to spring, and thus to deny the joy and beauty associated with rebirth. He emphasizes the role of death and decay in the process of growth, most memorably in the conversation between two veterans who meet near London Bridge after the war: "'Stetson! / 'You who were with me in the ships at Mylae! / 'That corpse you planted last year in your garden, / 'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year? / 'Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?'"

The war is the essential background to the poem, but instead of referring to it directly, Eliot alludes to the battle of Mylae in the Punic Wars of the third century B.C.E., suggesting that all wars are in reality one war. The fact that the first world war was fought not primarily on ships but in trenches is expressed only indirectly through the idea of the sprouting corpse, which seems a grotesque parody of Brooke's image of

the foreign burial plot (in "The Soldier") as "forever England." Similarly, the poem's "rats' alley" owes something to the rats that appear in poetry about trench warfare by such soldier-poets as Siegfried Sassoon. Later, Eliot casually introduces the minor character Albert, Lil's husband, a demobilized soldier. History enters the poem not as a subject for direct treatment but through snatches of overheard dialogue.

In the first section of the poem, "The Burial of the Dead," Eliot adapts some of the crucial imagery of the poem—the rocky, deserted land, the absence of life-giving water, the dead or dying vegetation—from the Biblical books of Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Ecclesiastes. Other quotations or translations come from writers of near-sacred status: Shakespeare ("Those are pearls that were his eyes," line 48) and Dante ("I had not thought death had undone so many. / Sighs, short and infrequent were exhaled," lines 63-4).

Eliot helpfully, if somewhat pedantically, included a set of notes on the poem that allowed even his early readers to identify the sources of these allusions, although he later ridiculed his own notes as "a remarkable exposition of bogus scholarship." The notes themselves are an indication of what is new about the poem. Previous poets would have assumed that their readers shared a common culture with themselves and would probably have alluded only to materials from that common culture. Eliot inherits from the symbolists a concern with private, esoteric meanings, but he adds a structure of notes in order to make some of those meanings accessible to his readers. The Bible, Shakespeare, and Dante obviously provide historical and aesthetic ballast for Eliot's apparently chaotic modern poem, but other types of allusion seem more bizarre.

Many of the quotations appear in foreign languages, such as the lines from Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* (1857-59), a legendary story of adultery which helps Eliot to establish the theme of frustrated or misdirected sexuality. While occasionally quoting his favorite modern French poets, including Baudelaire, he also includes passages of everyday conversation, such as the snippets in lines 8 to 16 from the reminiscences of Countess Marie Larisch, the niece of the former Empress of Austria and a fashionable contemporary of Eliot. Eliot's use of allusion and quotation seems in part a response to the dilemma of coming at the end of

a great tradition. The poet seeks to address modern problems—the war, industrialization, abortion, urban life—and at the same time to participate in a literary tradition. His own imagination resembles the decaying land that is the subject of the poem: nothing seems to take root among the stony rubbish left behind by old poems and scraps of popular culture. The method of assembling “fragments” or “broken images” from the past into a sort of mosaic allows him at once to suggest parallels between contemporary problems and earlier historical situations and to disorient the reader, turning the reading process into a model of modern, urban confusion. It parallels the cubist use of collage, calling attention to the linguistic texture of the poem itself and to the materials—literary and popular—out of which it is constructed.

Eliot’s allusive method is a distinctive feature of his poetry, but he developed it in part on the model of some of Pound’s earlier poems. An even more important influence was Joyce. Eliot read the early episodes of *Ulysses* that appeared in the *Little Review*; as assistant editor at *The Egoist*, he read the original drafts of five episodes that were published there in 1919. He also read other parts of the novel in manuscript and corresponded with Joyce about it. He later confessed to having felt that Joyce’s *Ulysses* did “superbly” what Eliot himself was “tentatively attempting to do, with the usual false starts and despairs.” Allusion becomes a favorite modernist technique for reconciling formal experiment with an awareness of literary tradition.

One of the factors that helped to create “high modernism” was the attempt of poets, after the war, to extend the techniques of the pre-war avant-gardes to address broad, historical questions, the sorts of questions normally addressed by epic. They remained suspicious, however, of attempts to tell the history of the world from a single, unified perspective—the “Arms and the man I sing” of the first line of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, in which both the poet (“I”) and his hero (“the man”) are singular. Instead, their epics tended to treat historical experience as fragmentary, and often it is difficult to say whether their long poems are epics or merely collections of lyrics. Instead of granting perspective on history, they struggle to contain it in their irregular forms. In the first draft of his own fragmentary epic, *The Cantos*, in 1917, Pound had

written that “the modern world / Needs such a rag-bag to stuff all its thoughts in.” The modernist epic would have to be a rag-bag.

Perhaps the most famous of modernist rag-bags is the concluding section of *The Waste Land*, “What the Thunder Said.” Eliot wrote this section in a flash of inspiration and published it virtually unedited. Eliot invokes three ancient Sanskrit words from the Upanishads, ancient Hindu scriptures: Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata, each announced by the single syllable “DA,” representing a clap of thunder.

The return of the waters suggests the possibility of a different type of sexual relation from those seen in the poem so far: “The sea was calm, your heart would have responded / Gaily, when invited, beating obedient / To controlling hands.” However, the flood and the purifying fire arrive, and the last lines of the poem seem to announce destruction, in many languages, as partial quotations pile up and the speaker (perhaps at last representing the poet himself), announces: “These fragments I have shored against my ruins.” After the destruction, the poem ends on a note of peace, with the words “Shantih Shantih Shantih,” which, as Eliot informs us, mark “the formal ending to an Upanishad.”

Eliot’s intentions in making a miniature epic out of the various lyrical moments and borrowed fragments that make up *The Waste Land* can best be understood in terms of his own analysis of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, which served as perhaps the most important model for the poem. Eliot wrote that the parallels Joyce draws between his own characters and those of Homer’s *Odyssey* constitute a “mythical method,” which had “the importance of a scientific discovery.” He went so far as to compare Joyce to Einstein. The mythical method, according to Eliot, “is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.” Many of Joyce’s readers have felt that Joyce himself did not necessarily aim for control and order, but most are in agreement that Eliot’s essay describes well the intention of *The Waste Land*, in which the many parallels that have been briefly discussed here help to convert chaos into a kind of order. Like other modernist models of history, Eliot emphasizes the current moment as one of crisis, either preparing for or recovering from a radical break in history. This radical break certainly

has something to do with the First World War, but it is also an aspect of the modernists' deep concern with view of the world, that is their fascination with the problem of destiny and the last judgment. It is for this reason that Kurtz's famous last words ("The horror! The horror!") as quoted in his novel Heart of Darkness ring through so much of later modernism. Eliot originally intended to use them as the epigraph for *The Waste Land*.

The capacity to judge a civilization that teeters on the edge of chaos was highly prized by Eliot, as it was by Pound; whose Cantos share some of the features of *The Waste Land*, and by the other modernists who attempted their own epics.

3.2: The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock

Segments of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," often called "the first Modernist poem," appeared in the *Harvard Advocate* in 1906 while Eliot was an undergraduate. He later read the poem to Ezra Pound in England and Pound arranged to have it published in the prestigious American journal *Poetry* in June 1915. It was included in *Prufrock and Other Observations*, Eliot's first book of poetry, in 1917.

Stream of Consciousness Technique, Allusions and References: in "The love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", described as a "drama of literary anguish," the stream of consciousness technique is used in the form of a monologue. This marks the beginning of Eliot's career as an influential poet. With its weariness, regret, embarrassment, longing, emasculation, sexual frustration, sense of decay, and awareness of mortality, Prufrock has become one of the most recognized voices in modern literature, the poem was first published in Chicago in the June 1915 issue of Poetry: A Magazine of Verse. "This was Eliot's first publication of a poem outside school or university.

Christopher Ricks (1996; 39) wrote" In the drafts, the poem had the subtitle Prufrock among the Women". Eliot(1959 ; 9) said "The Love Song of" portion of the title came from "The Love Song of Har Dyal," a poem by Rudyard Kipling, published in the 1888 collection Plain Tales from the Hills.

Montesi(2001;65) said about the origin of the name of the poem, "On the origin of the name "Prufrock", there was a "Prufrock-Litton Company" in St Louis at the time Eliot lived there, a furniture store. It has also been suggested that Prufrock comes from the German word "Prüfstein" meaning "touchstone" (cognate to proof-stone, with stone changed to rock).What first strikes the reader is the title of the poem. In the title there is a clear ironic contrast between the romantic suggestions of "love song" and the rather prosaic name "J. Alfred Prufrock". The name comes from Prufrock-Littau,a furniture company which advertised in St. Louis, Missouri, where T.S. Eliot was born. T. S. Eliot combined this ñame with a fatuous "J. Alfred," which somehow suggests the qualities this personlater shows.

Banerjee,(1972, 962-966)said about the Epigraph," In context, the epigraph refers to a meeting between Dante and Guido da Montefeltro, who was condemned to the eighth circle of Hell for providing counsel to Pope Boniface VIII, who wished to use Guido's advice for a nefarious undertaking. This encounter follows Dante's meeting with Ulysses, who himself is also condemned to the circle of the Fraudulent. According to Ron Banerjee, the epigraph serves to cast ironic light on Prufrock's intent. Like Guido, Prufrock had intended his story never be told, and so by quoting Guido, Eliot reveals his view of Prufrock's love song".

Southam(1968, 3)wrote, "There is a contrast between the serious epigraph from Dante's Inferno and the lighter Prufrock's love song announced in the title (in fact, the mixture of levity and seriousness is to be found throughout the whole poem). Whereas we had just been told that the poem is a love song of a character called Prufrock, in the epigraph we are given the words of another character, Guido da Montefeltro, a man condemned to hell in a prison of flame for his treacherous advice on earth to Pope Boniface".Guido tells the shame of his wicked life to Dante only because he believes that Dante will never return to earth to report what he says.

Frederick Locke (1963, 51-59), contends that "Prufrock himself is suffering from multiple personalities of sorts, and that he embodies both Guido and Dante in the Inferno analogy. One is the storyteller; the other

the listener who later reveals the story to the world. He posits, alternatively, that the role of Guido in the analogy is indeed filled by Prufrock, but that the role of Dante is filled by you, the reader, as in "Let us go then, you and I," (1). In that, the reader is granted the power to do as he pleases with Prufrock's love song".

Because the poem is concerned primarily with the irregular musings of the narrator, it can be difficult to interpret. Laurence Perrine(1956. p. 798)wrote, "[the poem] presents the apparently random thoughts going through a person's head within a certain time interval, in which the transitional links are psychological rather than logical". This stylistic choice makes it difficult to determine exactly what is literal and what is symbolic. Laurence Perrine(1956. p. 798)continues saying," on the surface, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" relays the thoughts of a sexually frustrated middle-aged man who wants to say something but is afraid to do so, and ultimately does not".

The dispute, however, lies in to whom Prufrock is speaking, whether he is actually going anywhere, what he wants to say, and to what the various images refer.

The intended audience is not evident. Some believe that Prufrock is talking to another person or directly to the reader. while others believe Prufrock's monologue is internal. Perrine(1956. p. 801) writes "The 'you and I' of the first line are divided parts of Prufrock's own nature". while Mutlu Konuk Blasing(1987, p25) suggests that the "you and I" refers to the relationship between the dilemmas of the character and the author.

Similarly, critics dispute whether Prufrock is going somewhere during the course of the poem. Laurence Perrine (1956. p. 810) "In the first half of the poem, Prufrock uses various outdoor images (the sky, streets, cheap restaurants and hotels, fog), and talks about how there will be time for various things before "the taking of a toast and tea", and "time to turn back and descend the stair." This has led many critics to believe that Prufrock is on his way to an afternoon tea, in which he is preparing to ask this "overwhelming question". Others, however, like Hecimovich(1992,p 48) believes that " Prufrock is not physically going anywhere, but rather, is playing through it in his mind".

Perhaps the most significant dispute lies over the "overwhelming question" that Prufrock is trying to ask. it seems that he is trying to tell a woman his deep interest in her, pointing to the various images of women's arms , clothing. Also, in the final lines even there is a lamentation that the mermaids will not sing to him.

Others, however, like Mitchell (1991, 26) believes that "Prufrock is trying to express some deeper philosophical insight or disillusionment with society, but fears rejection, pointing to statements that express a disillusionment with society such as "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons" (line 51). Many believe that the poem is a criticism of Edwardian society and Prufrock's dilemma represents the inability to live a meaningful existence in the modern world.

As mentioned by Mitchell (1991, 41) to many readers, Prufrock seemed to epitomize the frustration and impotence of the modern individual. He seemed to represent thwarted desires and modern disillusionment."

Perrine (1956, 825) thinks also, "as the poem uses the stream of consciousness technique, it is often difficult to determine what is meant to be interpreted literally or symbolically. In general, Eliot uses imagery which is indicative of Prufrock's character,[20] representing aging and decay. For example, "When the evening is spread out against the sky / Like a patient etherized upon a table" (lines 2-3), the "sawdust restaurants" and "cheap hotels," the yellow fog, and the afternoon "Asleep...tired... or it malingers" (line 77), are reminiscent of languor and decay, while Prufrock's various concerns about his hair and teeth, as well as the mermaids "Combing the white hair of the waves blown back / When the wind blows the water white and black," show his concern over aging.

Like many of Eliot's poems, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" makes numerous allusions to other works, which are often symbolic themselves. Laurence Perrine (1956. p. 845) identifies the following allusions in the poem:

- In "Time for all the works and days of hands" (29) the phrase 'works and days' is the title of a long poem - a description of agricultural life and a call to toil - by the early Greek poet Hesiod.
- "I know the voices dying with a dying fall" (52) echoes Orsino's first lines in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night.
- The prophet of "Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter / I am no prophet - and here's no great matter" (81-2) is John the Baptist, whose head was delivered to Salome by Herod as a reward for her dancing (Matthew 14:1-11, and Oscar Wilde's play Salome).
- "To have squeezed the universe into a ball" (92) and "indeed there will be time" (23) echo the closing lines of Marvell's 'To His Coy Mistress'. Other phrases such as, "there will be

time" and "there is time" are reminiscent of the opening line of that poem: "Had we but world enough and time".

- "I am Lazarus, come from the dead" (94) may be either the beggar Lazarus (of Luke 16) returning for the rich man who was not permitted to return from the dead to warn the brothers of a rich man about Hell, or the Lazarus (of John 11) whom Christ raised from the dead, or both.
- "Full of high sentence" (117) echoes Chaucer's description of the Clerk of Oxford in the General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales.
- "There will be time to murder and create" is a biblical allusion to Ecclesiastes 3.

On the other hand, Johan Schimanski (2006) has identified the following:

- In the final section of the poem, Prufrock rejects the idea that he is Prince Hamlet, suggesting that he is merely "an attendant lord" (112) whose purpose is to "advise the prince" (114), a likely allusion to Polonius. Prufrock also brings in a common Shakespearean element of the Fool, as he claims he is also "Almost, at times, the Fool."
- "Among some talk of you and me" may be a reference to Quatrain 32 of Edward FitzGerald's first translation of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam ("There was a Door to which I found no Key / There was a Veil past which I could not see / Some little Talk awhile of ME and THEE / There seemed - and then no more of THEE and ME.")

In the *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, 1999, Prufrock is full of self-doubts, with a pessimistic outlook on his future, as well as the future of society and the world. This pessimistic view renders him unable to declare his love to the unnamed woman. He describes himself as "almost ridiculous," "almost ... the Fool." Although aware of the possibility of personal fulfillment, Prufrock is afraid to act, unable to claim for him a more meaningful existence.

The poem also contains numerous biting images of the industrial land-scape with its insidious "yellow fog," "narrow streets," "lonely men

in shirt-sleeves," and "soot that falls from chimneys." "Prufrock" is also replete with classical references to such literary and historical figures as John the Baptist, Lazarus, and Hamlet and to the literary works of Hesiod, Andrew Marvell, Dante, and Jules Laforgue.

In fact, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" has sparked tremendous interest and dissension among literary scholars. It is considered by many to be one of the principal poems of this century, and is listed with *The Waste Land* (1922) and *Four Quartets* (1943) as Eliot's best work. Often analyzed by line, incident or reference, the poem continues to confound scholars. Eliot pioneered an innovative and often fragmentary style centered upon modernity and the use of startling metaphors; Louis Untermeyer calls it "sensitive to the pitch of concealment." Critics such as Robert M. Seiller, Elizabeth Drew, George Williamson, Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren all argue that Prufrock never articulates a question: he is too overwhelmed by modernity and the state of his existence to formulate it.

J. Peter Dyson contends that Eliot utilizes a literary reference to Hamlet in which to indirectly frame Prufrock's question. In a separate but related inquiry, Bruce Hayman questions whether Prufrock is proposing marriage or making a sexual proposition to the woman in the poem.

Critics agree that in the end Prufrock is too overwhelmed by the bleakness of his own life and his view of the urban landscape to take any action, so paralyzed is he with fear and uncertainty. Scholars have focused a great deal of energy on unraveling the meaning of the literary references with which Eliot peppers the poem.

There is disagreement over the allusions to John the Baptist and Lazarus, and argument over which Hamlet reference he employs. Several scholars have marked Dostoevsky's influence on Eliot, although Eliot himself pointed out that *Crime and Punishment* was not available to him when he wrote this poem. Critics list among Eliot's influences Lord Alfred Tennyson, Henry James, Matthew Arnold, Charles Baudelaire, Edgar Allan Poe, and Laforgue.

The rhyme scheme of this poem is irregular but not random. While sections of the poem may resemble free verse, in reality, “Prufrock” is a carefully structured amalgamation of poetic forms. The bits and pieces of rhyme become much more apparent only when the poem is read aloud.

Characteristics of the poem: One of the most prominent formal characteristics of this work is the use of refrains. Prufrock’s continual return to the “women [who] come and go / Talking of Michelangelo” and his recurrent questionings (“how should I presume?”) and pessimistic appraisals (“That is not it, at all.”) both reference an earlier poetic tradition and help Eliot to describe the consciousness of a modern, neurotic individual. Prufrock’s obsessiveness is aesthetic, but it is also a sign of compulsiveness and isolation.

Another important formal feature is the use of fragments of sonnet form, particularly at the poem’s conclusion. The three three-line stanzas are rhymed as the conclusion of a Petrarchan sonnet would be, but their pessimistic, anti-romantic content, coupled with the despairing interjection, “I do not think they (the mermaids) would sing to me,” creates a contrast that comments bitterly on the bleakness of modernity.

Eliot's interest in music is made evident in the title, but the term "love song" is used loosely here. The poem centers on the feelings and thoughts of the persona, J. Alfred Prufrock, as he walks to meet a woman for tea and considers a question he feels compelled to ask her (something along the lines of "Will you marry me?"). In fact, in this poem he never arrives at tea, let alone sings to the woman. The poem is composed of Prufrock's own neurotic—if lyrical—associations. Indeed, over the course of the poem, he sets up analogies between himself and various familiar cultural figures, among them Hamlet. This establishes a connection with Hamlet's famous soliloquy ("To be or not to be?—that is the question"). Prufrock's doubt that he deserves the answer he desires from this woman transforms the poem into a kind of interior monologue or soliloquy in which "To be or not to be?" is for Prufrock "To be what?" and "What or who am I to ask this woman to marry me?"

Chapter Four

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

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4.1 Background

“Eliot’s *Waste Land* is I think the justification of the ‘movement,’ of our modern experiment, since 1900,” wrote Ezra Pound shortly after the poem was published in 1922. T.S. Eliot’s poem describes a mood of deep disillusionment stemming both from the collective experience of the first world war and from Eliot’s personal travails. Born in St. Louis, Eliot had studied at Harvard, the Sorbonne, and Oxford before moving to London, where he completed his doctoral dissertation on the philosopher F. H. Bradley. Because of the war, he was unable to return to the United States to receive his degree. He taught grammar school briefly and then took a job at Lloyds Bank, where he worked for eight years. Unhappily married, he suffered writer’s block and then a breakdown soon after the war and wrote most of *The Waste Land* while recovering in a sanatorium in Lausanne, Switzerland, at the age of 33. Eliot later described the poem as “the relief of a personal and wholly insignificant grouse against life...just a piece of rhythmical grumbling.” Yet the poem seemed to his contemporaries to transcend Eliot’s personal situation and represent a general crisis in western culture. One of its major themes is the barrenness of a post-war world in which human sexuality has been perverted from its normal course and the natural world too has become infertile. Eliot went on to convert to a High Church form of Anglicanism, become a naturalized British subject, and turn to conservative politics. In 1922, however, his anxieties about the modern world were still overwhelming.

The Waste Land was quickly recognized as a major statement of modernist poetics, both for its broad symbolic significance and for Eliot’s masterful use of formal techniques that earlier modernists had only begun to attempt. The critic I. A. Richards influentially praised Eliot for describing the shared post-war “sense of desolation, of uncertainty, of futility, of the groundlessness of aspirations, of the vanity of endeavour, and a thirst for a life-giving water which seems suddenly to have failed.” Eliot later complained that “approving critics” like Richards “said that I had expressed ‘the disillusionment of a generation,’ which is nonsense. I may have expressed for them their own illusion of being disillusioned, but that did not form part of my intention.” Nonetheless, it was as a

representative of a postwar generation that Eliot became famous. To compare Eliot's comments on the poem with the way it was received illustrates strikingly the fact that, as William K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley put it, "The poem is not the critic's own and not the author's (it is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend about it or control it). The poem belongs to the public." The *Waste Land* made use of allusion, quotation (in several languages), a variety of verse forms, and a collage of poetic fragments to create the sense of speaking for an entire culture in crisis; it was quickly accepted as the essential statement of that crisis and the epitome of a modernist poem.

Eliot's age itself was symbolic of an entry into mid-life. It was at 33, "in the middle of our life's way," that Dante had the vision of heaven and hell recorded in his *Divine Comedy*. It was at the same age that Christ was crucified. His death and resurrection form a major symbolic framework for *The Waste Land*. Although its first lines suggest an aversion to "mixing / Memory with desire" and to "stirring / Dull roots with spring rain," the poem's success results largely from Eliot's ability to mix modes and tones. The originality of *The Waste Land*, and its importance for most poetry in English since 1922, lies in Eliot's ability to meld a deep awareness of literary tradition with the experimentalism of free verse, to fuse private and public meanings, and to combine moments of lyric intensity into a poem of epic scope.

4.2 About Tradition

Like many modernists, Eliot was highly self-conscious about his relationship to literary tradition. In a well-known essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), Eliot described how the modern poet, when truly original, enters into a dialogue with tradition. He claimed that a great poem makes it necessary to understand all earlier poetry of the same tradition in a new light.

A brief survey of the allusions in the first section of *The Waste Land* shows some of Eliot's techniques for incorporating fragments of tradition into his own work. Aided by Eliot's own notes and comments, scholars have identified allusions in this first section of 76 lines to: the Book of Common Prayer, Geoffrey Chaucer, Rupert Brooke, Walt Whitman, Théophile Gautier, Charles-Louis Philippe, James Thomson, Guillaume Apollinaire, Countess Marie Larisch, Wyndham Lewis, nine books of the Bible, John Donne, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Richard Wagner, Sappho, Catullus, Lord Byron, Joseph Campbell, Aldous Huxley, J. G. Frazer,

Jessie L. Weston, W. B. Yeats, Shakespeare, Walter Pater, Charles Baudelaire, Dante, Ezra Pound, James Joyce, and John Webster—about one allusion every two lines. These allusions are in fact heavily weighted towards the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Eliot's immediate precursors, but they include several ancient, medieval, and Renaissance sources, thus establishing a retrospective tradition that seems to run, say, from Sappho down to Pound, Eliot's friend and mentor, who himself drastically edited the manuscript of *The Waste Land* and arranged for its publication in *The Dial*. Eliot's technique of allusion serves various functions: to give symbolic weight to the poem's contemporary material, to encourage a sort of free association in the mind of the reader, and to establish a tone of pastiche, seeming to collect all the bric-a-brac of an exhausted civilization into one giant, foul rag and bone shop.

The first lines of the poem position it as a monument in a specifically English tradition by alluding to Geoffrey Chaucer, the first major poet of the English language, whom Dryden called "the Father of English Poetry." Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* begins with a description of April's "sweet showers," which cause the flowers of spring to grow. The natural cycle of death and rebirth traditionally associated with the month of April appears tragic to Eliot's speaker:

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land,
mixing Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.

For Eliot's speaker, April's showers are cruel, not sweet. The "us" in line 5—"Winter kept us warm"—seems to link the poet himself to the earth that is covered with snow. These opening lines, then, pose the question of the poet's originality in relation to a tradition that seems barely capable of nourishing the "dull roots" of the modern poet's sensibility. The poet lives in a modern waste land, in the aftermath of a great war, in an industrialized society that lacks traditional structures of authority and belief, in soil that may not be conducive to new growth. Even if he could become inspired, however, the poet would have no original materials to work with. His imagination consists only of "a heap of broken images," in the words of line 22, the images he inherits from literary ancestors going back to the Bible. The modernist comes to write poetry after a great tradition of poetry has been all but tapped out. Despite this bleakness,

however, the poem does present a rebirth of sorts, and the rebirth, while signifying the recovery of European society after the war, also symbolizes the renewal of poetic tradition in modernism, accomplished in part by the mixing of high and low culture and the improvisational quality of the poem as a whole. The poet's struggle to make a new poem out of the inherited language of tradition seems to be mirrored in the unevenness of the poem's language and form. The opening lines vary between five and nine syllables each. Five of the seven lines end with a single verb in participial form, following a comma (which marks a caesura, or pause, in the poem's rhythm). These lines seem uneven—as if the poet had started to write iambic pentameter but not completed the lines or as if he had intended to write shorter lines with three or four beats each but felt compelled to add the words that appear after the commas.

Each of the participles introduces an enjambment—in which a unit of meaning carries beyond a line-ending into the next line. The poem makes sparing use of end-rhyme, which is associated with completion and closure. Yet the participial verb forms that end five of the first seven lines perform something like the function of rhyme, linking together the various underground motions of winter and spring: breeding, mixing, stirring, covering, feeding: indeed, “breeding” and “feeding” do rhyme. Eliot also makes use of alliteration—the repetition of consonants—in phrases such as “*lilacs* out of the *deadland*,” “*mixing* / *Memory*,” “Winter kept us warm,” and “a *little life*.” Alliteration is an older poetic technique than rhyme and typical of Old English poetry, which, like these lines, was heavily accented.

Eliot adopted these Old English poetic techniques from Pound, who had translated the Anglo-Saxon poem “The Seafarer” into alliterative modern English. They suggest that Eliot is drawing on resources even older than Chaucer's Middle English. Even as he describes the decay of modern civilization, he seeks power in the primitive resources of the English language. The caesuras and enjambment give the verse a ritual air, as if we were witnessing a “rite of spring,” such as Stravinsky celebrated before the war. The title of this first section, “The Burial of the Dead,” from the funeral service in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, reinforces this ritual quality. The participial phrases emphasize the continual activity that underlies the winter's “forgetful snow” and the spring's “dead land”: life is breeding and stirring; dry roots are soaking up water; the emotions of the past and the future, memory and desire, are mixing in the rebirth of spring. Something is germinating.

For Eliot's speaker, this rebirth is cruel, because any birth reminds him of death. The soil out of which the spring plants grow is composed of the decayed leaves of earlier plants. April is the month of Easter, and Eliot is invoking here both the Christian story of the young god who dies in order to give new life to the rest of us and the many other versions of this myth chronicled by Sir James Frazer in his anthropological work *The Golden Bough* and Jessie Weston in her *From Ritual to Romance*. Frazer and Weston explored the links among the mythology of the ancient near east, the Christ story, fertility rites, folk customs like May Day, and degenerate modern forms of magic such as the Tarot deck. What made Frazer's and Weston's discoveries shocking to some of their first readers was the evidence that many Christian myths and rituals had their origins in ancient, pagan forms of magic.

Eliot was particularly interested in the myth of the Fisher King, most famously embodied in the Arthurian story of the quest for the holy grail. The Fisher King is impotent, his lands infertile and drought-stricken; one cause of this infertility is a crime, the rape of some maidens in the King's court. Only the arrival of a pure-hearted stranger (Perceval, Gawain, or Galahad in different versions of the Arthurian tales) permits the land to become fertile again. Weston emphasized the sexual symbolism of the story, notably the grail (a cup said to have been used at the last supper) and the lance (said to have pierced Christ's side), which can be interpreted as symbols of the female and male genitalia. This suggests ancient practices of imitative magic, including ritual marriages intended to encourage the plants to grow; Frazer thought that the tradition of the May Queen and King derived from such rites. Much of the symbolism of *The Waste Land* suggests these ancient fertility rites, but always gone awry, particularly in such modern instances as the fortune-teller Madame Sosostris, whom Eliot drew from *Crome Yellow* (1921), a satirical novel by the young Aldous Huxley.

Many myths attribute the death of winter and the rebirth of spring to the death and rebirth of a god with human attributes, who in some ancient practices is a man ritually murdered and in others an effigy buried or thrown into the sea to guarantee fertility or to bring rain. In *The Waste Land*, however, the god himself is conspicuously absent, except in debased forms like the (missing) Hanged Man in the Tarot pack or the drowned Phoenician Sailor, who returns as "Phlebas the Phoenician" in the fourth section, "Death by Water." Other, more modern versions of the Christ story find a place in the poem. *The Waste Land* echoes Whitman's

“When Lilacs last in the Door-Yard Bloomed” (1865), in which Whitman makes use of a similar mythology to commemorate Abraham Lincoln, who was assassinated at the end of the American civil war on Good Friday, 1865. Eliot probably also had Rupert Brooke’s poem “The Old Vicarage, Grantchester” (1912), in mind; it begins, “Just now the lilac is in bloom.” Brooke himself combined the roles of poet and martyr when he was transformed into a mythical figure of the English “poet-soldier” after his death. In the more immediate past, W. B. Yeats had recently published “Easter, 1916,” celebrating the martyrs of the Easter rebellion. Chaucer drew on this same mythological structure in the *Canterbury Tales*: his pilgrims are headed to Canterbury, “the holy, blissful martyr for to seek, / He who hath helped them when they were sick.” Eliot would later write a play, *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), about the death of Thomas à Becket, Chaucer’s “holy, blissful martyr.” Spring, the season of rebirth, is also a season for celebrating martyrs, and Eliot’s speaker seems to align himself with such martyrs as Christ, Becket, Lincoln, Brooke, and the war dead.

The poem ultimately does promise a new beginning, but Eliot’s speaker appears, perversely, to prefer winter to spring, and thus to deny the joy and beauty associated with rebirth. He emphasizes the role of death and decay in the process of growth, most memorably in the conversation between two veterans who meet near London bridge after the war: “Stetson! / ‘You who were with me in the ships at Mylae! / ‘That corpse you planted last year in your garden, / ‘Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year? / ‘Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?’” The war is the essential background to the poem, but instead of referring to it directly, Eliot alludes to the battle of Mylae in the Punic Wars of the third century B.C.E., suggesting that all wars are in reality one war. The fact that the first world war was fought not primarily on ships but in trenches is expressed only indirectly through the idea of the sprouting corpse, which seems a grotesque parody of Brooke’s image of the foreign burial plot (in “The Soldier”) as “forever England.” Similarly, the poem’s “rats’ alley” owes something to the rats that appear in poetry about trench warfare by such soldier-poets as Siegfried Sassoon. Later, Eliot casually introduces the minor character Albert, Lil’s husband, a demobilized soldier. History enters the poem not as a subject for direct treatment but through snatches of overheard dialogue.

In the first section of the poem, “The Burial of the Dead,” Eliot adapts some of the crucial imagery of the poem—the rocky, deserted land, the absence of life-giving water, the dead or dying vegetation—from the

Biblical books of Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Ecclesiastes. Other quotations or translations come from writers of near-sacred status: Shakespeare (“Those are pearls that were his eyes,” line 48) and Dante (“I had not thought death had undone so many. / Sighs, short and infrequent were exhaled,” lines 63-4). Eliot helpfully, if somewhat pedantically, included a set of notes on the poem that allowed even his early readers to identify the sources of these allusions, although he later ridiculed his own notes as “a remarkable exposition of bogus scholarship.” The notes themselves are an indication of what is new about the poem.

Previous poets would have assumed that their readers shared a common culture with themselves and would probably have alluded only to materials from that common culture. Eliot inherits from the symbolists a concern with private, esoteric meanings, but he adds a structure of notes in order to make some of those meanings accessible to his readers. The Bible, Shakespeare, and Dante obviously provide historical and aesthetic ballast for Eliot’s apparently chaotic modern poem, but other types of allusion seem more bizarre. Many of the quotations appear in foreign languages, such as the lines from Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde* (1857-59), a legendary story of adultery which helps Eliot to establish the theme of frustrated or misdirected sexuality. While occasionally quoting his favorite modern French poets, including Baudelaire, he also includes passages of everyday conversation, such as the snippets in lines 8 to 16 from the reminiscences of Countess Marie Larisch, the niece of the former Empress of Austria and a fashionable contemporary of Eliot.

Eliot’s use of allusion and quotation seems in part a response to the dilemma of coming at the end of a great tradition. The poet seeks to address modern problems—the war, industrialization, abortion, urban life—and at the same time to participate in a literary tradition. His own imagination resembles the decaying land that is the subject of the poem: nothing seems to take root among the stony rubbish left behind by old poems and scraps of popular culture. The method of assembling “fragments” or “broken images” from the past into a sort of mosaic allows him at once to suggest parallels between contemporary problems and earlier historical situations and to disorient the reader, turning the reading process into a model of modern, urban confusion. It parallels the cubist use of collage, calling attention to the linguistic texture of the poem itself and to the materials—literary and popular—out of which it is constructed. Eliot’s allusive method is a distinctive feature of his poetry, but he developed it in part on the model of some of Pound’s earlier poems, and Pound’s editing of *The Waste Land* greatly increased its

fragmentation. An even more important influence was Joyce. Eliot read the early episodes of *Ulysses* that appeared in the *Little Review*; as assistant editor at *The Egoist*, he read the original drafts of five episodes that were published there in 1919. He also read other parts of the novel in manuscript and corresponded with Joyce about it. He later confessed to having felt that Joyce's *Ulysses* did "superbly" what Eliot himself was "tentatively attempting to do, with the usual false starts and despairs." Allusion would become a favorite modernist technique for reconciling formal experiment with an awareness of literary tradition.

4.3 Voice

Eliot's original title for *The Waste Land* was "He do the Police in Different Voices." The line, another quotation, comes from Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65), and describes the foundling Sloppy's skills as a reader of the newspaper—imitating the voices of the police in the crime reports. *The Waste Land* is composed of many voices, not always distinguishable from one another. The second section, "A Game of Chess," contains a medley of voices. The opening passage draws on Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* to describe a richly furnished room, in which a depiction of Ovid's story of the rape of Philomela and her transformation into a nightingale is displayed above the mantel. The "inviolable voice" of the painted or sculpted nightingale also enters the poem inarticulately through a conventional representation of birdsong from Renaissance poetry: "Jug jug" (103). The following passage relates a conversation between a neurotic woman and a laconic man. The woman's remarks appear in quotation marks: "Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak." These comments alternate with lines, not in quotation marks, that may be spoken or thought by her male companion: "I think we are in rats' alley / Where the dead men lost their bones." The ominous tone of these replies suggests, however, that the words may issue from some supernatural source. A moment of ragtime music breaks in before the neurotic woman threatens to rush out into the street. (Eliot's friends thought that the woman in this passage was very closely based on his first wife, who was later institutionalized). The section ends with an overheard monologue, this one drawn from a story told by the Eliots' maid concerning Albert, the demobilized soldier, and Lil, his wife, who has bad teeth and has taken some pills to induce an abortion. The maid relates her own conversation with Lil. Another ominous voice (or the same one?) interrupts the monologue, announcing with increasing frequency "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME," the standard warning that closing time is approaching in a pub. Here, the words have a sinister

quality, suggesting that “time” means death, or apocalypse. The final words of the section recall Ophelia’s last scene before her suicide in *Hamlet*. The section makes use of at least seven voices: the initial narrator, the nightingale, the neurotic woman, her companion, the gramophone, the maid, and the barkeeper.

Among the mix of voices are those of popular culture. The influential critic Clive Bell, brother-in-law of Virginia Woolf, described Eliot’s poetry as largely “a product of the Jazz movement,” and saw *The Waste Land* as part of a “ragtime literature which flouts traditional rhythms and sequences and grammar and logic.” Eliot riffs on a ragtime song (“The Shakespearean Rag”): “O o o o that Shakespeherian rag, / It’s so elegant, so intelligent.” The critic Michael North has shown that many of Eliot’s first reviewers associated his modernism with the Jazz Age. The poem’s syncopated rhythms might seem, to a conservative critic, to bring all of literary tradition down to the level of jazz, but they can just as plausibly be seen as including popular culture in a new canon that erases the boundaries between high and low.

The use of so many voices in this kind of collage allows the poet to distance himself from any single statement. As the critic Louis Menand has put it, “nothing in [the poem] can be said to point to the poet, since none of its stylistic features is continuous, and it has no phrases or images that cannot be suspected of—where they are not in fact identified as—belonging to someone else..... Eliot appears nowhere, but his fingerprints are on everything.” Menand’s comment recalls Flaubert’s idea of the godlike author who is “present everywhere and visible nowhere,” and the demand of the prosecuting attorney in the *Madame Bovary* trial: “Would you condemn her in the name of the author’s conscience? I do not know what the author’s conscience thinks.” Indeed, some of Eliot’s most important influences were the post-Flaubertian novelists Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and James Joyce. Is the poet himself speaking the lines describing the room, or is this merely a pastiche of Renaissance drama? Who is issuing the warnings about closing time? Although *The Waste Land* is, by Eliot’s own admission, a highly personal document, it also aspires to a certain kind of impersonality.

In "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Eliot wrote of the mind of the poet as a catalyst:

When the two gases previously mentioned are mixed in the presence of a filament of platinum, they form sulphurous acid. This combination takes place only if the platinum is present; nevertheless the newly formed acid contains no trace of platinum, and the platinum itself is apparently unaffected; has remained inert, neutral, and unchanged. The mind of the poet is the shred of platinum. It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material.

This doctrine of impersonality was closely linked to Eliot's claim that his poetry was "classical" and not "romantic," by which he meant in part that it was more concerned with form and balance than with the expression of emotion. Impersonality did not mean his poetry avoided emotion. However, the emotions are assumed in something like the way an actor takes on a role—Eliot, in *The Waste Land*, "does" a variety of different characters in different voices. Paradoxically, by trying several personae on, and not identifying himself with any one persona, Eliot manages to achieve a kind of impersonality. Like Pound, Eliot drew for his conception of impersonality on Robert Browning's dramatic monologues, in which he took on the roles of such figures as the Duke who casually tells the story of how he put a stop to his first wife's suspected adultery ("My Last Duchess," 1842) or the Renaissance professor who devotes his whole life to the smallest aspects of Greek grammar ("A Grammarian's Funeral," 1855).

In a note to the third section of the poem, "The Fire Sermon," Eliot wrote: Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a "character," is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest. Just as the one-eyed merchant, seller of currants, melts into the Phoenician Sailor, and the latter is not wholly distinct from Ferdinand Prince of Naples, so all the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias. What Tiresias sees, in fact, is the substance of the poem.

Eliot thus suggests that all the many voices in the poem may be aspects of two voices, those of one man and one woman, or indeed of a single voice, that of Tiresias, the man who was changed into a woman and back into a man, according to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, who foresaw the destruction

of Thebes, according to Sophocles's *Oedipus the King*, and who was visited by Odysseus in the underworld in book eleven of the *Odyssey*. The background suggests one undercurrent of the dialogue between men and women in *The Waste Land*. The title "A Game of Chess," drawn from a Renaissance play about a seduction, and the chess imagery of this section, point to an understanding of marriage and sexuality debased into a game of strategy in which men and women battle over sex. Instead of a life-giving act of love, sex occurs in the poem as seduction or rape, leading to abortion. Eliot's note also suggests that the entire poem can be understood as a vision of a possible destruction, and near the end of the poem such a catastrophe seems to be envisioned in the words of the nursery rhyme, "London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down." From the point of view of impersonality, the central role of Tiresias suggests that the various voices of the poem can be understood as a sort of chorus, with each part being spoken by representatives of one sex or the other. The distance from such earlier poems as "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915) or even from Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* is apparent; the lyric "I" and the concentration on a single speaker's or character's experience has given way to a sort of dream vision, in which many voices speak at once. The resulting cacophony suggests the impossibility of a truly unified understanding of the poem, even if Eliot hoped that all the voices could be subsumed in that of Tiresias.

4.4 Words at Liberty

The Waste Land could not have been written without the assault on the English poetic tradition undertaken by Ezra Pound and the imagists. The most obvious way in which *The Waste Land* differs from most of the poetry of the nineteenth century, and from more recent poets like Kipling or even Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, is in its play with and partial rejection of traditional meter, rhyme, and stanza form. Parts of the poem are written in free verse. Eliot himself did not much like free verse in general and even insisted that it did not exist. Using the French term for free verse (*vers libre*), Eliot wrote that "no vers is libre for the man who wants to do a good job." In particular, although he was happy to do away with standard rhyme schemes, Eliot claimed in an essay of 1917 that all verse (perhaps all language) made use of some kind of meter; what was distinctive about his work was the complexity of his use of meter: "the most interesting verse...has been done either by taking a very simple form, like the iambic pentameter, and constantly withdrawing from it, or taking no form at all, and constantly approximating to a very simple one. It is this contrast between fixity and flux, this unperceived evasion of

monotony, which is the very life of verse.” In this regard, Eliot’s rhetoric clashed with that of Pound, but both men claimed to be experimenting with very difficult techniques for recording the rhythms of actual speech. Indeed, their views had converged in the years immediately preceding *The Waste Land*, with Pound experimenting more with traditional meters and Eliot using some aspects of free verse. Eliot’s divergences from traditional meters, then, were meant to achieve particular poetic effects rather than simply to shock. At first glance, *The Waste Land* may appear to follow no set metrical pattern. Yet, just as the opening lines of the poem subtly introduce a form of rhyme, Eliot frequently draws on regular meters. Eliot makes use of many fragmentary lines like those of the nightingale’s song in the “Fire Sermon” section:

Twit twit twitJug jug jug jug jugSo rudely forc’dTereu

Here, the first two lines seem to be made up entirely of stressed syllables, although they tend to fall into groups of three. The third and fourth lines, however, are composed of iambs. The iamb is the dominant “foot,” or metrical unit, of English poetry, consisting of two syllables, the first unstressed and the second stressed.

Often, as Theodore Roethke observes, “free verse is a denial in terms...[because] invariably, there is the ghost of some other form, often blank verse, behind what is written.” Blank verse is the English name for iambic pentameter (lines of five iambs) without rhymes, the verse form of Shakespeare’s plays and of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Wordsworth’s *Prelude*. Many verses of *The Waste Land* are composed in iambic pentameter, and others closely resemble that meter. Eliot’s frequent adaptation of lines from other poets, such as Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, John Webster, and Andrew Marvell, often reinforces this tendency to revert to the standard meter of English long poems, for example in the opening lines of the second section, “A Game of Chess.” Indeed Pound criticized these passages as “too penty,” that is, too close to iambic pentameter, or as Pound also put it, “too tum-pum at a stretch.” In addition to the many lines clearly written in blank verse, Eliot uses various rhyme schemes, often to comic effect. For example, in “The Fire Sermon,” one of the unwholesome couplings is introduced by a rhyming couplet: “The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring / Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.” In another part of “The Fire Sermon,” Eliot relates the unsatisfactory tryst between the typist and the young man carbuncular from the perspective of Tiresias, who, according to one

version of the myth, was blinded by the goddess Juno for his claim that women enjoyed sex more than men. In the encounter related in the poem, neither participant seems to experience much pleasure. Eliot uses quatrains (rhyming units of four lines) to describe the tryst. Eliot's slightly forced rhymes call attention to the coercive nature of the sexual encounter between the "young man carbuncular" and the typist. When he has left,

She turns and looks a moment in the glass
Hardly aware of her departed lover;
Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:
"Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over."

The double or feminine rhymes (rhyming the last two syllables of each line) have a darkly comic effect. The traditional meter and rhyme in such passages sets them off from the free verse of the rest of the poem, but often Eliot seems to be using the meter to call attention to a disjuncture between his low subject matter and the formal style with which he describes it. In fact, often the formality of the language is inversely related to the seriousness of the material Eliot is describing. Frequently, the lower-class material in the poem is treated satirically, in contrast with the work of Joyce, who showed a great fondness for the lower middle-class milieu of *Ulysses*.

Eliot also makes use of a number of the patterns and systems for making meaning available to free verse, some of which have been summarized by the critic Paul Fussell. They include the use of enumeration or cataloguing. Lists are one of the most ancient poetic forms, visible in the catalogues of ships in Homer's *Iliad* or in the "begats" of the Bible. A brief list appears at the beginning of "The Fire Sermon": "The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers, / Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends / Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are departed" (177-179). In this case, Eliot begins in iambic hexameter (six feet), but allows the meter to break down in the third quoted line. Eliot also makes use of another typical device of free verse, the repetition of phrases or syntactical forms, like the refrain "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME" in the passage about Albert and Lil.

Another method of structuring free verse, seldom used by Eliot, is to write very long lines, each of which contains a full syntactic unit, as Whitman often does, thus creating the effect of a formal speech and sometimes even a Biblical tone. Conversely, writers of free verse may run a series of very short lines together, dividing a syntactical unit into as

many as four or eight lines, as in William Carlos Williams's "This is just to say" (1934) :

I have eaten the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

Eliot sometimes combines the techniques of Whitman and Williams, by writing a long line that introduces a set of variations on a theme; the line then re-appears but broken up by enjambment as if the speaker were mulling over his thought, unable to phrase it adequately. Thus the line, "If there were only water amongst the rock," forms the basis for the fugal sequence:

If there were water
And no rock
If there were rock
And also water
And water
A spring
A pool among the rock
If there were the sound of water only
Not the cicada
And dry grass singing
But sound of water over a rock
Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop
But there is no water

The Waste Land thus makes use of a wide range of metrical patterns and rhyme schemes, as well as techniques for structuring free verse. Although the effect appeared chaotic to some of Eliot's first readers, the poem fulfills Pound's dictum that "Rhythm must have meaning" (1915). Later poetic practice was largely shaped by Pound's advocacy of free verse and Eliot's example.

4.5 Epic

The Waste Land is also characteristic of modernist poetry in that it contains both lyric and epic elements. Modernism continued the tendency, begun in romanticism, to prize lyric highly, but many modernist poets also sought to write in the traditionally highest form, epic. Eliot defined the lyric as "the voice of the poet talking to himself, or to nobody," and if we accept his description of *The Waste Land* as a "piece of rhythmical grumbling," it may seem to belong to the lyric tradition. Yet its broader ambitions are obvious. "Eliot came back from his Lausanne specialist looking OK; and with a damn good poem (19 pages) in his suitcase," wrote Pound after reading the manuscript of the poem. "About enough, Eliot's poem, to make the rest of us shut up shop." Pound defined an epic as a "poem including history." Although much shorter than Homer's *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, or Milton's *Paradise Lost*, *The Waste Land* does contain history—both contemporary history and the history of the world understood in mythological terms. One of the factors that helped to create "high modernism" was the attempt of poets, after the war, to extend the techniques of the pre-war avant-gardes to address broad, historical questions, the sorts of questions normally addressed by epic. They remained suspicious, however, of attempts to tell the history of the world from a single, unified perspective—the "Arms and the man I sing" of the first line of Virgil's *Aeneid*, in which both the poet ("I") and his hero ("the man") are singular. Instead, their epics tended to treat historical experience as fragmentary, and often it is difficult to say whether their long poems are epics or merely collections of lyrics. Instead of granting perspective on history, they struggle to contain it in their irregular forms. In the first draft of his own fragmentary epic, *The Cantos*, in 1917, Pound had written that "the modern world / Needs such a rag-bag to stuff all its thoughts in." The modernist epic would have to be a rag-bag.

Perhaps the most famous of modernist rag-bags is the concluding section of *The Waste Land*, "What the Thunder Said." Eliot wrote this section in a flash of inspiration and published it virtually unedited. Eliot invokes

three ancient Sanskrit words from the Upanishads, ancient Hindu scriptures: Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata, each announced by the single syllable “DA,” representing a clap of thunder. The return of the waters suggests the possibility of a different type of sexual relation from those seen in the poem so far: “The sea was calm, your heart would have responded / Gaily, when invited, beating obedient / To controlling hands.” However, the flood and the purifying fire arrive, and the last lines of the poem seem to announce destruction, in many languages, as partial quotations pile up and the speaker (perhaps at last representing the poet himself), announces: “These fragments I have shored against my ruins.” After the destruction, the poem ends on a note of peace, with the words “Shantih Shantih Shantih,” which, as Eliot informs us, mark “the formal ending to an Upanishad.”

Eliot’s intentions in making a miniature epic out of the various lyrical moments and borrowed fragments that make up *The Waste Land* can best be understood in terms of his own analysis of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, which served as perhaps the most important model for the poem. Eliot wrote that the parallels Joyce draws between his own characters and those of Homer’s *Odyssey* constitute a “mythical method,” which had “the importance of a scientific discovery.” He went so far as to compare Joyce to Einstein. The mythical method, according to Eliot, “is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.” Many of Joyce’s readers have felt that Joyce himself did not necessarily aim for control and order, but most are in agreement that Eliot’s essay describes well the intention of *The Waste Land*, in which the many parallels that have been briefly discussed here help to convert chaos into a kind of order.

Like other modernist models of history—Yeats’s gyres, Pound’s vortex, Joyce’s Vichian cycles—Eliot emphasize the current moment as one of crisis, either preparing for or recovering from a radical break in history. This radical break certainly has something to do with the first world war, but it is also an aspect of the modernists’ eschatological view of the world, that is their fascination with the problem of destiny and the last judgment. It is for this reason that Kurtz’s famous last words (“The horror! The horror!”) in *Heart of Darkness* ring through so much of later modernism. Eliot originally intended to use them as the epigraph for *The Waste Land*. As Conrad’s narrator, Marlow, says, “he had summed up—he had judged. ‘The horror!’ He was a remarkable man. After all, this was the expression of some sort of belief; it had candor, it had conviction, it

had a vibrating note of revolt in its whisper, it had the appalling face of a glimpsed truth—the strange commingling of desire and hate.” The capacity to judge a civilization that teeters on the edge of chaos was highly prized by Eliot, as it was by Pound, Whose *Cantos* shares some of the features of *The Waste Land*, and by the other modernists who attempted their own epics.^[1]

Chapter Five

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary :

Modernism as a literary movement that had emerged by the end of the First World War created a sort of revolution in literary production. There came a new way of life and thinking that focused on the feelings of the individual. This research is a study of T.S Eliot as a pioneer in the modernism. Eliot's most interesting and famous poems; *The Waste Land* and *The Love Song of Alfred Prufrock* are elaborately dealt with.

In view of the fact that all Modernists share the same view of life, which is dominated by pessimism, it has been found that Eliot's poems are a reflection of a shattered society in which individuals cannot function in normal manner. Recognized values and traditions came to be questioned and many doubts about faith and religion were cast.

Instead of appreciating their modern life, the modernists began to think of the new way of life as an intruder that robbed them of their innocent and happy life and reduced them to the level of machines.

Nonetheless, modernism had its worth and importance for through it the human mind was made and developed and its efficiency greatly enhanced. The people's consciousness was raised. Both poems that have been chosen for study are narrated through the protagonist's mind.

This is an innovative technique which is quite new to English Literature. Indeed, this led to the emergence of what came to be known as the 'stream of consciousness' technique which has been adopted by the following generation of writers, including poets, novelists and playwrights.

For many readers, T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) is synonymous with modernism. Everything about his poetry bespeaks high modernism: its use of myth to undergird and order atomized modern experience; its collage-like juxtaposition of different voices, traditions, and discourses; and its focus on form as the carrier of meaning. His critical prose set the aesthetic standards for the New Criticism, and his journal *Criterion* was one of the primary arbiters of taste throughout the 1920's and 1930's. Eliot's wide-ranging but relatively small corpus of work – the precocious "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915), the seminal *The Waste*

Land (1922), and the later *Four Quartets* (1943), which Eliot considered his masterpiece – has made him the primary figure of modernist poetry both for his peers and for subsequent generations.

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born on September 26, 1888 in St. Louis, Missouri to a wealthy Unitarian family with roots in Massachusetts. Studying first at Smith Academy from 1898 to 1905 and then at Harvard College from 1906 to 1909, Eliot learned Greek, Latin, French, and German, developing philological skills and gaining familiarity with varying philosophical traditions. While at Harvard, Eliot became interested in French symbolist poetry, finding himself particularly drawn to Rimbaud, Verlaine, and Laforgue. These poets would prove influential for Ezra Pound as well.

In 1911, Eliot enrolled as a doctoral student at Harvard, reading deeply in Buddhism and learning Sanskrit. Having studied in Germany and at Oxford, Eliot settled in England after the outbreak of the First World War, working as a teacher and, famously, as a banker. Eliot's Anglophilia was lasting: he was a leading figure in the London artistic scene along with Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and others, became a British subject in 1927, and converted to Anglicanism around the same time. Soon afterwards, he encapsulated his views as "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion."

Eliot had married Vivienne Haigh-Wood in 1915. The marriage was not successful: the two separated in 1933 and Eliot eventually committed Vivienne (still legally his wife) to a mental hospital in 1938. In 1957, Eliot married Esmé Valerie Fletcher, his former secretary at Faber and Faber. The two were happy together until Eliot's death in 1965; his poem "A Dedication to My Wife" is a rare public declaration of the deep affection he felt for his second wife.

Eliot's first truly mature piece of verse, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," written mostly when Eliot was only twenty-two, was pioneering in its use of interior monologue, in its fragmented structure, and in its startling figurative language ("Let us go then, you and I, / When the evening is spread out against the sky / Like a patient etherised upon a table"). It amazed Ezra Pound, three years Eliot's senior, by its modernity, which Eliot had achieved without any direct contact with avant-garde movements. Pound, who met Eliot during the second month of the war, arranged to have "Prufrock" published in *Poetry* in June of 1915. With the publication of the volume *Prufrock and Other*

Observations by The Egoist Press in 1917, Eliot was heralded as the most important of modern poets. He also became the most influential critical voice of the movement, arguing for example that, in modern civilization, "the poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language to his meaning."

In 1922, his status was confirmed by the publication of *The Waste Land*. Appearing as it did in the same year as James Joyce's *Ulysses*, the 434-line poem helped mark 1922 as a magical year in high modernism. Allusive, musical, and formally and linguistically complex, *The Waste Land* both diagnosed the chaos of modernity and provided an example of how art could order this experience; it expressed a widespread feeling of exhaustion and cultural crisis in the aftermath of the First World War. Like *Ulysses*, it mimicked and mined the different voices of urban life to create a bewildering and complex polyphony, and like Joyce's novel it used recursive patterning and mythic parallels to provide some semblance of organic harmony.

Eliot continued to publish poetry, drama, and critical prose for the next four decades. His 1925 *The Hollow Men* was a despairing work symptomatic of a generation scarred by war, but also pointed towards his later conversion, while the essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919) discusses the inextricable link between present and past poetry and contains Eliot's famous formulation of the impersonal nature of poetic creation. After Eliot's conversion to Anglicanism, his poetry took on a more theological bent, as he wrestled with issues of temporality and eternity, poetry as inevitable failure and as ungraspable ideal, in *Four Quartets*.

Having written one expressionist-influenced play, *Sweeney Agonistes*, in 1926-1927 (first performed in 1933), Eliot turned after his conversion to a very different sort of ritualized drama, the pageant play. His *Murder in the Cathedral*, first performed at the Chapter House of Canterbury Cathedral in 1935, tells the story of the martyrdom of Thomas a Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. Eliot envisioned drama as the "ideal medium" for verse and "the most direct means of social 'usefulness' for poetry." His later plays, however, became increasingly indistinguishable from the commercial theater whose conventions they were intended to recast.

As editor at Faber and Faber, Eliot promoted the work of many younger writers, including W.H. Auden and Djuna Barnes, although his conservative politics, expressed most bizarrely in *After Strange Gods*(1934), were at odds with the views of leading younger writers of the 1930's. After the Second World War, Eliot, now an influential literary editor, left lyric poetry behind in order to write increasingly mainstream drama. He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1948.

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Appendices

T.S. Eliot (1888–1965). The Waste Land. 1922.

The Waste Land

*Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis
vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent:
Σιβυλλα τί θέλεις ; respondebat illa: ἀπο θανεῖν θέλω.*

I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

APRIL is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering 5
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.
Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten, 10
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.
And when we were children, staying at the archduke's,
My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,
And I was frightened. He said, Marie, 15
Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.
In the mountains, there you feel free.
I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow 20
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
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, 25
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust. 30

*Frisch weht der Wind
Der Heimat zu,
Mein Irisch Kind,
Wo weilest du?*

“You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;
 They called me the hyacinth girl.”
 —Yet when we came back, late, from the Hyacinth garden,
 Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
 Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
 Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
 Looking into the heart of light, the silence.
Öd’ und leer das Meer.

Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante,
 Had a bad cold, nevertheless
 Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,
 With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,
 Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor,
 (Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)
 Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,
 The lady of situations.
 Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,
 And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,
 Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,
 Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find
 The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.
 I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring.
 Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone,
 Tell her I bring the horoscope myself:
 One must be so careful these days.

Unreal City,
 Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
 A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
 I had not thought death had undone so many.
 Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
 And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
 Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
 To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
 With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.
 There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying “Stetson!
 You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!
 That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
 Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
 Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?
 Oh keep the Dog far hence, that’s friend to men,
 Or with his nails he’ll dig it up again!
 You! *hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!*”

II. A GAME OF CHESS

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
 Glowed on the marble, where the glass
 Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines

From which a golden Cupidon peeped out 80
 (Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
 Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
 Reflecting light upon the table as
 The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
 From satin cases poured in rich profusion; 85
 In vials of ivory and coloured glass
 Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
 Unguent, powdered, or liquid—troubled, confused
 And drowned the sense in odours; stirred by the air
 That freshened from the window, these ascended 90
 In fattening the prolonged candle-flames,
 Flung their smoke into the laquearia,
 Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling.
 Huge sea-wood fed with copper
 Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone, 95
 In which sad light a carvèd dolphin swam.
 Above the antique mantel was displayed
 As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
 The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
 So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale 100
 Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
 And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
 “Jug Jug” to dirty ears.
 And other withered stumps of time
 Were told upon the walls; staring forms 105
 Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.
 Footsteps shuffled on the stair,
 Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair
 Spread out in fiery points
 Glowed into words, then would be savagely still. 110

“My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
 Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak.
 What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
 I never know what you are thinking. Think.”

I think we are in rats’ alley 115
 Where the dead men lost their bones.

“What is that noise?”
 The wind under the door.
 “What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?”
 Nothing again nothing. 120
 “Do
 You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember
 Nothing?”
 I remember
 Those are pearls that were his eyes. 125

“Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?”

But

O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—

It’s so elegant

So intelligent

130

“What shall I do now? What shall I do?

I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street

With my hair down, so. What shall we do to-morrow?

What shall we ever do?”

The hot water at ten.

135

And if it rains, a closed car at four.

And we shall play a game of chess,

Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

When Lil’s husband got demobbed, I said,

I didn’t mince my words, I said to her myself,

140

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Now Albert’s coming back, make yourself a bit smart.

He’ll want to know what you done with that money he gave you

To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.

You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,

145

He said, I swear, I can’t bear to look at you.

And no more can’t I, I said, and think of poor Albert,

He’s been in the army four years, he wants a good time,

And if you don’t give it him, there’s others will, I said.

Oh is there, she said. Something o’ that, I said.

150

Then I’ll know who to thank, she said, and give me a straight look.

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

If you don’t like it you can get on with it, I said,

Others can pick and choose if you can’t.

But if Albert makes off, it won’t be for lack of telling.

155

You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique.

(And her only thirty-one.)

I can’t help it, she said, pulling a long face,

It’s them pills I took, to bring it off, she said.

(She’s had five already, and nearly died of young George.)

160

The chemist said it would be alright, but I’ve never been the same.

You *are* a proper fool, I said.

Well, if Albert won’t leave you alone, there it is, I said,

What you get married for if you don’t want children?

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

165

Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,

And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot—

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight.

170

Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.

Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night.

III. THE FIRE SERMON

The river's tent is broken: the last fingers of leaf
Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind
Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed. 175
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.
The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends
Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are departed.
And their friends, the loitering heirs of city directors; 180
Departed, have left no addresses.
By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept...
Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,
Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long.
But at my back in a cold blast I hear 185
The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.

A rat crept softly through the vegetation
Dragging its slimy belly on the bank
While I was fishing in the dull canal
On a winter evening round behind the gashouse. 190
Musing upon the king my brother's wreck
And on the king my father's death before him.
White bodies naked on the low damp ground
And bones cast in a little low dry garret,
Rattled by the rat's foot only, year to year. 195
But at my back from time to time I hear
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.
O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter
And on her daughter 200
They wash their feet in soda water
Et, O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!

Twit twit twit
Jug jug jug jug jug jug
So rudely forc'd. 205
Tereu

Unreal City
Under the brown fog of a winter noon
Mr Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants 210
C. i. f. London: documents at sight,
Asked me in demotic French
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel
Followed by a week-end at the Metropole.

At the violet hour, when the eyes and back 215
 Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits
 Like a taxi throbbing waiting,
 I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,
 Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see
 At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives 220
 Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,
 The typist home at tea-time, clears her breakfast, lights
 Her stove, and lays out food in tins.
 Out of the window perilously spread
 Her drying combinations touched by the sun's last rays, 225
 On the divan are piled (at night her bed)
 Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays.
 I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs
 Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest—
 I too awaited the expected guest. 230
 He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,
 A small house-agent's clerk, with one bold stare,
 One of the low on whom assurance sits
 As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.
 The time is now propitious, as he guesses, 235
 The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,
 Endeavours to engage her in caresses
 Which still are unreproved, if undesired.
 Flushed and decided, he assaults at once;
 Exploring hands encounter no defence; 240
 His vanity requires no response,
 And makes a welcome of indifference.
 (And I Tiresias have foresuffered all
 Enacted on this same divan or bed;
 I who have sat by Thebes below the wall 245
 And walked among the lowest of the dead.)
 Bestows one final patronizing kiss,
 And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit...

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,
 Hardly aware of her departed lover; 250
 Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:
 "Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over."
 When lovely woman stoops to folly and
 Paces about her room again, alone,
 She smooths her hair with automatic hand, 255
 And puts a record on the gramophone.

"This music crept by me upon the waters"
 And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.
 O City City, I can sometimes hear
 Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street, 260

The pleasant whining of a mandoline
 And a clatter and a chatter from within
 Where fishermen lounge at noon: where the walls
 Of Magnus Martyr hold
 Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold. 265

The river sweats
 Oil and tar
 The barges drift
 With the turning tide
 Red sails 270
 Wide

To leeward, swing on the heavy spar.
 The barges wash
 Drifting logs
 Down Greenwich reach 275
 Past the Isle of Dogs.

Weialala leia
 Wallala leialala

Elizabeth and Leicester
 Beating oars 280

The stern was formed
 A gilded shell
 Red and gold
 The brisk swell
 Rippled both shores 285
 South-west wind

Carried down stream
 The peal of bells
 White towers
 Weialala leia 290
 Wallala leialala

“Trams and dusty trees.
 Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew
 Undid me. By Richmond I raised my knees
 Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe.” 295

“My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart
 Under my feet. After the event
 He wept. He promised ‘a new start.’
 I made no comment. What should I resent?”

“On Margate Sands. 300
 I can connect
 Nothing with nothing.
 The broken finger-nails of dirty hands.
 My people humble people who expect
 Nothing.” 305

la la

To Carthage then I came

Burning burning burning burning
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest

310

burning

IV. DEATH BY WATER

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep seas swell
And the profit and loss.

315

A current under sea
Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the whirlpool.

Gentile or Jew
O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.

320

V. WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

After the torch-light red on sweaty faces
After the frosty silence in the gardens
After the agony in stony places
The shouting and the crying
Prison and place and reverberation
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains
He who was living is now dead
We who were living are now dying
With a little patience

325

330

Here is no water but only rock
Rock and no water and the sandy road
The road winding above among the mountains
Which are mountains of rock without water
If there were water we should stop and drink
Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think
Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand
If there were only water amongst the rock
Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit
Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit
There is not even silence in the mountains
But dry sterile thunder without rain

335

340

There is not even solitude in the mountains
But red sullen faces sneer and snarl
From doors of mud-cracked houses

If there were water

And no rock
If there were rock
And also water
And water
A spring

A pool among the rock
If there were the sound of water only
Not the cicada
And dry grass singing
But sound of water over a rock
Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop
But there is no water

Who is the third who walks always beside you?
When I count, there are only you and I together
But when I look ahead up the white road
There is always another one walking beside you
Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded
I do not know whether a man or a woman
—But who is that on the other side of you?

What is that sound high in the air
Murmur of maternal lamentation
Who are those hooded hordes swarming
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth
Ringed by the flat horizon only
What is the city over the mountains
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
Falling towers
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
Vienna London
Unreal

A woman drew her long black hair out tight
And fiddled whisper music on those strings
And bats with baby faces in the violet light
Whistled, and beat their wings
And crawled head downward down a blackened wall
And upside down in air were towers
Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours
And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells.

In this decayed hole among the mountains
In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing

Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel
 There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.
 It has no windows, and the door swings,
 Dry bones can harm no one. 390
 Only a cock stood on the roof-tree
 Co co rico co co rico
 In a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust
 Bringing rain
 Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves 395
 Waited for rain, while the black clouds
 Gathered far distant, over Himavant.
 The jungle crouched, humped in silence.
 Then spoke the thunder
 DA 400
Datta: what have we given?
 My friend, blood shaking my heart
 The awful daring of a moment's surrender
 Which an age of prudence can never retract
 By this, and this only, we have existed 405
 Which is not to be found in our obituaries
 Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider
 Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor
 In our empty rooms
 DA 410
Dayadhvam: I have heard the key
 Turn in the door once and turn once only
 We think of the key, each in his prison
 Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison
 Only at nightfall, aetherial rumours 415
 Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus
 DA
Damyata: The boat responded
 Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar
 The sea was calm, your heart would have responded 420
 Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
 To controlling hands

 I sat upon the shore
 Fishing, with the arid plain behind me
 Shall I at least set my lands in order? 425

 London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down

Poi s'aspose nel foco che gli affina
Quando fiam ceu chelidon—O swallow swallow
Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie
 These fragments I have shored against my ruins 430
 Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.
 Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata. *Shantih shantih shantih*

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question ...
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,
Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;
There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair —

(They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!")
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin —
(They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!")
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all:
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall
Beneath the music from a farther room.
So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)
Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
And should I then presume?
And how should I begin?

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? ...

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,
Asleep ... tired ... or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,
I am no prophet — and here's no great matter;

I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,
To have squeezed the universe into a ball
To roll it towards some overwhelming question,
To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—
If one, settling a pillow by her head
Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;
That is not it, at all."

And would it have been worth it, after all,
Would it have been worth while,
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along the floor—
And this, and so much more?—
It is impossible to say just what I mean!
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:
Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
"That is not it at all,
That is not what I meant, at all."

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool.
I grow old ... I grow old ...
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.
I do not think that they will sing to me.
I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.