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„T.S. Eliot as “Minstrel Troubadour”: *The Waste Land* and the Merging of High and Low Cultures“

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DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

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HINWEIS

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"I want a holophrase"

--Hope Mirrlees, "Paris: A Poem"

"My life is like a music hall,
Where, in the impotence of rage,
Chained by enchantment to my stall,
I see myself upon the stage
Dance to amuse a music hall."

--Arthur Symonds, "Prologue", *London Nights* (3)

1. Introduction

A rare recording of an American robin's migration across the Atlantic Ocean to Great Britain, as David Chinitz points out, parallels the migration of one of the prominent figures of the Modernist literary movement of the early 20th Century, that of TS Eliot (3). According to Eliot, as Chinitz highlights, this bird and its journey to Great Britain represents the "‘American language’, extending its influence eastward through the mass media, global capitalism, and the other phenomena of postindustrial modernity that seemed to emanate from the United States." (3). As Eliot is a major figure of what has been categorized as Transatlantic Modernism, much scholarly focus has centered on his self-made 'Englishness'. That is, the focus has been on his immersion and assimilation into the high culture of England, astoundingly, as a foreigner, still becoming an authoritative literary figure. In such a high cultural context as London, where Eliot chose to live, it has been duly noted that he produced works of art for elite audiences with such controversial, yet, ever-impactful poems as "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock" and *The Waste Land*.

Eliot has been categorized as one of the major High Modernist literary figures. Thus, understanding features of this High Modernist category is crucial in understanding the way in which Eliot's seminal work, *The Waste Land*, has taken on the institutional aura of elitist and exclusivist, at the least, functioning as a difficult cultural text that requires the reader to have a breadth of knowledge of literary history. Interestingly, even with such knowledge of literary history, even for a wide range of professional literary readers, *The Waste Land*, with its myriad allusions and intertextualities, still remains a conundrum or a difficult text, as far as how to experience it aesthetically.

Unfortunately, both *The Waste Land* and Eliot himself have come to be disregarded more and more over the decades down to the present. Much social and cultural change and accomplishment has taken place since the early 1900s, i.e., higher regard for and openness toward gender roles; new movements and change regarding racial discrimination; as well, new perspectives on social class distinctions. Due to such positive social and cultural change, Eliot and this High Modernist masterpiece, have come to be viewed as old-fashioned, exclusive, snobbish, racist, and bigoted, to name a few possible descriptions. While *The Waste Land* remains a worthwhile text to

analyze and discuss in the English literature classroom, it is as though, according to my estimation, it has lost its appeal as an enjoyable work of art. Arguably, it is not generally regarded as a text that marks a major Western and, overall, global shift, portraying how humanity has come to terms with post-industrial, urban, transnational, globalization.

My aim, therefore, in this study is to reconsider *The Waste Land* as a text that embraces and embodies new positive ways of interacting in a rapidly changing, globalized society. The problem this study therefore addresses is the categorization of *The Waste Land* as an exclusivist and elitist text, a prominently retrospective categorization that, I suggest, has negatively influenced the general reception and interpretive engagement with the text. This study will reconsider the fixed, established position of *The Waste Land* as High Modernist. To carry out what may seem to be such an ambitious task, I aim to consider in further detail what Charles Sanders in “*The Waste Land Minstrel?*” suggests are important elements in *The Waste Land*, namely, both the Minstrel and the Troubadour traditions (37). These two traditions generally have not been focal points in previous analyses of this text. Thus, I contend that TS Eliot embraces and incorporates both Minstrel and Troubadour traditions in *The Waste Land*, as is evident in the text, and in doing so, foregrounds and envisions a culturally inclusive new reality of urbanized, international, and mobile means of human interrelations in the 20th century.

For this study then, it is first important to clarify that what is meant by culturally inclusive reality especially pertains to new cultural shifts in society that address past restrictions placed on social class, race, gender roles, and sexuality. That is, *The Waste Land* portrays a post-WWI questioning of traditional societal standards and restrictions. To consider this new engagement with rigid, socially and politically established conventions—especially rigid during the 19th and early 20th Centuries—I will make central to my focus the categories of language, identity and desire. These three topics prove to be substantive and functional as dynamic forces in both the Minstrel and Troubadour traditions, as well as prominent features in *The Waste Land*.

1.1. Avant-garde and High Modernism

First, to begin my analysis, it is necessary to address how Eliot and consequently, *The Waste Land*, have come to be retrospectively categorized as elitist and exclusivist. Disentangling the two categories of pre-WWI avant-garde and post-WWI High Modernism proves helpful in this endeavor. What are, therefore, characteristics of the avant-garde and High Modernist movements in the early 20th century?

Although it has beginnings around mid-19th century, as Tim Armstrong points out, “modernism can be defined as a series of international artistic movements in the period 1900-40...(24). Near the center point of this time period, the year 1922, the year *The Waste Land* was published, has been deemed “*annus mirabilis* (marvelous year) of modernism.” (Lewis 124). Some in England, however, have suggested earlier dates to mark a major shift in cultural change. Regarding an English perspective, Virginia Woolf was a major proponent for the year 1910. As Lewis highlights: “By 1910, the year of Edward VII’s death, many in England also felt the need for a radical change, in the social and political realms as well as the aesthetic.” (Lewis 88). Interestingly, Continental European aestheticism, impressionism and symbolism movements had already been in effect previous to 1910. However, England had yet to fully accept such experimental art movements, much less the soon to follow post-impressionist exhibition of 1910. This was an event held in London, organized by Roger Fry, Woolf and other members of the Bloomsbury group.

In England, a turn to such experimental engagements with artistic representation in the early 1900s inspired further artistic experimentation, leading to pre-WWI avant-garde movements. This resulted in a succession of “-isms”, that is, artistic movements “often aggressively announced in manifestos...”, i.e., vorticism, futurism, imagism, to name a few (Lewis 96). These groups active in the 1910s, including such figures as Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis and Gertrude Stein, were engaging in highly experimental attempts to reconsider methods of artistic representation. Abrams and Harpham define the concept of avant-garde as: “a small, self-conscious group of artists and authors who deliberately undertake, in Ezra Pound’s phrase, to ‘make it new.’ (227). These avant-gardists attempted to ‘make it

new' because the old methods of artistic representation no longer seemed sufficient for representing reality in modern life (Lewis 1).

A prominent feature to consider with the avant-gardists is their general disdain for mass culture. In producing such experimental and innovative art, literature, and poetry, these groups were not concerned with pleasing the masses. Their primary purpose was to determine and redefine what they considered to be good art. Little Magazines and journals were established by the avant-gardists as a means to publish works intended mainly for the minority, not the masses. Yet, ironically, these artists still intended to engage with the masses, as Abram and Harpham conclude: "Frequently, avant-garde artists represent themselves as 'alienated' from the established order, against which they assert their own autonomy; a prominent aim is to shock the sensibilities of the conventional reader and to challenge the norms and pieties of the dominant bourgeois culture." (227). Important to note, however, is the fact that the broad reading public in England pre-WWI did not generally understand how to receive or engage with such experimental artistic expressions. The avant-gardists in this regard, therefore embraced an exclusive, arguably elitist categorization, attempting to sustain art, elevating it above the seemingly thoughtless, homogenized mass culture of the early 20th century.

This embracing of an exclusivist and elitist mindset ironically embodies aspects of bourgeois liberalism, which especially emerged during the 19th and early 20th centuries in England (Lewis 11). Such liberalism, was concerned with individual autonomy, less government regulation, in turn, often less human rights, and as Lewis argues, was a major contributor to WWI (Lewis 16). Embracing certain aspects of this liberalism is ironic because the pre-WWI avant-gardists mostly despised the middle class bourgeois and were radically postured against them. These pre-WWI English avant-gardists were already exploring anti-liberalist and arguably anti-bourgeois socio-political ideas in their art and literature. The avant-gardists affirmed the "changing status of women and working classes..." and supported new perspectives on sexuality (Lewis 15). Yet, they were arguably adopting seemingly prominent ideologies from liberalism, mainly that of individualism. This liberalist political mindset, however, would soon collapse in light of WWI (Lewis 16). As Lewis points out, "[f]rom 1914 to 1918 that conflict appeared to confirm the bankruptcy of the nineteenth century liberal political

system” (Lewis 16). Hence, those pre-WWI avant-gardists and modernists, having embraced some of the liberalist mentality, would soon question that very mentality post-WWI.

Ezra Pound was a leading figure with pre-WWI avant-garde movements, embracing such experimental and arguably exclusivist ideologies referenced. It is crucial then to note the impact of Pound’s influence on TS Eliot’s poetry. As Pound and Eliot worked closely together, Pound edited and published Eliot’s works to pioneer the new modernist movement. Eliot and his works pre-WWI, such as *The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock*, were then arguably associated with an elitist and exclusivist minority. Such a categorization for this particular poem seems fair, as the speaker, it has been claimed, takes on Baudelaire’s “detached and ironic gaze of the masculine walker, the *flaneur*” (Armstrong 23). However, these alienated, elitist and exclusivist associations remained retrospectively attached with post-WWI Eliot as well.

John Storey in *Inventing Popular Culture* contributes to this retrospective categorization of modernism as elitist and exclusive. He includes an argument by John Carey, claiming:

modernist literature and art can be seen as a hostile reaction to the unprecedentedly large reading public created by late nineteenth-century educational reforms. The purpose of modernist writing...was to exclude these newly educated (or “semi-educated”) readers, and so to preserve the intellectual’s seclusion from the “mass.” (Storey *Inventing Popular Culture* 41)

Storey further suggests this categorization, including a statement given by Andreas Huyssen:

Ever since the mid-19th century, the culture of modernity has been characterized by a volatile relationship between high art and mass culture... Modernism constituted itself through a conscious strategy of exclusion, an anxiety of contamination by its other: an increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture. (*Inventing Popular Culture* 41)

Storey further alludes to the difficult nature of modernist texts, which intentionally create a divide between the few against the many. Storey posits:

This is because modern art is ‘antipopular’: it is ‘a social agent which...divides the public into the two classes of those who understand it [‘a special gifted minority] and those who do not [‘the shapeless mass of the many’]”. (*Inventing Popular Culture* 42)

According to this perspective, modernists viewed the broad reading public as incapable of understanding their complex works. That is, only the professional, highly educated few could interpret and engage with such high art.

The problem with associating high modernism with such elitist and exclusivist aims is that marked cultural shifts had taken place post-WWI, reacting against such cultural exclusivity. Post-WWI, a whole decade had passed with the emergence of transnational radical artist movements. These pre-WWI movements then, essentially shocked, yet, prepared the public for massive shifts in exploring and experiencing new methods, modes, and representations in art and literature. Pericles Lewis argues then for a marked distinction in the pre-WWI avant-garde and the High Modernist:

Parallel tendencies in Europe showed how the earlier energies of the avant-garde had been channeled into a distinctively modernist idiom, experimental and challenging but directed to a broad public rather than a coterie audience. Networks of artists and writers sympathetic to the aims of modern art formed in the various parts of the world, whether on the Left Bank in Paris, around the British Museum in Bloomsbury in London, in Harlem or on Fifth Avenue in New York. Such networks of sympathy helped to diffuse and elaborate canons of 'modern' taste that would have seemed radical a generation earlier. (124)

So in 1922, when *The Waste Land* was published, "modern art was becoming canonical and established." (Lewis 125). Due to transnational mobility and influence, arguably worldwide, cultural shifts in America and Europe were made then toward openness for more of a collective social integration.

Michael North in *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern* suggests as well that claims for modernism as anti-popular and anti-mass culture have been retrospectively given. North contends:

Since postmodernism defined itself in large part by its greater eclecticism and stylistic openness, it required as foil a modernism as exclusive as possible. Thus, the rivalry between postmodernism and modernism was read back into history, quite openly, as an antipathy between modernism and mass culture, one whose existence has always seemed more a matter of theoretical necessity than of empirical fact." (North *Reading 1922* 10)

As North posits, the oppositional categorization of modernism and mass culture has unfairly been the retrospective consensus. This categorization was further attributed when considering how early 20th century formalist movements—those directly associated with Eliot—elevated poetry as autonomous and pure art. In such a

detached category then, true poetry was not to commingle with modern opportunities of marketing and mass distribution.

David Earle in *Re-Covering Modernism: Pulps, Paperbacks, and the Prejudice of Form* opposes the stance of modernism as anti-mass culture. Earle posits that “modernism has always been an available aspect of mass culture.” (6) He further claims:

The construction of elite modernism would have it that literature is above monetary concerns, and the corresponding forms that have been archived by the academy have been collected as rare products of the pure production of art.” (Earle 6)

Here, Earle highlights the few versus the many perspective. That is, he opposes the view of modernists as exclusivists, attempting to preserve art to not allow it to be diffused in mass consumption. Earle further concludes that “modernism has always been fascinated with, even reliant upon, capturing and translating the ephemeral and common...” (Earle 7) This view in fact hearkens back to Charles Baudelaire’s quote: “Modernity is the transitory, the fugitive, and the contingent; it is one half of art, the other being the eternal and immutable...” (Lewis 5).

Michael North provides an acute perspective implying that Eliot and *The Waste Land* represent forces breaking down the few versus many barriers. North poses the question:

What effect might it have on current belief in the resolutely anticommercial bias of early modernism to know that Edward Bernays, founder of the discipline of public relations, perfected his techniques with Horace Liveright, ‘the principal publisher of modernism’?” (North *Reading* 1922 pg 9)

As Tim Armstrong asserts, “Horace Liveright agreed to undertake American publication of both *The Waste Land* and *Ulysses*...” (33). These two works of course are known as the two major representations of modernism. Notably, the fact that this publication endorsed by Liveright refers to an American perspective rather than English is a non-issue, in that, what is important for this study is how Eliot and Pound sought an avenue to reach a mass public. Arguably, such collaboration, particularly by Pound and Eliot, with major publishers and mass distributors further contributes to the argument that High Modernism had shifted from exclusivist and elitist roots to a more culturally inclusive relation to the public.

With the mentioned post-WWI “crisis of political liberalism”, Eliot was arguably among those striving against previous individualist and exclusivist concepts (Lewis 11). After the war, it seems fitting that previous ideologies set against human rights were questioned rigorously in art and literature. So, as Lewis succinctly articulated, High Modernism did embrace some of the previous highly innovative concepts of the avant-garde. Yet, notably, such embracing was achieved with a purpose to fuse these innovations with methods and techniques representative of a desire to reach a larger audience.

Having now postulated that Eliot and *The Waste Land* are representative of a new culturally inclusive reality of a post-WWI society, it is necessary to consider specific methods and techniques at work in the text that demonstrate such a claim. What are prominent methods and techniques appropriated in the text that represent a post-WWI desire for collective unity? What are the implications of social, cultural, transnational mobility? How are these new realities explored in what seems to be such a fragmented text? How does such a difficult text function to reach a broad audience? I aim to address these questions in this study.

I will begin by reviewing a range of critical engagements concerning Eliot as a revolutionary figure of change. Subsequently, I will turn to an in depth analysis of methods and techniques adapted from both Minstrel and Troubadour traditions that are employed and incorporated in *The Waste Land*. Principal to my focus will be these three topics: language, identity, and desire.

1.2. Eliot as “Agent of Change”

In an attempt to provide an initial summary on how the Minstrel and Troubadour traditions are employed in *The Waste Land*, I propose a word that is associated with the Postmodern turn: play. Since *The Waste Land* is categorized as a pillar of Modernism, why then allude to such a Postmodern concept? As a pillar of Modernism, on the one hand, Eliot’s literary achievements capture the unstable nature of the early twentieth century, a new cross-cultural, trans-national engagement, and the need for restoration of the arid environment of modern society. Importantly, along with these achievements, Eliot pioneers, even acts as prophet for new shifts to Postmodern thinking.

Ruth Nevo in *The Waste Land: Ur-text of Deconstruction* argues Eliot's poem to function "as a deconstructionist Ur-text, even as a Deconstructionist Manifesto." (454). As Nevo suggests, in *The Waste Land* "the fundamental categories of literary discourse are dismantled or simply abandoned." (455). He creates a fluid overlap of voices, with no clear indication where the speakers change. Nevo suggests, "It is a cinematographic *mélange* or montage of glimpses, gestures, images, echoes, voices, phrases, memories, fragments of speech, song, quotation, appearances, and disappearances." (455-456). Although Eliot, arguably, is not attempting outright to create what Nevo suggests as a "Deconstructionist Manifesto", especially since *The Waste Land* is published decades previous to the Deconstructionist theoretical turn, Eliot is however exploring three main themes, which correlate with a Postmodernist theories, that of play regarding language, identity, and desire (454).

In Michael North's article *The Dialect in/of Modernism: Pound and Eliot's Racial Masquerade* examines issues of language and identity. According to North, Eliot and Pound both as expatriates living in London revealed a cultural positioning strategy apparent in their written correspondence to one another (56). Eliot took on the name Old Possum, and Pound the name Brer Rabbit, both characters from Uncle Remus stories, African-American folktales (56). North highlights the importance of such play suggesting that "Eliot was to mimic what Alain Locke once called the " 'possum play' of the Negro peasant...to use the traditional strategy of the powerless, assuming a bland conformity that conceals an explosive charge." (56).

Assuming these character roles essentially behind the scenes in the English cultural context, Eliot and Pound intentionally adopted a minority language, an African-American dialect (North 56). Since the early 1900s was a significant time for the standardization of British English, this dialect became even more important for Pound and Eliot. As North states:

As a violation of Standard English, dialect became the sign of Pound and Eliot's collaboration against the literary establishment and the literature it produced. Dialect became, in other words, the private double of the modernist poetry they were jointly creating and publishing in these years. (56-57)

With the rise of the Jazz Age of the 1920s and the sheer force of transatlantic cultural exchange, African-American language and identity had a major impact on the modernist art movement. In fact, North makes a keen observation of the modernist

artistic shift from tradition as he posits that “[b]lack dialect is a prototype of the literature that would break the hold of the iambic pentameter, an example of visceral freedom triumphing over dead convention.” (57).

This inclination for a freer form of art finds many parallels in the genre of jazz. For African-Americans, Jazz was an outlet. In fact, jazz may have been the strong influential wind initiating such a shift in the modernist art to a free form of expression. Jazz as a mode of improvisation provided a rich cultural space for free expression.

In *A Jazz-Banjarine, Not a Lute: Eliot and Popular Music before The Waste Land* David Chinitz discusses Eliot’s interesting connection with jazz (5). Eliot once was invited to a high culture social event and was asked, with the knowledge that he was a poet, to bring along a lute to which Eliot responded: “But it is a jazz-banjarine that I should bring, not a lute.” (Chinitz 5). The lute has a long history connected with poetry and high culture, while the jazz-banjarine finds its beginnings and popularization within parlors and music hall popular culture (Chinitz 5-6). Chinitz highlights the fact that “[w]ith its African percussiveness and short sustain on stopped strings, the banjo was ill-suited for the slow legato of much European music, and so seemed, by European aesthetic standards, to be emotionally limited and incapable of musical profundity.” (6). As Chinitz suggests further, because the “banjo was still best known as a fixture in the minstrel show, Eliot’s comment effectively cast him as a blackface comic...” (6).

Along with the jazz movement in America the banjo became a well-known symbol for American culture (Chinitz 6.) Chinitz even postulates that “the banjo prepared the arrival of Eliot and his modernism—his own challenge to the official culture of England. For Eliot to play the ‘jazz-banjarine’ was to be an agent of change.” (6). No longer just the American robin, having traveled over the great waters to a new land, but now also figuratively able to “breed with the English thrush” to become what Chinitz calls “*migratorius and musicus*” (4). Eliot would become a multifaceted “troubadour-bird” (Chinitz 4). For Eliot to play the banjo essentially was a move from the old to the new, embracing Ezra Pound’s charge to “make it new”.

2. The Troubadour Tradition: “Inventors” and “Origins”

For Chinitz to playfully suggest this title as “troubadour-bird”, intriguingly proposes a dynamic within *The Waste Land*, that of the tradition of medieval troubadour poetry. This tradition however maintains, at most, passing references in scholarship pertaining to *The Waste Land*. In Lawrence Rainey’s *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot’s Contemporary Prose* the Troubadour tradition is noted as Eliot dedicated this poem to Pound, writing “*il miglior fabbro*”, which translates: “the better craftsman” (Rainey 57). Rainey notes, “Eliot dedicates the poem to Ezra Pound with the phrase that registers Dante’s tribute to the Provençal poet Arnaut Daniel, who flourished between 1180 and 1200.” (76). Although Arnaut Daniel is referenced by Rainey in this account, Dante overshadows Daniel in regards to Eliot. Daniel’s name, along with other Troubadour poets that preceded Dante are not listed within the general index of this text, which indicates the lack of interest in such topics pertaining to *The Waste Land*.

In *The Cambridge Companion to TS Eliot* edited by A. David Moody, the Troubadour connections remain minute. Arnaut Daniel is mentioned in a brief description regarding the *Four Quartets* (Moody 145-146). In this instance again, Daniel is coupled with Dante. In this reference text, there is little to no reference to other aspects of the origins of Troubadour poetry. Similarly, in Joseph Maddrey’s *The Making of TS Eliot: A Study of The Literary Influences* few references are given to Troubadour tradition. Arnaut Daniel, courtly love, Provençal and/or Troubadour poetry all are not emphasized in this text. French influence upon Eliot is noted, and very much emphasized, as is the case generally in Eliot scholarship. However, this influence typically centers on Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud and Jules Laforgue. Such influence is important, and some of it will play a role in my study, however, it is important to note the reference to such French influence hovers around the 19th and 20th centuries, disregarding Medieval French influence.

Interestingly, England and Europe saw a flourishing interest in Provençal poetry in late 19th century into the 20th century. Ezra Pound in fact embraced such an interest. Stuart Y. McDougal in *Ezra Pound and the Troubadour Tradition* notes this interest, stating: “In the autumn of 1904, Ezra Pound began his studies of Provençal at Hamilton College under Dr. William Pierce Shepherd.” (3). This scholarly interest would in turn

prominently shape Pound's avant-garde and modernist inclinations. Knowledge of and engagement with Provençal and Troubadour traditions became of utmost importance for Pound. He especially was concerned with language, as he commenced upon translating a large number of Provençal poets. In these translation endeavors, he especially experimented with the interpretive process, which he considered a way to develop his own language and identity as a poet (McDougal 5). Intriguingly, McDougal quotes Eliot addressing Pound's translation process, stating: "[G]ood translation like this is not merely translation, for the translator is giving the original through himself, and finding himself through the original" (39). McDougal includes a succinct summary that implies the Troubadour tradition had influence upon Eliot and *The Waste Land*:

As [Pound] has stated repeatedly, the young poet, like the scientist, "begins by learning what has been discovered already"... and "any study of European poetry is unsound if it does not commence with a study of that art in Provence" (*LE*, 101:1913). Thus, in terms of Pound's constant search for "inventors" and "origins," Provence has played an important role." (5)

As Pound and Eliot sought to be modernist "inventors" then it must be important to consider these Troubadour origins. Thus, this section of my study is concerned with origins and, more specifically, revolutionary methods and techniques of the troubadour tradition and how these influences are employed in *The Waste Land*.

2.1. Origins, Mobility and an Inclusive Poetic Language

Scholars find it difficult to pinpoint the exact origin of the troubadour tradition. It is a general consensus, however, that William, Count of Poitier, late eleventh century is regarded as the first Troubadour. (Chaytor Section 6). Such a claim is stated in recognition that William's poetry represents an elaborate style, with conventions and rules that had been established previous to his work. For this study then, it will suffice to focus upon the origins, methods and techniques of the troubadour that emerged during and after this time of late eleventh century.

The troubadour movement emerged in southern regions of current day France. Emphasis has been placed on the Provençal region or dialect. Yet, recent revisions have been made to highlight the Occitan language and culture. I would especially like to emphasize features of language, so will use what current scholars distinguish as the literary language of Troubadours, that is, the Occitan language or "langue d'oc" (Burgwinkle 21). This language did not limit itself to the geographical or linguistic

boundaries of a certain dialect, like that of Provençal. In fact, especially notable for the connection with modernism, was the manner in which the language of the troubadours functioned as an international, mobile language. As Sara Kay asserts, this mobile language “has no home” (Kay 10). It resembled the wandering minstrel, a phenomenon from which the troubadour was attributed its name. (Chaytor Section 7) In a sense, the Occitan language maintained an exilic function, arguably, similar to what Eliot and his innovative, transnational poetic language represents.

As Paul Zumthor posits, “From 1100 to about 1400 this standard Occitan was one of the principal poetic languages of Europe.” (Zumthor 11). Important to note, is how the Occitan language represents the rise of vernacular languages in Europe, being used in high cultural spheres and forms, i.e. literature, ecclesiastical matters, etc. As Burgwinkle notes, “Troubadour song represents the earliest rhyming verse known in a vernacular ‘European’ language.” (21) Burgwinkle even asserts: “Dante Alighieri most famously celebrated Occitan (langue d’oc) as the perfect language for verse (until the advent of Tuscan, that is). . .” (21). It seems that such a claim made by a major figure like Dante would find its way to and indeed pique the interest of scholars and arguably poets interested in origins of European poetry. I suggest then, that for Eliot, this Occitan mobile, trans-cultural, vernacular poetic language inspired his own methods of developing an inclusive, mobile and international language, evident in *The Waste Land*.

“A game of chess”, Section 2 of *The Waste Land*, portrays a desire for such an inclusive social model. This section portrays the desire for freedom from oppressive high poetic diction, from art and literary conventions that restrict expression. Parallels can be drawn in the Troubadour tradition, with the rise of vernacular against the dominance of Latin. Section 2, therefore, represents a post-WWI need for new means to break down the few vs. the many barriers—the high culture and popular culture barriers. It represents the need to establish more of a cultural unity.

Section 2 in *The Waste Land* begins with a woman immersed in a high cultured, wealthy environment. She is sitting at a mirror, possibly a reference to a wealthy Victorian home. She is surrounded by references and imagery of high culture: “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..." (Eliot Ln 77-80). With the "vials of ivory and coloured glass", interestingly the "ou" of "coloured" portrays an English standardized spelling (Eliot Ln 86). The reference to the oppressive, binding nature of a fixed, high culture and its traditions and standards is represented by the "synthetic perfumes,/ Unguent, powdered or liquid" (Eliot Ln 87-88). This symbolism of high culture and status actually portrays the hindrance of human potentials in this instance. Rather than providing beautiful inspiration and freedom to human faculties, these high culture products "troubled, confused/ And drowned the sense in odours" (Eliot Ln 88-89).

These restrictive, oppressive odors rise with the help of the "the air/ That freshened from the window" (Eliot Ln 89-90). It is intriguing how these oppressive odors that represent high culture and tradition, then, rise to form images on the "coffered ceiling" (Eliot Ln 93). In this instance, these odors "ascended/ In fattening the prolonged candle-flames,/ Flung their smoke into the laquearia,/ Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling." (Eliot 90-93). To consider the employment of high culture imagery in this instance, it is important to note allusions made here to *The Aeneid*. In this imagery, "laquearia" is a "paneled ceiling" ("The Waste Land"). Eliot provides the source, translating it from *The Aeneid*, "Blazing torches hang from the gold-panelled ceiling, and torches conquer the night with flame." ("The Waste Land"). So as these high culture odors rise, they represent the fixed preservation of the traditions. That is, in this imagery of literary tradition, referencing *The Aeneid*, these odors as high culture rise and "[fatten] the prolonged candle-flames" (Eliot Ln 91). These "prolonged candle-flames" then symbolize the tradition being preserved (Eliot Ln 91).

The new high art imagery that utilizes tradition, therefore, sustains high art and tradition. That is, these odors (representing high culture), by way of tradition (represented by the flames), are then "Flung" as "smoke into the lacquearia" (Eliot Ln 92). They are established as art on the ceiling. In other words, this new high art (odor), mixes with old high art (flames), in turn, establishing a pattern, sent high into the "gold-panelled ceiling" ("The Waste Land"). Yet, notably, this odor prohibits and stifles the senses. Ironically, then, Eliot is addressing those who might be the few that would either quickly recognize such traditional references or ones that would quickly no how to find sources to interpret such references. Such allusions seemingly would not resonate with a reader with little knowledge of literary tradition. But this is exactly one

socio-cultural phenomenon this text is highlighting. In other words, one function of *The Waste Land* is to address the fixed high culture establishment. In this address, Eliot is arguably suggesting a need for a new posture toward cultural inclusivity, rather than the oppressive, few versus the many. In this instance, Eliot posits what a post-WWI poet should embrace, a new language and style. He depicts a new interrelation with humanity, one that embraces unity rather than disunity.

It is important to continue an analysis of Section 2 to further argue the portrayal of a need for a new inclusive poetic language. As analyzed earlier, this new high art patterned on the ceiling, is representative of oppression and restriction. This oppressive atmosphere is further established in section 2 of *The Waste Land*. The speaker goes on to describe high art on the walls. In this description, there is a painting of Philomel and the king. The allusion of this painting further addresses oppression and restriction, typically enforced by those socially deemed in a role of power against those in a social role with less power. In this myth, the king rapes Philomel and cuts out her tongue (Hamilton 457). Of course, this prevents her from telling the atrocities committed against her. Philomel still found a way to tell her story, as she achieved this by weaving a tapestry. (Hamilton 458). To escape the repercussion of the king when he found out she shared the news, the gods turned Philomel into a swallow of which later legends changed to a nightingale (Hamilton 459). This story represents a human being, Philomel, as rendered voiceless, isolated and disregarded. A search for new means of expression, a new language, was necessary to overcome the oppression and restrictions placed on her.

Now, alluding to a newly found voice, the speaker continues and suggests that in this painting “the nightingale/ Filled all the desert with inviolable voice/ And still she cried, and still the world pursues,/ ‘Jug Jug’ to dirty ears.” (Eliot In 100-103). That is, with a new voice, a new means of expression, she is still not heard or understood.

The speaker further alludes to constrained imagery, describing the artwork as “other withered stumps of time/ Were told upon the walls.” (Eliot In 104-105). This instance reiterates and explicitly depicts oppressive imagery. The speaker says: “...staring forms/ Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.” (Eliot 105-106). This “enclosed” imagery reiterates the restriction that fixed tradition can place on humanity, as humanity attempts to seek out new ways to voice and express itself.

A new culturally inclusive poetic language is needed then. Two characters in section 2 of *The Waste Land* represent this yearning for a new language. Interestingly, employed in this scene is low diction, in conversation, as opposed to traditional high poetic diction. “Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.” (Eliot Ln 112). The restrictions of language; the oppression created by rigidly upholding tradition; the need for a new means of expression, all are succinctly stated in one line: “What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?” (Eliot Ln 113). The imagery in this line shows a progressive decline in language and means of expression, directly connecting with a decline in an ability to think. Indeed, as this scene involves two characters, this instance foregrounds not only the need for new means of poetic expression, but also foregrounds the importance of interpretive engagement on the part of the reader/listener/audience in order to provide meaning. How are elements of interpretation and performance significant within the Troubadour tradition? Are there parallels found in *The Waste Land*?

2.2. Interpretation, Variability, Play: Postmodern?

To explore features of interpretative engagement during the time of the Troubadour tradition, it is important to consider textual production. Indeed, as the troubadour tradition emerged, there was a cultural shift from oral transmission of vernacular texts to written. As the Occitan lyric poetry emerged, it was often delivered as an oral performance. In fact, especially toward the beginning of the Troubadour movement, poets would sometimes send poems to distant lands by way of a performer known as a “joglar” (Paden 315). The following, translated into English, is the last stanza of “Quan lo rius de la fontan” composed by Jaufre Rudel, a troubadour poet from around 1148:

Without parchment brief, I bestow
On Filhol the verses I sing now.
In the plain Romance tongue, that
He may take them to Uc le Brun, anew. (Kline)

This stanza alludes to the poet delivering the song through “Filhol”, who is the joglar or traveling performer of the poem (Kline). Such transmission of lyric poetry suggests an interpretative judgment bestowed on the joglar in order to successfully perform the

poem. Thus, the poem was passed on to an audience through the joglar's interpretive and performative abilities, along with his/her creative selections.

The transition to more of a written culture, in regards to vernacular texts, still foregrounds this interpretative performance. Pre-printing press, texts and manuscripts were produced and reproduced by hand. So, in this process of production/reproduction, error was inevitable. David F. Hult in *Manuscripts and Manuscript Culture* asserts this view:

The essential variability of manuscript copies is analogous to, but less dramatic than, the variability of texts produced by oral tellers of tales who, individually, recount a different version of a given story at each performance and, collectively, through tales being passed down through generations of storytellers, produce radically different versions that can scarcely be considered the same 'text'. (16)

Interestingly, Hult goes on to suggest the term "mouvance", a concept contributed by Paul Zumthor (16). This concept refers to the instability of texts before the printing press came along. Hult states:

mouvance is the nature of a work that, as such, before the age of the [printed] book, takes shape from a quasi-abstraction, since the concrete texts in which it is realized present, through a play of variants and reworkings, something like a ceaseless vibration and a fundamental instability. (Hult 16)

Scribes were typically in charge of copying texts. In this process, with such texts as vernacular troubadour poetry, these scribes would essentially take initiative to play with texts, varying meanings and forms. In his essay *Manuscripts*, William D. Paden proposes that in

such a process of active, participatory reproduction, variants become possible on more than strictly written grounds. Indeed, the scribe becomes capable of introducing variants through his competence in active use of the poetic language, which is a specialized form of his competence in speech. (316).

This active participation in interpretation was very much a key feature of textual production during the time of the troubadour movement, as well, a defining feature of the troubadours themselves (Hult 18). Scholars suggest the troubadours embraced this interpretative play, and "fundamental instability" of the text (Hult 16). In fact, the name troubadour alludes to a distinguishing factor of this astonishingly new movement of European poetry. Chaytor provides a distinction between the troubadour poet and two other major origins of European poetry, the Greek and Roman traditions, suggesting how the troubadour

differs from the *vates*, the inspired bard of the Romans and the [Greek: poeta], poeta, the creative poet of the Greeks, the "maker" of Germanic literature. Skilful variation upon a given theme, rather than inspired or creative power, is generally characteristic of the troubadour. (Section 10)

As Chaytor succinctly states then, the troubadours flourish in pursuing variability and, essentially, seeking to play with themes and poetic forms (Section 10).

Troubadour poets mix genres and play with fixed conventions. Burgwinkle poses a question regarding the variations of the troubadours, asking: "[H]ow can love songs both praise and condemn the beloved or allude to their own absolute truth at the same time as they exploit their status as constructed objects?" (22) Burgwinkle then asserts: "Such postmodern game playing is nonetheless pretty much standard in the troubadour bag of tricks." (22).

For my study, therefore, it is appropriate to further consider these astoundingly innovative concepts that emerged during the middle ages—concepts such as play, variability, ambiguity, interpretive engagement, performance, instability of texts and language, and the breaking down of fixed generic boundaries. As I have posited, these concepts from the troubadour movement are relevant and applicable in providing an analysis on how *The Waste Land* functions as a socially and culturally inclusive post-WWI text. As well, I suggest that these concepts pave the way toward and find parallels in postmodernist thinking, especially toward new engagements with fixed binaries and barriers. So, before continuing this study, I find it necessary to briefly consider a few postmodern concepts as put forth by Jacques Derrida. I include this section on Derrida within this study with the intention of featuring a specific postmodernist posture, a posture that critically engages with fixed, established barriers and hierarchies. I find Derrida's concepts to parallel many of the innovative concepts of the troubadour movement addressed so far, especially regarding restrictions on language, oppression upheld by tradition, and a need for new possibilities of interpretation and expression.

2.3. Postmodern Concepts

As Rivkan and Ryan note, Derrida laid the groundwork for a shift from Structuralism to Post-Structuralism (257). Derrida assumes a bold stance, critiquing a long tradition of Western Civilization that held in high regard specific concepts of Plato and Aristotle (Rivkan & Ryan 257). Regarding this “revolutionary” positioning of Derrida, Rivkan and Ryan state:

For Aristotle, knowledge consists of the analysis of objects in terms of their essences; Plato invented the “metaphysical notion of an ideal realm of ideas that transcended or existed outside and apart from physical reality. The so-called “pre-Socratic” philosophers, on the other hand, were interested in the process of space and time that wove together all material objects in a “sumplocke,” or confluence, of being. They emphasized change over stasis and the blending together of things over their discreteness or separable identities. (Rivkan & Ryan 257)

This “blending together of things” is a key aspect of Derrida’s concept of *différance*, which builds on and elaborates further on the Structuralist’s concept of the sign. Rivkan and Ryan point out the foundation of Derrida’s theory building on Saussure’s theory, suggesting a stance against the metaphysical traditions passed down from Plato and Aristotle, where there is an ideal, an essence, and a substance, that gives an object and/or an idea an essential identity (257). That is, a physical object or mental concept can have a universal, internal meaning that by way of cultural conventions is then given an external sign or category to refer to it. Derrida considers how such an argument has established binaries of ideal/derivative, superior/inferior, presence/absence, and voice/word (Rivkan & Ryan 257). He suggests these binaries allude to an internal essence vs. external derivative cultural naming and do not represent a feasible theory.

For Derrida, like Saussure, each object or idea does not have an internal essence giving it an innate identity, but only has an identity and meaning assigned to it based on its difference from other objects and ideas. This assertion proves to break down the superior internal/inferior external binary. As Rivkan and Ryan assert, what was considered the superior innate identity is simply another concept with meaning only because of difference to other concepts. (259). For Derrida and Saussure then, all objects and ideas only have meanings categorized based on this signification, so “all reality is ‘textual’” (Rivkan & Ryan 259).

Derrida does not stop at this theoretical stance but continues to say that this meaning, this sign system established by difference, is also deferred indefinitely.

Rivkan and Ryan allude to this infinite play of signs suggesting that “all signifieds are in turn themselves differential; they too are signifiers.” (259). So, Derrida claims then that signifier/signified, representing a sign of a single object or idea, continues in signifying its meaning indefinitely.

With this concept of *différance* and the indefinite play of signs, Derrida positions himself against the set binary oppositions often prevalent in Structuralism. Such set oppositions exist for Derrida because of power relations created by cultural conventions, i.e. black/white, high culture/low culture (Storey *Cultural Theory* 129). “To deconstruct the opposition”, as stated by John Storey, “[we must] ... overthrow the hierarchy.” (*Cultural Theory* 130). This breaking down of the binary hierarchy is one of the distinguishing factors of Derrida’s critical posture.

So, how does such a controversial mid-twentieth century critical posture relate to Eliot or to *The Waste Land*? Eliot, in his essays and criticism, asserts conservative views regarding essentialist thinking. In other words, to couple him or his monumental High Modernist text with Derrida’s controversial notions of questioning essence and innate meaning, is arguably an inaccurate estimation of Eliot’s philosophical standpoint. But my focus in this study is on how Eliot, in *The Waste Land*, makes evident such postmodern concepts that lead to social and cultural unity, rather than maintaining fixed, oppressive boundaries, that are established often by the few elites in society.

Also, it is imperative to differentiate between Eliot’s criticism and his poetry. That is, it is necessary to consider what Eliot suggests regarding the difference between prose and verse. Eliot makes a crucial distinction between prose and verse in *After Strange Gods*, stating: “I should say that in one’s prose reflections one may be legitimately occupied with ideals, whereas in the writing of verse one can deal only with actuality.” (30). In this sense, for Eliot, verse engages with and addresses actuality, not the ideal. Such a statement, I suggest, contributes to a postmodernist variability and interpretive engagement. Derrida asserts a critical engagement with the traditional platonic hierarchy that places ideal over actual. For an essentialist, such as Eliot, this ideal would maintain an innate essence, yet, Eliot stresses that verse engages with actuality not the ideal. Such a claim, therefore, suggests Eliot’s perspective regarding the function of his verse. Verse, for Eliot, is to function as representative of actuality. It

is to be engaged with—in creation and reception—by way of active participatory interpretation. Notably, it is to be enjoyed. To further explore such “active participation” and variability, I will now focus on the topic of intertextuality.

2.4. “Parrots and Nightingales”

A distinguishing feature of the troubadour tradition is how troubadour poets would creatively engage with other troubadour poetry. That is, apparent in an astounding amount of material, troubadour poets often quoted other troubadour poets. Sarah Kay states:

Occitan lyrics are probably the first corpus in any language (including Latin) to be quoted at such length verbatim in medieval Europe...Many twelfth-century troubadours allude to one another's songs, reprising phrases or rhyme schemes; they also reiterate material from their own songs, in *tornadas*, for example, or to link successive songs on the same theme together. (3)

Not only did these poets allude to other poets, as well, they alluded to or assimilated their own past lyrics in their own poetry.

Thus, two parts are of utmost importance in this engagement of intertextuality—the creative process of reception and the creative process of composition. So, in other words, creative interpretation and variability, both in engaging with a text and in creating a new text are part of the process foregrounded in the troubadour tradition. As Kay suggests, this sort of play and posture with poetic form and themes of the troubadours emerged from “a capacity to inspire the desire to repeat it, to assume one's place in it, and to assume a personal relationship to it.” (Kay 11). For the purposes of this study, it is important to distinguish between two modes of such interpretive and compositional variability. Kay categorizes these two modes as parrots and nightingales. Parrots imitate, while nightingales variably sing, or assimilate.

Kay goes on to posit that “the main differences overall are that the parrots' reception emphasizes the Occitan language...[I]t stresses the value as knowledge, sententious or revelatory, of the troubadours. (Kay 13). In this sense, the parrot represents a mode of exact repetition of phrases as adages. In light of this mode, the poet aims to embrace and share such knowledge and/or beauty by means of an exact replica for the receiver of the poem. The poet attempts to “seek illumination from what is quoted, rather than aiming to throw light on it.” (Kay 8). Two key concepts are found

within this mode: the desire for attaining knowledge and the desire of identification with the referenced tradition.

The second mode is that of the nightingale. Sarah Kay points out that this mode “is more interested in assimilation, affect, and song.” (Kay 13). Kay discussed how local regions, during the troubadour movement, would assimilate the mobile Occitan language and poetic forms into their own language and culture. The nightingale therefore represents a translation and a re-appropriation of troubadour poetry. This mode foregrounds the prominence of participatory interpretation and variability, i.e., play with form, themes, language, knowledge, and genre. Both of these modes—parrot and nightingale—function as prominent methods and dynamics employed in *The Waste Land*.

Generally, one of the most difficult aspects of reading *The Waste Land* is the vast amount of intertextual allusions and quotations. In this study, therefore, it is beneficial to apply both the parrot and nightingale modes, as defined by Kay, in a critical reading. First considering examples of quotation in *The Waste Land*, the initial focus will be on the concepts of the parrot mode—desire for knowledge and desire for identification with a tradition.

In the first stanza, “The burial of the dead”, inserted is a direct quote from Richard Wagner’s opera, *Tristan and Isolde*: “Frisch weht der Wind/ Der Heimat zu/ Mein Irisch Kind,/ Wo weilest du?” (Jain 155-156). Notable is the verbatim repetition from the German language taken from Wagner, rather than including a translation into English. If Eliot seeks illumination and/or an identity association with such a quote, what is accomplished in this instance?

As Manju Jain notes, this quote “from the sailor’s opening song is meant to invoke the whole drama, and acts as an epigraph to the episode in the hyacinth garden.” (156). On the one hand, foregrounding this quote in this manner, promotes this poem’s various modes of operating, that is, although it is to function as a lyric poem, it is also to function as a drama. In this sense, it provides allusions from the particular drama, which contribute to the dynamics of the poem. Yet, just as functional, is how this quotation puts in motion attributes taken from the drama genre as a whole, such as musical, visual, and performance features.

As Jain suggests, this quotation also functions as an epigraph for the lines that follow (156). Thus, as the lines that follow this quotation—in *The Waste Land*—are in English, such a transition reiterates the multilingual dynamics of the poem. That is, the epigraph of *The Waste Land* is in Greek and Latin, to which the poem itself then transitions to English.

Also, the German language insertion, further asserts an association with an exilic theme in *The Waste Land*, one of longing and desire. To illustrate this claim, I turn to Act I, Scene I of *Tristan and Isolde*, provided in an English translation by Richard Le Gallienne. The drama begins with a sailor singing a song, which is overheard by Isolde:

Westward
Our eyes roam
Eastward rolls the ship.
Fresh blows the wind
For home:
My Irish child,
Where tarriest thou?
Is it thy sighs
That fill our sails?
Blow, blow, thou wind! (Wagner 3)

In this playful song, a theme is established, referencing Isolde's longing and desire to remain in Ireland, while being forced to travel to England. "Westward/ Our eyes roam/ Eastward rolls the ship." (Wagner 3). This theme is therefore employed in *The Waste Land*, initiated at the beginning of the poem, as the speaker utters: "mixing/ memory and desire" (Eliot In 2-3). Thus, for the quotation to be inserted in German, further contributes to this longing and desire for home. That is, the German quotation insertion functions as an alienated fragment, when juxtaposed with the poem as a whole, which is mostly in English.

An additional quote to consider is found in the last line of this first section in *The Waste Land*. Here, the quote is in French: "You! hypocrite lecteur! – mon semblable, - mon frere!" (Eliot 76). This quote is borrowed from a poem by the French poet Charles Baudelaire. Jain translates this quote as " 'O hypocrite reader, my fellow-man, my brother!' " (163). Jain contends: "Baudelaire compels the reader to confront in himself the vice of ennui or boredom..." (163). This quote therefore is inserted to confront the reader. Its aim is to draw the reader into the performance of the lyric/drama taking

place. It directs the reader to be a part of the performance, to be engaged in the interpretive process of creating meaning and experiencing the text, as opposed to passively, in boredom, reading the text. Such a posture toward the reader also implies an opposition to an exclusivist mentality. The “You!” is set apart, suggesting that whatever the reader’s level of knowledge regarding the range of quotations and allusions in the text, the reader is invited to actively participate in interpreting the poem, to overall enjoy the poem.

In light of the utilization of quotations and this implication for participatory engagement, exploring instances of the nightingale mode will be appropriate. As this mode is especially prevalent in the troubadour tradition, the parallels in *The Waste Land* further suggest an influence worth analyzing. A crucial point of interest pertains to the interpretive play involved in the processes of assimilation and translation.

With a method very much comparable to the troubadours, Eliot assimilated his own poetry that had previously been published or at least completed into one of his new poems, *The Waste Land*. Lines 25 through 29 are a case in point:

There is shadow under this red rock,
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you... (Eliot ln 25-29).

Jain points out that “[t]hese lines are based upon an early poem by Eliot, ‘The Death of St. Narcissus’:

Come under the shadow of this grey rock
Come in under the shadow of this grey rock
And I will show you a shadow different from either
Your shadow sprawling over the sand at daybreak, or
Your shadow leaping behind the fire against the red rock. (154).

Eliot playfully assimilates his own lyrics into his own separate poem. Comparing the two lyrics brings to attention the slight changes, of “grey rock” to “red rock”; “Come under this shadow of this grey rock” to “There is shadow under this red rock” (Jain 154).

The levels of variability in these lines, however, are multifold. That is, these lines provide various allusions to add to the complex array of dynamics in the poem. Playing with themes from ancient mythology is a prominent feature. For these lines and the

play with themes, knowledge of the myths of Narcissus and Echo provide helpful information. Edith Hamilton in *Mythology* captures the story well, worth quoting in full:

[Narcissus'] beauty was so great, all the girls who saw him longed to be his, but he would have none of them. He would pass the loveliest carelessly by, no matter how much she tried to make him look at her. Heartbroken maidens were nothing to him. Even the sad case of the fairest of the nymphs, Echo, did not move him. She was a favorite of Artemis, the goddess of woods and wild creatures, but she came under the displeasure of a still mightier goddess, Hera herself, who was at her usual occupation of trying to discover what Zeus was about. She suspected that he was in love with one of the nymphs and she went to look them over to try to discover which. However, she was immediately diverted from her investigation by Echo's gay chatter. As she listened amused, the others silently stole away and Hera could come to no conclusion as to where Zeus's wandering fancy had alighted. With her usual injustice she turned against Echo. That nymph became another unhappy girl whom Hera punished. The goddess condemned her never to use her tongue again except to repeat what was said to her. "You will always have the last word," Hera said, "but no power to speak first."

This was very hard, but hardest of all when Echo, too, with all the other lovelorn maidens, loved Narcissus. She could follow him, but she could not speak to him. How then could she make a youth who never looked at a girl pay attention to her? One day, however, it seemed her chance had come. He was calling to his companions. "Is anyone here?" and she called back in rapture, "Here—Here." She was still hidden by the trees so that he did not see her, and he shouted, "Come!"—just what she longed to say to him. She answered joyfully, "Come!" and stepped forth from the woods with her arms outstretched. But he turned away in angry disgust. "Not so," he said; "I will die before I give you power over me." All she could say was, humbly, entreatingly, "I give you power over me," but he was gone. She hid her blushes and her shame in a lonely cave, and never could be comforted. Still she lives in places like that, and they say she has so wasted away with longing that only her voice now is left to her.

So Narcissus went on his cruel way, a scorner of love. But at last one of those he wounded prayed a prayer and it was answered by the gods: "May he who loves not others love himself." The great goddess Nemesis, which means righteous anger, undertook to bring this about. As Narcissus bent over a clear pool for a drink and saw there his own reflection, on the moment he fell in love with it. "Now I know," he cried, "what others have suffered from me, for I burn with love of my own self—and yet how can I reach that loveliness I see mirrored in the water? But I cannot leave it. Only death can set me free." And so it happened. He pined away, leaning perpetually over the pool, fixed in one long gaze. Echo was near him, but she could do nothing; only when, dying. (115-117)

Mindful of themes regarding narcissus in love with his own beauty, consumed by his own self, the levels of play continue further. In 'The Death of St. Narcissus', Eliot makes use of the narcissus myth, as Narcissus is alluded to in the following manner: "First he

wished that he had been a tree/ To push its branches among each other./ And tangle its roots among each other.” (TS Eliot and Ezra Pound 92-93). In this reference, Narcissus yearned to be a tree, so he could be surrounded and consumed by his own self. In multiple levels, therefore, Eliot playfully translates and assimilates his own lyric into one of his other lyrics. This particular translation and assimilation appropriated from another poem into *The Waste Land* takes place a few lines prior to lines 25-29, as the speaker asks: “What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow/ Out of this stony rubbish?” (Eliot 19-20). This variation on Eliot’s own poetry alludes to narcissus’ self-consumption and self-reliance, associating with ruins and wastes that need to be restored.

Such play and variability also takes place at other levels with Eliot and Pound as translators and editors of Eliot’s own pre-published poem. Section IV, “Death By Water”, is comprised of translated lines from Eliot’s poem “Dans le Restaurant”, a poem written in French in the year 1918 (Jain 181). Jain provides a version translated into English of the particular lines considered to be adapted into *The Waste Land*:

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight drowned,
Forgot the cries of gulls and the Cornish surge,
The cargo tin and the profit and the loss;
A current undersea carried him down
Through all the stages of his former life. (181)

Of interest for this section as well, is how Pound separately translated “Dans le Restaurant” in true troubadour style. That is, he translated the poem not literally, but took liberties to play with form, rhythm, language and themes. The finished translation is considerably similar to Eliot’s original. Yet, Pound’s playful, idiosyncratic interpretations and assimilations are visible. The following is a passage from Pound’s version of Dans le Restaurant. This version, as Seamus Geary states, has remained unpublished, but is located in the Ezra Pound Papers collection in the Beinecke Library of Yale. This passage is a brief version of the passage by Eliot just previously included in this study, as well a version of the one Eliot includes in *The Waste Land*:

Phlebas the Phenicien, fairest of men,
Straight and tall, having been born in a caul
Lost luck at forty, and lay drowned
Two long weeks in sea water, tossed of the
Streams under sea, carried of currents
Forgetful of the gains
forgetful of the long days of sea fare

Forgetful of mew's crying and the foam swept coast
Of Cornwall... (Geary).

The behind the scenes translation and editing processes are important to address, due to the mentalities of playfulness and variability. Hence, Eliot and Pound's embrace and application of the nightingale mode, very much representative of the troubadour tradition, contribute to the varied dynamics employed in *The Waste Land*.

The importance placed upon this play and variability regarding interpretation is indeed a central theme within *The Waste Land*. The voice of the thunder, "DA", and the three words, "Datta", "Dayadhvam", and "Damyata" suggest this significance (Eliot In 400, 401, 410, 418). Jain refers to Eliot's notes, regarding the "Fable of the Thunder in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*" (189). Jain summarizes the fable, which infers the significance of interpretation:

The threefold offspring of the creator Prajapati, gods, men and demons, approach the Prajapati for instruction after completing their formal education. To each group he utters the syllable 'da'. Each group interprets this reply differently. (189).

The centrality of the thunder's voice in *The Waste Land* being directly interpreted, thus, asserts as fundamental an openness toward humanity's differences in interpretation.

As postulated, therefore, these two modes, nightingale and parrot, function as prominent dynamics of *The Waste Land*. These dynamics interestingly lend this text to be categorized as elitist and exclusivist. The abrupt shifts from source to source, the nuances of allusions seemingly connected or disconnected, the variability and playfulness with assimilation all render the poem as complex and difficult in its reception. Ironically, these complexities and difficulties are especially a result of the nightingale mode, a mode that embraces variability, idiosyncratic interpretation and assimilation. In this regard, the text arguably embraces interpretative engagement in an inclusive manner, in regards to all levels of interpretive ability. The centrality of variability and playfulness is further appropriated pertaining to subjectivity and voice.

2.5. Subjectivity: Male and Female “desiring”

In the troubadour tradition, the lyric “I” is often male, while the female is often the object being desired and addressed. Yet, the troubadour tradition also transgressed social conventions in regards to women being in the object position. Burgwinkle asserts that traditionally in poetry women function as the desired or are addressed by men, “but in a move that is unique to the troubadour corpus, some of these women are also objects that actively desire and live to write about it.” (23). Sarah Kay still accounts for recognizing the female voice as subject desiring, as it endures “a source of anguish”, a notable difference from the male’s subject desiring experience (Kay *Subjectivity* 110). Most viewpoints, however, suggest the difficulty to differentiate between male or female subject voices in troubadour poetry, as both arguably experience an anguish of longing and desire.

Ambiguity between the male and female subjective voice, coupled with longing and desire, are themes incorporated in *The Waste Land*. The central voice of this poem, the speaker, is Tiresias. In troubadour fashion, as the poets/speakers would often name themselves, Tiresias addresses him/herself stating: “I, Tiresias” (Eliot 218). The theme of prophetic voice is embodied by Tiresias, associated with the Sibyl in the epigraph. Sibyl’s legend suggests her oppressed position, in that, she is immortal, yet always declining in age and in her “prophetic powers” (Jain 149). Enduring a motif employed in various ways in *The Waste Land*, Tiresias is a “trapped spectator”, gifted with a voice and portraying ambiguity, longing and desire (Jain 149).

A legend of Tiresias suggests he/she was blinded by a god, gifted with an ability to prophesy, and able to move between male and female genders. In *The Waste Land*, Tiresias is simultaneously male and female. “I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,/ Old man with wrinkled female breasts...” (Eliot 218-219). As the speaker, Tiresias represents humanity in broad terms when addressed as “Son of man” (Eliot In 20). He does not merely represent males, addressing oppression and restriction toward gender.

The voice of Sappho, an ancient Greek female poetess, further contributes to the significance of female subjective voice. Jain refers to Eliot’s notes on a particular poem by Sappho considered in *The Waste Land*: “Evening Star, that brings back all that shining Dawn has sent far and wide, you bring back the sheep, the goat, and the

child back to the mother.” (176). In *The Waste Land*, Sappho’s poem is blended with Tiresias’ utterance. Intriguingly, Tiresias shifts from being blind to being able to see by way of Sappho’s poetic voice: “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...” (Eliot 218-220). Giving Sappho’s voice such authority breaks down barriers of oppression toward females, foregrounding a socially inclusive rather than socially exclusive posture.

In *The Waste Land*, subjective voice, male/female, is that phenomenon which can restore life against “the ruins” (Eliot Ln 430). Voice in this poem represents that which is trapped, which desires freedom, to be heard, and to be connected. Voice is also associated with beauty, the “inviolable voice” of the nightingale, the swallow, poetry, flowers, and the water/shore (Eliot Ln 101). Voice then contrasts with the ruins, the arid environment, with the wasteland. To contribute to this assertion, I turn to ancient Greece. Edith Hamilton refers to the ancient Greek regard to flowers:

In Greece there are most lovely wild flowers. They would be beautiful anywhere, but Greece is not a rich and fertile country of wide meadows and fruitful fields where flowers seem at home. It is a land of rocky ways and stony hills and rugged mountains, and in such places the exquisite vivid bloom of the wild flowers...comes as a startling surprise...The contrast of this laughing, luxuriant beauty with the clear-cut, austere grandeur all around arrests the attention sharply. (260-261).

Voice in *The Waste Land* associates itself with the flower against the rocky landscape. In this sense, the male/female speaker desires to embrace the figurative flowers, the voices, the beauties, the songs in contrast with the rocky landscape, the wastes and ruins. Notably, figures of speech have also been considered as flowers of speech.

In section V, the speaker states, “I sat upon the shore/ Fishing, with the arid plain behind me/ Shall I at least set my lands in order?” (Eliot Ln 423-425). That is, the speaker is fishing for those voices and songs, desiring those phenomena associated with restoration. The speaker reiterates this association, stating: “These fragments I have shored against my ruins” (Eliot Ln 430). Hence, as the subjective voice is of utmost importance to the central theme of *The Waste Land*, Eliot’s incorporation of an ambiguous poetic male/female voice directly confronts rigid social and cultural restrictions against the voiceless, the disenfranchised, and the oppressed. Further parallels as well can be drawn considering conventions and concepts of the troubadour

tradition that transgress social and cultural restrictions. These conventions are especially situated within the tradition of Courtly Love.

2.6. Courtly Love: “Spring Folk Ritual”

Roger Boase refers to a significant theory of Courtly Love as “Spring Folk Ritual” (86). He states: “Courtly Love evolved out of the folk traditions and ritual dance songs of Europe, particularly those with the rites of spring...” (Boase 86). This theory suggests that at the beginning of the troubadour movement popular and aristocratic poetry blended together with no sense of restriction according to conventions. The popular verses, which had been prevalent for centuries, were flourishing within court culture. Some scholars suggest that one of the first known troubadours, William of Poitou, embraced such popular verses, and of special interest are his “frequent allusions to the season of May.” (Boase 88).

Significantly, troubadour poets often included a “spring prelude” in their poems. Boase asserts that

[m]any troubadour lyrics contain a description, usually in the opening stanza, of trees in blossom, singing birds, and a fountain of cool water. This picture of the rebirth of nature is appropriate to a lyrical tradition which originated in hymns to the goddess of Nature. (86-87).

This troubadour convention in connection with spring suggests a conventional influence for *The Waste Land*, as it begins with associations to spring:

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. (Eliot In 1-7)

The first four lines represent the voices and flowers as discussed previously in this study. The speaker ironically seems set against the ideas of spring and rebirth. The following three lines contribute to this posture, contrasting the dead land of winter, as protecting the speaker from remembering or desiring, the rebirth in spring. The main contrast, however, is in the possibility of abundance of life in the first four lines or with only “little life” in the last three lines (Eliot In 7). Themes of regeneration and rebirth are therefore established initially, appropriating this troubadour convention. Along with this

“Spring Folk Ritual” convention, an additional convention of the troubadour tradition prominent in *The Waste Land* is play.

2.7. Courtly Love: “Play Phenomenon”

Play, as previously addressed in various aspects of this study, was a central feature of Courtly Love in troubadour culture. Play was recognized as part of poetic performance, where people would assume roles, as if in a theatrical play. A concept that allowed such acting to thrive was that of “[u]npredictability” (Boase 103). Boase states:

This concept asserted that “[s]uspense is created through the fear of losing and the hope of winning; the essence of play is lost when the outcome is certain. The element of uncertainty allows scope for improvisation and adventure.” (103).

The concept of play, thus, embraced variations. Regarding social and cultural conventions, it embraced grand and subtle changes alike. The troubadours would experiment with language, genre, identity and emotions. Notably, “Courtly Love was a conventional, but anti-Establishment, sentiment...” (Boase 104). Hence, mindful of the popular traditions and this category of the “play phenomenon”, I shift now in my study to the tradition that embraces these elements as well, that of the Minstrel Tradition.

3. Minstrel Tradition

Johann Gottfried Herder’s clarion call to preserve the songs of the folk influenced scholars, collectors, editors, poets and authors, beginning in the late 18th century. Hence, with the publishing of Thomas Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* and James Beatties’ *The Minstrel* in the late 18th century a movement had emerged to revive the minstrel tradition. A catalyst for this movement arose from the sense of an oral tradition nearing extinction in a post-printing press reality. Nick Bujak in *The Form of Media History: Narrator-Space and the Lay of the Last Minstrel* asserts that “print was held responsible for the tragic loss of access to one of Britain’s most vital linguistic origins. (697).

This movement arguably initiated by Herder, became, essentially, a response to industrialization. Songs and stories of the folk assumed a pre-history sort of role. These folk traditions were associated with “a time before the Fall”, so for the

preservers, it “carried within it the possibility of purification...” (Storey *Inventing Popular Culture* 3). Thus, as John Storey observes in *Inventing Popular Culture*, Herder “urged intellectuals to follow his example (of 1774 and 1778) and make collections of the poetry of the folk.” (Storey *Inventing Popular Culture* 3).

This movement that emerged—that of collecting and preserving songs of the folk from ancient times—was indeed yoked with the minstrel tradition. Notably, the minstrel tradition “had long denoted the popular, vernacular poetry of a nation.” (McLane 430). In this sense, the concept of minstrelsy was utilized to assist in preserving asongs, ballads, and legends of the folk, namely, a folk that represented a culture in its pure form.

In England, throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, a fascination and interest in minstrelsy continued to flourish among scholars, critics, and intellectuals. Along with this interest in minstrelsy, a form of entertainment emerged in England from within the working class, which would in turn spread among the masses, by way of, most notably for this study, the rising movement of professionalization. This particular form of entertainment that emerged was situated in the British music hall. The following section is concerned with this cultural phenomenon of the British music hall in London and the critical discourse that emerged in its wake.

3.1. Discourse on the British Music Hall and Popular Culture

Eliot’s utilization of the minstrel tradition in *The Waste Land* has a deep root system. It developed from a particular critical movement in London that initiated around mid-19th century, a movement that was maintained by Eliot post-WWI. This movement consisted of acclaimed professional critics addressing popular culture phenomena found especially in the cultural site of the British music hall. My aim in this section is to consider origins of and subsequent developments in these intellectual endeavors regarding popular culture and the effects instituted upon the English culture at large. I refer to Barry Faulk’s engagement with accounts of origins and relevant shifts in this discourse in his elaborate study of *Music Hall and Modernity* (2). Drawing from Faulk’s critical engagement, I explore what informed, shaped, and solidified Eliot’s intellectual interest in popular culture, specifically an interest sustained by the British music hall.

Notably, Eliot's engagement in this discourse, I suggest, contributes to poetic methods and modes employed in *The Waste Land*.

3.1.1. Origins: Penny Gaff and Henry Mayhew

Due to urbanization in London in the mid-1800s the working class people prodigiously captured the interest of intellectuals, especially those intellectuals desiring to preserve folk traditions. Preservation of these traditions was crucial for these intellectuals to preserve the unique identity of the English. In Henry Mayhew's seminal 19th Century text *London Labour and the London Poor*, Robert Douglas-Fairhurst as Mayhew's contemporary editor asserts that the working-class poor and street folk that struggled to survive each day during this time were gaining a newfound recognition by intellectuals (31-32).

Henry Mayhew was among novelists, philosophers and poets intrigued by the working class, yet, in a sense he was a pioneer in this regard. Mayhew published letters of his engagement with the working class, raising awareness of these people who were often out of spherical range of interactions with the middle class. Douglas-Fairhurst observes the unique posture of Mayhew, stating: "Other writers may have noticed these scrawny children before, but none had elevated them to the dignity of print, certainly not with Mayhew's ability to reconcile objectivity with compassion." (31).

In his accounts of the working class, Mayhew critically engages with the phenomenon of the penny gaffs, the entertainment origin of the music hall. He notes the vulgar, obscene, and crude nature of the experience. Intriguingly, as Faulk observes, Mayhew deems it a "pedagogic enterprise", one where the audience acquires from itself and from the performers a distinct, authentic identity (10). Importantly, it is this very authenticity that seems to fascinate Mayhew. Thus, in the early 1850s, Mayhew's role as intellectual observer and critic of the working class, and, most notably, his focus on the phenomenon of the penny gaff, initiated a movement of critical discourse that revolved around the music hall. Hence, this critical movement concerned itself with the working class as popular culture.

3.1.2. Development of a Critical Movement

Crucial to this discourse was the rise of intellectual professionals, such as Mayhew, who took it upon themselves to address issues circulating in shifts of popular and mass culture. The rise of these professionals, as Faulk points out, came about due to the rise of professionalization in late 19th century England (4). Professionalization especially emerged within the bourgeois society where credibility was sought and highly regarded by the middle class. Thus, middle class intellectuals had opportunities to establish themselves as authoritative cultural figures that in turn informed and shaped society.

Other prominent cultural aspects to consider with this critical movement were standards and conventions of the middle class, especially evident in commercialization. This middle-class phenomenon of commercialization overpowered the popular culture of the working class. That is, as the popular entertainment of vulgar pubs was commercialized into the late 19th century, the form and content of the entertainment also was made less vulgar, less obscene. Even new large theaters were built in order to further contribute to middle class standards. This shift from the vernacular materials found in the working-class pubs as authentic, moving to a middle class respectable and standardized experience produced a different sort of entertainment, an entertainment of which professional critics took issue. Therefore, critics, especially in the late 19th century, concerned themselves with definitions of vernacular or popular music hall in comparison with or contrast to the new middle class standardized music hall.

Popular culture became a prominent topic for intellectuals. As Faulk posits: Music hall regulars, as early as the penny gaff...consistently prided themselves on knowing more about the city than did novices. Music-hall habitués, then, might well feel that they alone had the real scoop on modernity; that is, they had an authentic experience of vernacular culture unsullied by bourgeois convention. (12)

When music halls were mainstream in English culture, taking place in large Victorian halls, a few critics were addressing the change from the old popular culture to the new mass commercialized halls. In the 1890s, one such critic was Elizabeth Robins Pennell (Faulk 8). As a spokesperson for the authentic music halls, she advocated for her own profession as one capable of analyzing and determining what is good culture for English society. In this regard, she embraced her authoritative position and insisted

that she “had the real scoop” on popular culture (Faulk 12). Her position was especially exclusive, in that she aimed to maintain her authority in describing to English society what authentic English culture is.

Pennell was one of the first of those to follow who were critical toward the loss of the authenticity of the old music hall entertainment due to the changes of commercialization and mass appeal established for the bourgeois. Faulk in *Modernism and the Popular: Eliot's Music Halls* deems this critical posture as “music-hall lament” (Faulk “Modernism” 607). Essentially, these professionals were anxious of losing the authenticity and vulgarity of the popular entertainment. Notably, within this fear, they were anxious of losing Englishness. Pennell asserts that “[m]ore of the past lives in the music hall than in any other modern institution” (Faulk “Modernism” 608). This echoes the aims of the collectors, antiquarians, editors, authors and poets aiming to revive folk traditions through minstrelsy. In both senses, the cultural authority must be the one to preserve the English culture and to teach others why and how it must be preserved and viewed.

A critic to follow Pennell was Max Beerbohm. He further contributed to Pennell's lament of the loss of popular culture in light of commercialization. He had an even stronger view of the exclusiveness of the critic. He, therefore, was part of the few that could determine how to appropriately appreciate the vulgarity of the authentic music hall. He took on the role of expert teaching the masses. Although exclusive, as Faulk points out, Beerbohm began to embrace a new shift in culture toward openness (Faulk “Modernism” 610). For Beerbohm, high culture no longer functioned alone as the example of good culture, the vernacular expression found in the popular culture has merit in and of itself (Faulk “Modernism” 610). A similar view would thus pass down to Eliot, evident a couple decades later.

Faulk posits that some critics focused on the lyrical form and content in the old music hall performances (13). Keith Wilson was one such critic. He argued the music hall songs were expressions and representations of the working-class perspective of the city of London. It would seem the working class would harp on the lack of resources afforded them compared with the bourgeois, but this was not necessarily the case. In fact, they would sing about the opportunities allowed them in a city like London. As Faulk summarizes Wilson: “[m]usic-hall song represented the city as the ultimate

space of liberty for all...it was enough merely to live in what seemed to be the capital city of the world, no matter who you were or what your station.” (13). Such a position again contributes to a movement toward merging high and low cultural spheres.

As these professional critics assumed these authoritative roles, the middle class was engaged in consuming the information being distributed. The middle class desired to rise socially and part of that desire to rise was to be knowledgeable of the public critics’ positions regarding popular culture. Faulk notes, however, the way one critic, Percy Fitzgerald, positioned himself also as part of the audience, not maintaining a distant, elite role. Fitzgerald then especially asserts the importance of audience and performer, functioning as a collaborative effort. Faulk suggests that Fitzgerald alludes to “his desire to be read as both critic and participant in the crowd.” (16). This critical position seems to later inform and shape Eliot’s concern for the audience and performer connection.

G.H. Mair in an essay written in 1913 adopts Pennell’s lament of the fading realities of the old, authentic popular music hall in the face of the growing middle class standardizations (Faulk 41). He grieves the loss of the folk tradition, suggesting a connection of the folk tradition with the Elizabethan context (Faulk 41). This latter position is of crucial importance for Eliot’s critical stance toward the old music hall. That is, for Mair and a few years later for Eliot, the Elizabethan theatre as a cultural production represented and contributed to a notion of Englishness, similar to the authenticity represented and arguably produced by the folk (Faulk 41).

A final critic that contributed to Eliot’s immersion in the music hall was Arthur Symons. Symons especially embraced the music hall as muse for his artistic production. As Ronald Schuchard posits in *Eliot’s Dark Angel: Intersections of Life and Art*, “Symons, obsessed with the elusive mystery of the halls, saw his completion as an artist dependent upon a complete identification with the performers.” (103). Schuchard continues, including a lyrical utterance by Symons:

‘My life is like a music hall,’ he wrote,
 ‘Where, in the impotence of rage,
 Chained by enchantment to my stall,
 I see myself upon the stage
 Dance to amuse a music hall.’ (103-104).

Symons' claim of the music hall as poetic muse would in turn be a distinguishing factor of one of the last critics of the music hall, that of TS Eliot.

3.1.3. "London Letters"

Eliot immediately immersed himself in the culture of the music hall when he chose to move to England in 1914. In fact, he frequented the music halls to such an extent that he took on the name "Captain Eliot" (Schuchard 104). He was familiar with the music hall form of entertainment from the American minstrel shows and his interest was deepened as he began to critically engage in the music hall discourse in London.

In 1921, Eliot was approached by acquaintances from the *Dial* headquartered in New York, seeking writers to publish materials as London correspondents. Eliot sought a position as a writer going on to publish some of his most cherished works. In a short time period in writing for the *Dial* Eliot produced materials that revealed much of his theories on culture, poetry, drama, and the creative writing process. He was given free rein to publish reviews, criticism, creative writing, and other intellectual endeavors he thought important to address. Thus, as a habitu   of the music hall and a proponent and enthusiast of good culture, it only seems fitting that Eliot joined the professional discourse on popular culture and the music hall, as is evident in material published in *the Dial*. In fact, as Schuchard points out "T. S. Eliot was to become the last inheritor of the music-hall mystery, the poet-detective who would crack its comic code, the dramatist who would see in its bizarre comedians the possibility of reviving poetic drama in the modern world." (104).

Eliot took on the professional role as critic—public cultural vanguard—in line with Mayhew, Pennell, Beerbohm, Wilson, Fitzgerald, Mair and Symons, to name a few I have considered in this study. In a similar manner as most of these critics, Eliot concerned himself with the seemingly dying authentic popular entertainment of the music halls. Eliot endured what Faulk suggests to have begun with Pennell, the "music-hall lament" (Faulk "Modernism" 607). He found in the vulgar, vernacular, authentic expressions of the working class true art. This was art worth producing and experiencing as opposed to the standardized forms now produced for the public.

In this sense, it is crucial to make a distinction. That is, Eliot was not postured against producing art, literature, poetry and drama for the mass public. He was in fact

a public figure publishing materials and reviewing materials that were arguably produced for and consumed by the mass the public. His letters and essays published in the *Dial* were consumed mostly by middle to upper middle class readers. This was the case mainly as this readership would be the most interested in gaining cultural knowledge to maintain its position and/or rise in its position in society. Thus, Eliot was not exclusive in the sense that he insinuated the middle-class public as not capable of engaging with or producing good cultural products. Nicholas Joost and Ann Risdon in *Sketches and Preludes: T.S. Eliot's "London Letters" in the Dial* address the assumptions of Eliot's exclusive station: "He frequently demands excellence and is dismissive when he fails to find it, but he is never snobbish or lacking in sympathy for the ordinary working man and woman, quite the contrary." (382). In other words, Eliot's critical stance is not to set himself on a pedestal above the middle class, his aim instead was to preserve authentic expressions of culture and to insist that the public should be intentional and innovative in methods and modes of art production.

It was within the music hall that Eliot found the most authentic expressions of culture. Specifically, Eliot was most intrigued by one of the star performers, Marie Lloyd. In fact, one of his letters for the *Dial* was written as a eulogy after Lloyd's death in 1922. In this published letter, Eliot laments Lloyd's death as well as grieves over what he saw as the imminent decline of vernacular expression found in the music hall. Lloyd, therefore, functioned for Eliot as the pinnacle expression of the working class, of authentic cultural production. In Eliot's view, she was the last of those artists and performers in England that were not commercialized or cheapened by standardization in society. She functioned as an authentic performer, giving expression to the popular culture, arguably to the English identity. She was a contemporary minstrel.

3.1.4. Poetry and Drama

Through Lloyd, Eliot's engagement with the critical discourse of the music hall especially foregrounded his primary theoretical concepts of poetry and drama. Eliot's critical interest in Lloyd revolved around her engagement with the audience. In her performance style, she included the audience into the art making process. Joost and Risdon include a quote by Eliot regarding the performer and audience engagement:

The working-man who went to the music hall and saw Marie Lloyd and joined in

the chorus was himself performing part of the work of acting, he was engaged in that collaboration of the audience with the artist which is necessary in all art and most obviously in dramatic art. (376)

In this statement, Eliot alludes to his critical interest in combining methods and techniques taken from the modes of lyric poetry and drama. This theoretical stance, foregrounding the importance of performer and audience interaction, permeated Eliot's creative works. This critical posture is especially apparent in *The Waste Land*, with its cast of characters and dynamic voices drawing the reader/audience in to participate in various experiences and interpretations.

Elevating the importance of the participation and engagement of performer and audience constitutes a central aspect of Eliot's grieving of Marie Lloyd's death. For Eliot, and some of the previous critics of the music hall, part of the commercialization of the music hall minimized and cheapened the opportunities and inevitably the desires of the audience to engage with the performers. Losing this key component of the theatrical experience also degraded the level of the art form. In this cheapened regard, the performer was not connecting with or expressing the authentic experiences of the audience. Arguably, the performer was not establishing an authentic environment for the audience to express themselves authentically in turn. Therefore, Lloyd represented the last of that authentic experience.

This theme of the performer and audience engagement contributes as well to Eliot's claims that Elizabethan drama was an authentic expression of English culture. In Shakespeare's plays, the audience would participate in ways that parallel Lloyd's performer/audience interrelations. That is, the performers of the Shakespeare plays would produce nuances, authentic cultural expressions with which the audience would then participate.

Considering this Elizabethan influence further contributes to Eliot's notion of high art and popular art functioning together, as I have suggested in this study, as culturally inclusive. Joost and Risdon include a quote of Eliot regarding an Elizabethan theatrical cultural reality, suggesting this phenomena "was aimed at a public which wanted *entertainment* of a crude sort, but would *stand* a good deal of poetry, our problem should be to take a form of entertainment, and subject it to the process which would leave it a form of art." (378). Eliot's prominent claim with Lloyd is that she achieved this goal. That is, she utilized the popular form of entertainment to engage

with the audience, and along with the audience was able to transform that entertainment experience into art.

Lloyd's breaking down of conventional boundaries, such as high and low art conventions, as well as social class hierarchies imminently influenced Eliot's poetic productions. Faulk observes this phenomenon asserting that "Lloyd's ability to remake her identity in public offers sanction for the poet's endeavor to displace the solid facts of class and gender in order to maintain his fandom." (Faulk "Modernism" 617). For Eliot as poet, the notions of the Elizabethan theater experience and Lloyd blending high and low cultural categories in this manner lend methods for producing an innovative and authentic poetic work. That is, these influences of authenticity operate as cultural phenomena that address society's need to be collaborative and inclusive across social boundaries. Faulk posits that Lloyd and thus Eliot were revolutionary in addressing social and cultural restrictions, as Faulk claims: "Class difference, and perhaps difference in general, no longer present a real barrier which separates the authority of middle-class gourmands from the cultural products they savor and esteem." (Faulk "Modernism" 619). Hence, this contributes to a view of Eliot that is less exclusive than has often been proposed. In light of this culturally inclusive perspective of Eliot and considering a feature prominent both in the Elizabethan theater and music hall entertainment, I will now explore an element which is often disregarded in Eliot, that of humor and comedy.

3.2. Comedy

A definite element typically overlooked that permeates Eliot's creative writing is that of comedy. It is visible in his poetry, in his correspondence with Pound, and in accounts of his personal interactions. Often taken too seriously, likely due to his authoritative manner, Eliot embraced a playful comedic manner that many in his life knew well. Lawrence S. Rainey included one account of a young student planning to move from Harvard to Oxford (2). He nervously met with the well-known TS Eliot to ask for advice, since Eliot had also made the same move across the Atlantic. The meeting and conversation for the student, however, was not as informative and inspiring in the fashion the student presumed it might be. The meeting was very casual, not much was said overall. Expecting thorough explanations and sound wisdom, he

was surprised to his actual experience. After some casual chatting, Eliot assumed the student wanted to know how to prepare to make the move from Harvard to Oxford. In the account, the student claimed he was waiting in anticipation, as he “waited with greed for the words which I would repeat for the rest of my life, the advice from the elder to younger, setting me on the road to emulation.” (Rainey 2). Eliot then with ease asked: “Have you any long underwear?” (Rainey 2). This account might be embellished by the student to maintain Eliot’s place in his mind as mentor, as authority, and as possible genius of contemporary culture. Yet, it is telling, that in such an important moment, with an expectation of the skilled professional to enlighten the young mentee, Eliot attempts a joke.

Eliot’s interest with comedic playfulness was a subject he actually studied in depth. He studied classical concepts of comedy, such as that of Aristophanes. He was also indebted to philosophical works on comedy, by contemporaries like Bergson (Schuchard 88). However, it was Baudelaire whose foregrounding of the vulgar and grotesque that most captured Eliot’s critical and creative purposes with the comic. Essentially, Baudelaire posited that it is the vulgarity of comedy that assists the audience to recognize a need for moral development. So, it functions as a cultural good for society. In turn, Eliot was directed to English comedies, “from Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson to Charles Dickens...”, to name a few (Schuchard 89). Eliot aimed to emulate the comic mode where the vulgar was an authentic expression and representation for the reader/audience. Thus, Eliot in turn embraced the variety of vulgarities often performed in music hall entertainment. The music hall performers Eliot associated with the old music hall provided more than merely past time or nostalgic entertainment, these performances had a distinct cultural impact for the good of society. This alludes to why Eliot was so fearful of the decline of the authentic music hall experience.

Eliot’s immersion in traditions of authentic comedy further takes place with his utilization of the farce comic mode. Schuchard observes Eliot’s critical engagement with farce, quoting Eliot:

“I say farce,” he writes, drawing directly upon Baudelaire, “but with the enfeebled humour of our times the word is a misnomer; it is the farce of the old English humour, the terribly serious, even savage comic humour, the humour which spent its last breath in the decadent genius of Dickens.” (89).

The farce comic mode was traditionally humor more on the surface level, not necessarily driven toward intellectual engagement. That is, it embraced playfulness similar to that of the troubadours as discussed in this study. Abrams and Harpham posit farce to be “a type of comedy designed to provoke the audience to simple hearty laughter...” (55). They further suggest that

it commonly employs highly exaggerated or caricatured types of characters, puts them into improbable and ludicrous situations, and often makes free use of sexual mix-ups, broad verbal humor, and physical bustle and horseplay. (Abrams and Harpham 56)

Such caricaturizing and play with social conventions lends itself well to embracing vulgarities and the grotesque, as arguably there are no limits as to what can be expressed and represented in this mode.

Eliot's fixation on employing comic modes in general in his poetry and drama also render visible his cultural inclusive posture, as I have argued. In *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, Northrop Frye considers the comedy mode as one that breaks down barriers in society, reconciling differences into a whole community. Frye posits: “[T]he movement of comedy is usually a movement from one kind of society to another.” (163). Traditionally, the audience recognizes in a play the movement of the undesirable, immoral characterized society to the more desired and reconciled society. Frye suggests: “The appearance of this new society is frequently signaled by some kind of party or festive ritual.” (163). Usually at the end of the play, the audience was then invited to participate in the successful move to a better and more flourishing society. Frye observes “[t]he resolution of comedy comes, so to speak, from the audience's side of the stage...” (164). What is especially relevant in this communal function is how inclusive it was in purpose. That is, the whole audience would participate in the celebration of the reconciliation and new society. Frye remarks that “[t]he tendency of comedy is to include as many people as possible: the blocking characters are more often reconciled or converted than simply repudiated.” (167).

Notably, this notion of comedy as a reconciling phenomenon informs Eliot's embrace and employment of various comic modes in his monumental work, *The Waste Land*. In fact, these festivities that traditionally have taken place at the end of comedy arguably represent “primitive myths and rituals that celebrated the victory of spring over winter.” (Abrams and Harpham 54). These themes of ancient rituals pertaining to

spring and winter are central features in *The Waste Land*. Thus, immersed in the music hall discourse, informed by traditional modes of comedy and appropriate employments of vulgar humor, Eliot utilized the phenomenon of minstrelsy as a prominent poetic device in his fragmented, variety show poem, *The Waste Land*.

3.3. Minstrel as Figure

A minstrel, in the late 18th century, became a literary and poetic device, a literary figure. They became “poets to think with.” (McLane 431). Exploring modes of mediation and narration became central in the creative process. The narrator, speaker, and/or deliverer of a poetic utterance arguably assumed a controversial role in culture. That is, minstrels provided a vital mode for “talking about the historical and cultural situations of poetry.” (McLane 431).

In this final section of my study, I refer to Maureen N. McLane’s perceptive article entitled *The Figure Minstrelsy Makes: Poetry and Historicity*, which keenly engages with questions that arise pertaining to the Anglo minstrel as poetic figure. Central to the focus of this section are historical and cultural functions of minstrel as figure, explored by McLane. These functions inspired by McLane entail: persona, dialectic and performance; confrontation of conventions; revival of pure form; obsolescence of the poet; and attempts of articulating the story of humanity. (429-451). In this section, I will therefore explore and analyze means by which the minstrel figure functions in *The Waste Land*, further asserting the controversial, yet culturally inclusive resonance of the text.

3.3.1. Persona, Performance, Dialectic

The minstrel figure functions as a persona constructed by a poet or author. The concept of persona derives from “the Latin word for the mask worn by actors in the classical theater.” (Abrams and Harpham 286). Thus, persona is not limited to one voice or character, but can involve many characters in a poem, play or narrative. Specifically pertaining to poetry, a persona represents a voice “we hear in a lyric poem.” (Abrams and Harpham 286).

How do the multi-faced personae of the minstrel figure function? Or, how do they function regarding culture, as McLane observes, “...minstrelling discourse

constantly poses the problem of what cultural work a modern poet might continue to perform..." (444). One significant feature for the minstrel figure is how the appropriation of multiple masks and multiple voices renders this figure a performer, one that may represent and/or address cultural phenomena. Thus, it allows for theatrical variety.

In line with this performer concept, the minstrel figure also embraces a philosophical and historiographical concept, regarding that of dialectic. That is, the minstrel figure as performer may pose questions to a reader/audience, expecting participatory involvement. This question and answer method initiates dialogue and interpretive engagement, arguably foregrounding the significance of individual interpretation. Therefore, considering these methods of persona, performance, and dialectic, how does the minstrel figure, as employed in *The Waste Land*, address cultural realities?

In *The Waste Land*, Tiresias is the prominent speaker, appropriated as minstrel figure and choreographer of the multiple personae of the poem. Tiresias engages with the reader/audience in a way resembling a performer. Charles Sanders observes this performer quality as he suggests "*The Waste Land* does not close with a final period" (38). Eliot ends it with the three repeated words "Shantih shantih shantih" (Eliot In 433). Sanders posits this ending "invites active collaboration and continuing performance." (38).

Throughout the poem the reader is invited to engage with the different characters, not to just interpret the meaning, but actually to be directly addressed by the speaker. In Section V, the speaker ambiguously includes the reader in the address: "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..." (Eliot In 359-362). Near the end of the poem, the speaker confides in the reader, seeking acknowledgment: "I sat upon the shore/ Fishing, with the arid plain behind me/ Shall I at least set my lands in order?" (Eliot In 423-425).

The speaker alludes not only to individual interpretative engagement, but also to a collective engagement: "We who were living are now dying" (Eliot In 329). The speaker in this instance directs the reader's attention to a larger picture. That is, the reader is led to contemplate his/her place in a larger narrative of the history of humanity. The speaker as minstrel might be addressing the cultural reality of an

ongoing collective engagement, especially prevalent within the new urban city.

This insistence that the reader/listener collaborates with the performers in the poem alludes to an even more essential cultural phenomenon, regarding the many voices in *The Waste Land*. This phenomenon is best illuminated in the popular cultural movement of the British music hall. In this form of entertainment Eliot found one of his most primary poetic muses, that of Marie Lloyd. Jonna Mackin describes her cultural impact:

Lloyd was adored for her enjoyment of risqué material and her legendary talent for innuendo. It is said that one cannot appreciate Marie Lloyd's songs by reading her lyrics; we must imagine her drawing out and manipulating her audiences' responses with gestures that they knew only too well how to read. With those innocent lyrics she stimulated multiple private imaginings. (50)

As a performer, Lloyd created an environment, especially incorporating innuendos, where the audiences were not just passive spectators, but were encouraged to actively engage with "private imaginings" (Mackin 50). These private imaginings represent one aspect of the diverse range of individual experiences with the comedic art. These imaginings on one end of the spectrum can be described as the many creative identities within the audience, as well as representing the many voices.

Mackin alludes to scholars arguing that the music hall was a descendant of the Elizabethan Theater (56-57). In this way, the performance space essentially had two depicted spheres for performing—locus and platea (Mackin 56-57). The locus was "at the rear and privileg[ed] who or what was represented...[t]he *platea* [was] located at the front of the stage, where the performer walks forward and engages with the audience (Mackin 57). Eliot would have been aware of these performance theories, as he was indebted to Elizabethan drama in shaping his art. Mackin in fact includes a quote by Eliot in regard to this matter:

The working-man who went to the music-hall and saw Marie Lloyd and joined in the chorus was himself performing part of the work of acting; he was engaged in that collaboration of the audience with the artist which is necessary in all art and most obviously in dramatic art. (57)

In light of such collaboration, Mackin suggests the performers were "interacting with the public and authorizing their multiple imaginings as part of the performance." (57).

As the British Music Hall was a show with rapid-fire allusions, parodying and satirizing all cultural spheres, the audience/participants were on the edge of their seats, following from topic to topic. The shows did not adhere to a central plot structure or

narrative, rather they were fragmented in nature.

The Waste Land no doubt has been categorized in such a fashion deemed as chaotic and fragmented. Abrupt disruptions in the flow of references abound in the text. One moment moves from a biblical allusion, “I will show you fear in a handful of dust.”; to an opera about medieval romance, “Frisch weht der Wind...” (Eliot Ln 30-31. It then transitions to a possible mythological reference, yet, included as a conversational utterance, “You gave me hyacinths first a year ago/ They call me the hyacinth girl.” (Eliot Ln 30-31, 35-36). The text also includes intimate scenes, seemingly inserted for elements of pathos and possibly for recognition of some sort of narrative flow. This fragmented structure indeed embodies a music hall style variety show.

Mackin points out Eliot’s allusion to this fragmentation and the “multiple imaginings” referring to Eliot’s initial inclination to name *The Waste Land* “He do the police in different voices” (57). Such a title implies many voices and characters, especially foregrounding vernacular and minority dialects. In fact, in line with Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia, Eliot’s many-voiced poem, *The Waste Land*, took on a diverse range of fragmented voices. Mackin includes a quote by F.J. Gould, affirming this fragmented artistic quality of Modernist art, stating: “[T]housands of people prefer the scattered items of a music hall to the connected thought of an epic or the sustained intent of the classical drama.” (58). This claim by Gould provides a solid framework to explore another cultural phenomenon related to these methods of persona, performer, and dialectic, that is, the American Minstrel Show.

The American Minstrel Show was for America, a primary means of entertainment for the masses. These shows took place all over the country, representing, while simultaneously shaping the cultural landscape and mentality of the country. Sanders suggests that before this form of entertainment crossed the Atlantic to Great Britain, “it had crystallized certain conventions and rituals” (34). Sanders provides a succinct description of the structure of the early shows:

At the center of the ring sat Mr. Interlocutor, central not only in physical presence, but in interchange of words and deeds as well. Mr. Interlocutor, usually a large man with a voice large enough to be heard above that of all others, introduced all members of the company. ‘Uniformed’ to establish his authority and superior intelligence, or else pompously and sumptuously attired in contrast to his endmen, he was the ‘feeder’ to them, the master of ceremonies who strove to ‘play it straight,’ who was charged with the burden of carrying most of the show in his memory, whose task it was to make the show unfold

smoothly and successfully, and yet, unfortunately, who had to suffer indignities of the 'intellectual' beset and frequently bested by his sometimes half-wit, sometimes gyrating company." (34)

Sanders contends that a prominent figure Eliot incorporates in *The Waste Land* is a choreographer and mediator with an overwhelming task similar to Mr. Interlocutor (35). That figure is Tiresias (35). Tiresias is the one speaker that clearly states his name: "I, Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between lives..." (Eliot Ln 218). Interestingly, Sanders points out that "Tiresias has uttered his name for the first time in v. 218, the center of the 434 verse poem." (35). Notably, Tiresias seems to adopt the "*platea*" method described earlier in this essay. As Mr. Interlocutor, he steps forward onto the stage, acknowledges the audience, directs their attention to and mediates scenes:

The typist home at teatime, 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,
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. (Eliot Ln 222-230)

Returning to the first section of *The Waste Land*, as Jonathan Gill explains, "Tiresias—seems to introduce characters of the show (78). He introduces one in this way, "Madame Sosotris, famous clairvoyante" (Eliot Ln 43). He is the choreographer of the fragmented events. Stating his name directly in the middle of the poem, Tiresias represents a balance for the chaos, intending to unify the fragments of the events, experiences, and thoughts relayed.

Eliot's incorporation of the American Minstrel Show in his art preceded his work on *The Waste Land*. In the Minstrel shows two performers were on both ends of the semicircle, "a tambourine player (Mr. Tambo) on one end and a performer on bone castanets (Mr. Bones) at the other (Sanders 34). Jonathan Gill highlights that one of Eliot's works entitled "Fragments of Agon" incorporates these "two characters drawn directly from blackface minstrelsy, the 'endmen' Tambo and Bones" as they "sing about two people living as one, one as two, 'Under the Bamboo Tree' (66).

Gill also highlights a key text for noting the American Minstrel Show influence in Eliot's works—the *Bolo Poems*. These poems are highly racial depictions of African-American culture, using conventions of the minstrel show. As Gill claims, these lyrics

“struggle with the very same tensions that dominate Eliot’s published output—Old World versus New, high culture versus low, order versus chaos, tradition versus innovation, the dead versus the living...” (66). Gill goes on to say these poems negatively impacted Eliot’s reputation in the “European high culture” (66).

However, in *The Waste Land*, allusions to Minstrelsy are arguably not employed and portrayed as racialized. In fact, in one instance the speaker addresses specific aspects of the American Minstrel Show as a terrible reality, implying that it contributes destructive elements in culture. In Section 3, the speaker is sitting at the river fishing and says, “But at my back in a cold blast I hear/ The rattle of bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.” (Eliot ln 185-186). I suggest in this instance the speaker confronts specifically a racial depiction of the blackface figure laughing “from ear to ear” with instruments, the bones, being played in performance (Eliot ln 186). This confrontation seems to address a negative feature of the traditional American Minstrel Show, as it was being appropriated into the British music hall. In this regard, employing the minstrel figure provided means to subvert established social and cultural traditions of racism.

3.3.2. Confronting Conventions

I have considered the myriad voices made possible in *The Waste Land* especially with the appropriation of the British music hall and the American minstrel show. As well, the minstrel figure among the many guises can be utilized to confront and address established systems in society. This attempt is made possible due to the ambiguity of the minstrel figure. McLane asserts that

[f]rom Percy onward, minstrels are by definition ambiguous figures, caught between their noble predecessors the bards and their entrepreneurial successors in print culture, Elizabethan ballad-mongers and ultimately modern poets. (434)

The grand scope of minstrel history lends to an ambiguous definition of a minstrel, as minstrels cross cultural borders and time periods. But, it is this very ambiguity that poets attempt to embrace and employ to achieve such goals as undermining cultural and social mentalities that may be harmful for society.

While it is important to note Eliot’s adoption of aspects of the American Minstrel Show into his art, it must be clarified that he was not attempting to focus on structural

features of the minstrel show in *The Waste Land*. Gill asserts:

Eliot seemed less interested in the structure of the minstrel show as a model for his own poetry than in minstrelsy's more general approach to questions of identity and language, in which self-consciously masked voices allow for a safe, even guaranteed transgression; the modernist-style poetic fragmentation and formal discursiveness that Eliot appreciated in minstrelsy also extended to fragmentary and discursive identities. (78)

Eliot, as a foreigner living in the established elite cultural center of London, aimed to depict new cultural exchange and engagement in the modern city. As the Old Possum character is a trickster in African-American folklore, so to Eliot aimed to assert himself against the established institutions (Chinitz 7). This positioning was not meant to overthrow the high culture as such, but rather to devour the hierarchy of high/low culture. Eliot was blurring the lines set between the two cultural spheres with an enigmatic, fluid poetic style. In light of blurring these lines, Eliot would, along with other poets, artists, and critics help determine what is categorized as Modernism. Highlighting such meshing together of high and low culture, Gill argues that "modernism itself must be understood as a creature of mixed blood, counting Tambo and Bones alongside Dante and Shakespeare as ancestors." (65). It sustains such fragmented elements as a high art, mythological reference to "Philomel" and the hurried, low diction, and uncontrolled utterance "When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said- / I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself" (Eliot 99, 139-140). Weaving them together with such elegance requires great skill.

This ambiguity, achieved by blending together such fragmented references and styles represents the contradictory nature of modernist literature and poetry. In fact, the modern cities were full of such contradictions and fragments, with blacks and whites segregated, yet influencing each other's cultural sphere. Artists preferred to create new works of art outside the confines of modern society norms, yet found themselves appreciating modern opportunities to market and distribute their art. The "blackface minstrel songs" were paraded with a contradictory nature "at once comedies 'of the grotesque and unacceptable,'...and tragedies of the proper and legal." (Gill 71).

This double-sidedness is apparent even in Eliot and Pound's attempt to break down the high/low culture divide. The plan to adopt an African-American dialect to work against the standardized British language arguably turned against itself. Michael North asserts: "the language Pound and Eliot assume as part of their attack on convention

is itself a convention; the linguistic tool they use to mock the literary establishment is in fact part of that establishment.” (58). Such a double vision may be like the two cupids depicted in *The Waste Land*. One “Peeped out / (Another hid his eyes behind his wing)” (Eliot Ln 80-81).

With an American root system, Eliot aimed to portray a new order of living, one merging “the Old World and the New, the modern and the primitive, tradition and innovation” (Gill 80). Maybe the arid land in need of regeneration is the old rigid binary system and the new system is portrayed as the blending of the old social and cultural divisions. In this regard, a new aim to merge together high and low culture in the 1920s arguably paves the way for postmodernism, seemingly embracing the play of signs.

One passage in *The Waste Land* embodies content and stylistic features subtly and enigmatically alluding to a long history of a binary system that is to be reconsidered in modern life:

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. (Eliot Ln 107-110)

These three lines are compact with allusions and sensory details, exuding with philosophical speculations and mythical qualities. The firelight seems to reference Plato’s Allegory of the cave, where the firelight shining on a person represents a superior realm compared with the person’s shadow, a shadow that represents the state of all physical matter of earth. This sets the stage for the light/shadow, superior/inferior binaries. In this poetic instance, the firelight shines on the physical (derivative) objects, the brush and her hair. In this moment, the description of her brushing her hair ascends to a metaphorical, mythical quality as her hair is directed “out in fiery points” (Eliot Ln 109). But suddenly it “Glowed into words” (Eliot Ln 110). From the deconstructionist viewpoint, these words are derivative and inferior like the shadow. They are negatives in the binary superior/inferior— voice/words. Eliot though is arguably incorporating this scene to allude to the stale nature of this ancient binary system. This succinct, mysterious event just depicted seems to flourish, but is categorized in the same light as its environment where nothing is going on, where the speaker says, “Nothing again nothing. / ‘Do you know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember nothing” (Eliot Ln 120-121). Interestingly, the inferior, physicality of the brush worked on the

same level as the superior light to place the hair in a position to glow even more so. This is not just an example of the physical, inferior words, derived from the superior essence but actually is a direct breakdown of that constructed hierarchy.

The physical, I suggest, works with the spiritual, the brush works to place the hair in a position so that it can be viewed in the firelight in order to be appreciated as beauty. This is a preparatory moment in the poem, a contrasting vision of the old versus the new, intending to break down the hierarchical binaries. In light of this portrayal, there must be a shift from the dry, old landscape.

Eliot's use of the minstrel figure in *The Waste Land*, thus, helps depict a modern society that must recognize an old arid landscape and a need to shift to a new way of living to flourish in modern society. Eliot seemingly incorporates the ambiguous minstrel figure, situated in the music hall and minstrel show, in his aesthetic tool belt because of the complex array of cultures considered in the performances. Jonathan Gill captures this new modernist positioning, which prophesied and already, unknowingly adopted a postmodernist bent:

Hence blackface minstrelsy's obsession with masking—blacks in blackface playing whites, whites in blackface playing Germans, black women in blackface playing slaves playing Irish immigrants—offered a tool for radical performance, and endless, indeterminate play with racial, economic, gender, ethnic, and national identities. The American identity, minstrels told audiences, was an improvisation. (79)

This ongoing play of signs and breaking down of binaries is apparent in the characterization of Tiresias, Mr. Interlocutor, in *The Waste Land*. As Sanders mentions Mr. Interlocutor is “usually a large man” (34). In this case, Tiresias' character an enigmatic figure blurs the boundary lines of gender: “I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives, / Old man with wrinkled female breasts...” (Eliot Ln 218-219). In this scene voyeuristically mediated by Tiresias, there is even a play of identity a merging into a universal identity of humanity when Tiresias narrates: “(And I Tiresias have forsoffered all/ Enacted on this same divan or bed;/ I who have sat by Thebes below the wall/ And walked among the lowest of the dead.)” (Eliot Ln 243-246). In this example of gender boundary lines blurring, Eliot essentially takes on an improvisational posture. This post-modernist sort of play of signs, this intentional posture, can be paralleled with the free form of jazz.

The rhythmic form and melodic flow of “O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—

/It's so elegant/ So intelligent" is an example of such free play (Eliot In 128-130). "Shakespeherian" has an added stress, "Shakespe-'he'-rian, with a pitch and sound delivered as a melodic run similar to a saxophone's melody, a prominent instrument for jazz music (Eliot In 128). In describing the style of Wallace Stevens, a modernist poet, Chinitz alludes to Modernist poets' adoption of such styles from the saxophone and the banjo: "Modern poems...are verbal analogues to the quintessentially modern music identified with the saxophone and the banjo, whose staccato the poem imitates..." (12). Chinitz highlights Steven's description of the rhythm and melody of modern poetry, categorizing "the modernist timbre as the 'twanging [of] a wiry string.'" (12). This short, choppy, melodic variance was in a sense a less civilized form, as mentioned earlier in this essay, compared with the European aesthetics of beauty, which included a range of instruments that created a richness and fullness. Jazz, an improvisational form of music, was even categorized as immoral, set against traditional standards and conventions. However, in a contradictory modernist discourse of the early 20th Century, jazz was also viewed as a new fertile landscape for artists to explore. Chinitz asserts how

Gilbert Seldes's defense is typical in this respect: 'Jazz is roaring and stamping and vulgar, you may say; but you cannot say that it is pale and polite and dying'—as opposed, that is, to 'conventional pedantry...and a society corrupted by false ideas of politeness and gentility in the arts.' (12)

Hence, employing minstrelsy guises in tandem with jazz techniques, created a dynamic of great complexity and innovation. This connection with jazz in fact emerged from the modernist fascination in experimenting with forms in art, poetry, and literature. It emerged even more so with a desire to connect with pre-industrialization, in fact, with ancient means of representing reality, especially attempting to connect with a primitive freedom.

3.3.3. Freedom of Form

The minstrel figure carries with it the notion of freedom. In this sense, as a poetic device, it may be utilized as a mediator that provides means of crossing time periods as well as breaking free from constrained historical perspectives. Such a notion is not only suggesting a desire or method for representing the ideal. Rather, this figure employed allows for flexible engagement with artistic form. In this regard, the minstrel figure may engage with the early 20th Century fascination and longing for the primordial and the primitive. Artists such as Picasso established their artistic oeuvres with this primitive motif, which for this time in history became an outlet to revolt against the traditional conventions. Tim Armstrong expounds upon Picasso's use of the primitive art form, stating: "Both hidden and apparent at the centre of his art—in the central figures of *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*—African art remains a formal as well as a psychological presence." (143).

Armstrong suggests that modernism was comprised of "a discourse of the 'counter- primitive'...in relation to jazz." (149). Armstrong describes it this way:

Many saw it as the natural expression of the era, both in its freedoms and pathologies. The white bandleader Stan Kenton wrote: 'I think the human race today may be going through things it never experienced before, types of nervous frustration and thwarted emotional development which traditional music is entirely incapable of not only satisfying but expressing. (149)

This fascination with what was deemed the primitive reveals the state of society during this time period. It for sure has racial overtones, but it is important to recognize this shift in societies' mentality, because in this shift a new diverse, multi-faceted western society was painfully trying to bloom.

As Derrida was critically analyzing Plato and Aristotle's long stretch of influence across the centuries of western civilization, so too, arguably, decades before Derrida, were the cultural pioneers of a new, modern society offering a similar analysis. Armstrong refers to this new inclination toward the primitive, considering it as "abstraction" (142). Armstrong offers a perspective postulated by Roger Fry:

[W]ith its directness of vision African art is free from western assumptions about the human body and the laws of perspective; the African sculptor is closer to his material, and can think in a fully plastic way. The resulting forms are animated with a 'disconcerting vitality, the suggestion that they make of not being mere echoes of actual figures, but of possessing an inner life of their own.' (142)

This freedom from the "laws of perspective" that had been passed down through

Western tradition parallels Eliot's freedom from formal constraints and content limitations evident in *The Waste Land* (Armstrong 142). Eliot did not abandon the Western Literary tradition, that's for sure. Use of a range of stanzaic forms, end rhymes, alliterations, and other conventions of form were included, however, just as important was the breaking of such boundaries of form, embracing a primitive, free sort of influence. As in his essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent", Eliot strongly claims that for an artist to be a genuine artist then tradition must not be abandoned (*The Sacred Wood*). Referring to tradition, Eliot states: "It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour." (*The Sacred Wood*) Yet, such a critical statement is bold and actually references the posture to blend high and low cultures, literary conventions with attempted freedoms.

In *The Waste Land*, this mixture of convention and freedom is apparent in the stanza of Madame Sosostris:

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. (Eliot Ln 51-59)

For this text to be categorized as lyric poetry, distinct attributes would be form, such as verses and stanzas. This stanza is in proper stanzaic form, with some sort of sense of rhythm and repetition, a musical flow. Repetition of words such as "Here is the man... here the Wheel... here is the one-eye merchant..." (Eliot Ln 51-52). Another instance is a repetition of "which" at the beginning of the lines 51 and 52: "Which is blank...Which I am forbidden..." (Eliot Ln 51-52).

On the other hand, freedoms are arguably achieved due to the minstrel show device. That is, sporadically placed in the poem, there are moments of narrative flow, as would be the case in a minstrel show. As a lyric poem is traditionally categorized as non-narrative, this flash of narrative speaks to the free flow between literary modes.

In this stanza, the poetic diction, as well, is in a low, conversational style. To include a phrase like "Thank you." in a poem that engages with references and allusions to high art is telling as to reconsidering constraints of poetic expression (Eliot

In 57). To be a multi-cultural, multi-language, multi-period poem, these two words suggest a sense of unity. The meaning and use of these two words—not specifically the English translation—cross social classification systems and high and low art boundaries. These are two words that represent freedom.

3.3.4. Obsolescence of Poet?

TS Eliot grieved the loss of authentic artistic representation once found in the music halls. In the same vein, along with Pound, Eliot grieved the lack of cultural relevance and influence of contemporary poets and poetry. Especially in modernity, it is crucial for the poet to seek means of renewal and innovation for poetic expression and relevance. In Eliot's correspondence as London spokesman in the *Dial*, he focuses on this need, addressing the stale nature of most contemporary poetry in England and America. For Eliot, only a small number of poets seemed to accomplish fresh and worthwhile literary productions. Generally, Eliot's criticism in this regard seems overly harsh. When in fact, however, it speaks less to a snobbish, exclusivist mentality than to recognition of potential for the poetic mode to be culturally relevant and impactful.

Is poetry no longer a medium of expression appropriate for society? This question seemed to resonate in Eliot's creative process due to his employment of a minstrel figure in *The Waste Land*. In fact, this question corresponds with a notion that McLane ponders: "minstrelsy — dead or alive?" (449). In other words, the poet and the minstrel as figure both face a possibility of irrelevancy in contemporary society.

Since Percy's re-appropriation of the minstrel figure, the discourse surrounding minstrelsy has posed questions pertaining to the cultural authority of minstrelsy or most significantly the lack thereof. Kathryn Sutherland in her article *The Native Poet: The Influence of Percy's Minstrel From Beattie To Wordsworth* speaks to these categorizations of the minstrel, contending that such public figures as Dr. Johnson suggested minstrels to represent low authority (415). In this regard, the minstrel figure was merely a musician and "certainly not a composer of poetry" (Sutherland 415).

Percy, however, positioned himself against such a view. For Percy, the minstrel functioned with much cultural authority. As Sutherland points out, "[t]he Minstrels seem to have been genuine successors of the ancient Bards, who united the arts of Poetry and Music, and sung verses to the harp, of their own composing." (415). Eliot's

incorporation of the minstrel and troubadour traditions established this ancient sense of the Bard as composer and singer, as highly regarded storyteller and cultural presence. Eliot therefore is in line with Percy's mentality, as Sutherland defines it: "with great daring, Percy had taken the vagrant street-singer of his own time, transformed him into an authoritative story-teller and handed him back to the contemporary poet as his model." (Sutherland 421). In parallel fashion to Percy, combining the low authority of a street-singer with the enduring high authority of the story-telling Bard forms the prominent element for Eliot that addresses the issue of minstrelsy always facing the possibility of extinction.

For McLane, "[s]inging on the edge of the abyss...the minstrel offers a parable of the modern poet's imminent obsolescence." (443). Tiresias as minstrel figure in *The Waste Land* in fact similarly looks out over the abyss of the waters for the historical relevance and inspiration of the poetic voices. The minstrel's position at the edge of the abyss in this manner represents two primary issues. Both issues are concerned with the problematic of location—that is, both issues center on the possibility of irrelevance and/or death in the abyss. In this regard, the abyss may represent the past, myth, fancy and/or other imaginative charms and enchantments that may be employed in poetic expression.

The first issue centers on the reader of poetry, that is, the contemporary retrieval and engagement with past works of poetry. Eliot certainly addresses the importance of tradition in his well-known essays, most importantly in *Tradition and the Individual Talent*. Much has been drawn from this essay regarding the importance Eliot places on engaging with tradition. The problematic in this first sense seems to be that the majority of contemporary readers will not have a depth and breadth of knowledge of the tradition of poetry to utilize in the interpretive process when engaging with ancient references in poetry. Thus, there is a sense of the contemporary disregard and, therefore, the loss of beauty and good art, or at least the loss of appropriate relation to ancient resources of inspiration. Allusion as a vital element of modern poetry is therefore irrelevant or insignificant for a common reader. Perhaps this casts much potential for modern poetry into the grave. For poetry to be of cultural relevance with a vital dynamism, persistent renewal of methods within the poetic mode therefore is a necessity.

This brings me to the second issue, that of the poet's production. The first problematic centered on reader knowledge and intentional reader engagement situates a contemporary poet in a difficult place. In other words, for Eliot as a modern poet, singing into the abyss and engaging with the imaginative history arguably found in the abyss are both necessities in the creative and production processes of writing a poem. However, if Eliot recognizes this productive necessity along with the overwhelming possibility of an audience not engaging with the potential of the historical content in the poem, he then arguably recognizes the high likelihood of contemporary cultural insignificance of his own poetry. The contemporary poet's creative process and, thus, the end product may in a sense be irrelevant and, essentially, dead for modern society. Thus, for Eliot, the problematic of the minstrel figure or poet as dead or alive, correlates with the double significance of ancient and modern elements. McLane articulates well this ancient/modern significance:

Minstrelsy is a Janus-faced muse, a figure of obsolescence but also of a peculiar resilience. It still has much to teach us about poetry, historicity, and, ultimately, the condition of mediality. Through minstrelsy, poets began to discover the modern problematic of making that Pound later formulated in two famous dicta—to write “poems including history” while also “making it new.” (450)

Utilizing the minstrelsy element, *The Waste Land* functions in the manner Pound suggests is necessary for modern poetry, “including history” blended with innovative techniques and ideas (McLane 450). In this regard, *The Waste Land* is a cultural text that illustrates a means for artists to improve their craft, while emboldening artists to labor for relevance in contemporary society. Eliot's cultural work in *The Waste Land*, thus, far exceeded expectations of contemporary poetry in the 20th century, functioning as a new model for poetry, literature, drama, painting, and film to name a few modes of artistic production.

3.3.4.1. Minstrelsy and Exile

In a similar “janus-faced” manner, Eliot endured a phenomenon that heightened his cultural senses, that is, he endured the daily realities of exile. Never fully at home in England or fully at home in the USA, Eliot lived in exilic limbo. This odd place of limbo is analogous to the “janus-faced”, looking back, looking forward model, also corresponding with Pound's idea of including history but making it new. Eliot would

look back in time, across the Atlantic Ocean for inspiration, as well as forward to his current setting in England. In such a limbo, the exilic mentality could lead to a mental state of insignificance and irrelevance. When taken to an extreme, it could lead one to a sense of extinction.

Although he did not abandon the tradition handed down to him, Eliot did what he insisted needed to be done, he incorporated new forms of cultural expression, which were not constrained and bound by rules of respected works from tradition. Fostering his relationship with such a new cultural expression, Eliot embraced his own alien identity, as expatriate, as exile in London. The reality of being a foreigner heightened Eliot's senses to better portray modern life. He had always before him a need to assimilate, to learn about the cultural tradition of England, to dialogue about the differences of his new home with his old home. Chinitz includes a quote by Eliot talking with a British friend, alluding to this struggle to learn about the foreign culture:

But remember that I am a *metic*—a foreigner, and that I *want* to understand you, and all the background and tradition of you. I shall try to be frank—because the attempt is so very much worthwhile with you—it is very difficult with me—both by inheritance and because of my very suspicious and cowardly disposition. (5)

This constant struggle with cultural themes served him well as one of the main figures of Transatlantic Modernism, where exchange of cultural identities and traditions shaped the art and literature of western society in early 20th century.

In his intent to assimilate, Eliot was self-conscious, worrying that his wild, uncultured American roots would be apparent to the conservative atmosphere in London. Eliot was concerned that he “may simply prove to be a savage.” (Chinitz 4). Although this was a concern, Eliot did not seek to block out his American dialect. He considered it to be a key feature that would inevitably blend with the high culture. He sought for innovative ways to incorporate this dialect, knowing it could receive harsh criticism and in turn, especially in London, cast him outside the authoritative circles of cultural establishment. Michael North argues there was a definite reason for fear of minority dialects in such a cultural capital as London of the early 1900s, stating:

[T]he shock Eliot felt when he first heard his own ‘drawl’ against the standard syllables of an academic language may be a paradigmatically modern experience. As the standardization indispensable to a smoothly running modern economy extends itself farther and farther over the globe and deeper and deeper into industrialized society, it awakens speakers to the particular character of their own languages just as peculiarities are extinguished. (59)

In *The Waste Land*, one aspect of using such an arguably subversive dialect is, as I have addressed in this study, accomplished by using covert means such as blackface from the American Minstrel Shows. In incorporating dialect in this way, Eliot was able to mask the voices, improvise, and portray in comedic fashion cultural realities. Using this theatrical medium as a backbone of *The Waste Land*, Eliot could depict high cultural discourses merging with low cultural discourses, as all were part of the play of signs, all were part of Shakespeare's stage, in a sense. In other words, in light of Post-structuralist thought, just as no object or idea has an innate essence, so no level of culture has a superior, innate meaning, all cultural exchange is based on constructed conventions. So as the players on the stage act their constructed parts, so citizens engage in culture and interact with using the established signs.

Masking identities in a play with language in such a way is apparent as Tiresias mediates "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME" while performers in a hurried fashion engage in dialogue: "He's been in the army four years, he wants a good time/ And if you don't give it him, there's other's will, I said." (Eliot Ln 141, 148-149). This dialect is subtle but includes grammatical examples that are not Standard English, such as "don't give it him" (Eliot Ln 149). Along with this formal aspect is the content. This line references the sexual freedom that is directly attacking the conservative society of England. The traditional boundary lines of sexual morality were blurred. Such interaction can represent a breakdown of social mores, being a negative on the binary scale, but with the play of signs as mentioned, Eliot could be referencing the new experience of modern life. This play of signs, from a deconstructionist perspective, broke down binary barriers, merging peoples, ideas, and creative endeavors, in ways that were culturally paradoxical. Daniel Albright said it this way: "In the modernist movement, things tend to coexist uncomfortably with their exact opposites." (x).

3.3.4.2. Heraclitus

This notion of opposites coexisting again refers to the utilization of the “janus-faced” minstrel figure as discussed in this section on the possible obsolescence of poets/poetry. In a general scope, the unification of ancient and modern elements in *The Waste Land* is achieved with a vast array of fragmented materials. As a literary text, it achieves the blending together of what actually are opposing elements, ideas, and relations.

Very significantly, I suggest, this uniting of opposites corresponds with an ancient philosopher discussed earlier in this study as a major influence upon the deconstructive movement, Heraclitus. My purpose for including this association with Heraclitus is not for positing a direct influence upon Eliot. Rather, I find that attributes of Heraclitus shed light on myriad characteristics of the postmodern shift that I have argued Eliot was anticipating and in some ways representing. Even more importantly for the purposes of this section, some of Heraclitus’ attributes correspond with Eliot and Eliot’s minstrel figure in *The Waste Land* being in a limbo of relevance and irrelevance, seemingly embracing opposing elements. Further consideration of specific characteristics of Heraclitus is then necessary to discuss the relevant parallels.

Recognized as a crucial pre-Socratic philosopher, Heraclitus is a conundrum for scholars to interpret and categorize. Only fragments of his works have been preserved. Even more intriguing, as Peter Adamson points out in *Classical Philosophy: A History of Philosophy Without any Gaps*, Heraclitus supposedly often only wrote in brief statements (115). The fragmented works were arguably not a result due to the historical loss of recorded materials. Rather, Adamson posits: “Heraclitus, though, more or less *wrote* in fragments. His body of work is not unlike that of a comedian from the 1950s: it consists of mostly one-liners.” (115).

This fragmented style as an overarching category is of special interest in regards to Eliot addressing the problematic of the relevance or irrelevance of poets. This comparison to Heraclitus is centered on how Eliot embraces elements of ambiguity, limbo, comedy, and most significantly, blending together fundamentally opposite ideas, concepts, and cultural phenomena. Therefore, considering how Heraclitus embraced these categories using what appears to be fragmented and disjointed philosophical ideas, as well contributes to the notion of the “janus-faced”,

traditional yet innovative achievement of Eliot in *The Waste Land*.

In one sense, the fragmented style of Heraclitus produces ambiguous and comical effects for listeners and readers. One example Adamson provides highlights the wordplay of the philosopher: "The bow: its name is life, its work is death." (116). This utterance is interesting in Greek as the word Heraclitus used is *bios*, which can mean bow or life (Adamson 116). In this instance, Heraclitus's philosophical style proves ambiguous and even comical. As Adamson further states, no wonder "the ancients referred to him as 'the riddler' or 'Heraclitus the obscure.'" (116-117).

The most significant parallel of Heraclitus and Eliot, however, pertains to the "unity of opposites". Heraclitus is well known for this idea. One particular example Adamson refers to implies that "donkeys prefer garbage to gold." (122). Adamson further summarizes this phrase suggesting that "gold is valuable for us, but for the donkey things are the other way around." (122). What is significant in this comical statement is not wholly due to individual realities or perspectives, but rather that both perspectives are true at once in regards to a reality larger than individuals. That is, "[t]he gold really is both valuable and worthless, as is the garbage." (Adamson 122). The individual perspectives are both part of what makes the wholeness of existence, in Heraclitus' view. However, individuals often discount or overlook opposing views. Adamson summarizes Heraclitus, stating: "Heraclitus remarks that people fail to notice the way things are 'brought together' by being 'pulled apart,' and gives the examples of the lyre and bow, which are held together by being in tension." (133).

Such an illustration of the lyre is fitting for Eliot as poet and Bard bringing together what seem to be illogical associations and opposing elements. Although Eliot, as mentioned previously in this study, appropriates a banjo rather than a lyre, the analogy corresponding with Heraclitus still works. The very instrument of the banjo Eliot imaginatively embraces speaks to the tension on which he thrives. Physically, the banjo is utilized with strings tightly wound. As well, the banjo stands as a symbol of uniting ancient and modern concepts, embracing old and new cultures.

Eliot addresses the poet's relevance in society by at once blending together allusions, images, and ideas that promote seemingly different perspectives of reality. In attempting such a difficult task, Eliot also addresses a multi-faceted reality of modern society. By including such a diverse range of fragmented elements in *The Waste Land*,

Eliot is arguably portraying the relevance of the myriad parts of existence, notably expressed in human culture, in relation to the wholeness of existence. Thus, Eliot arguably attempts a unification of the vast range of differences of humanity. James Longenbach points out a statement that summarizes Eliot's notions of creative production and reception in this regard, as Eliot claimed: "And of course the only real truth is the whole truth" (200). In other words, a search for individual relevance includes a search for some sort of appropriate relation and unity among other individuals, which inevitably includes a search for how all the individual parts connect according to the wholeness of existence. Longenbach refers to this notion by referring to the hermeneutic circle, suggesting: "Understanding is a dialectic between the part and the whole, and we cannot understand any individual part without some prior knowledge of the whole." (Longenbach 200).

Such an ambitious goal of seeking understanding of human existence by utilizing fragmented elements in appropriate relation to a whole brings me near the end of my study. The following being the final section of my study will consider an additional concept proposed by Heraclitus, as well as a prominent feature by a disregarded contemporary of Eliot, Hope Mirrlees. Overall, this final section centers on the desire for articulating the grand narrative of modern humanity.

3.3.5. Articulating the Story of Humanity

Eliot's inevitable goal of making poetry relevant in modern society especially depended on his ambitious desire to express the relevance of individual parts to the whole as discussed. The longing for clarity of expression in this regard by way of the poetic minstrel figure was crucial. One way of considering this longing for such an ambitious expression is to look once again to Heraclitus.

Known for making philosophically significant the concept of *logos*, Heraclitus sought to gain understanding of existence as a whole and to be able articulate that understanding (Adamson 119). In Greek, as Adamson suggests, this concept of *logos* has multiple meanings (118). Adamson posits:

Basically *logos* means, 'word', but it expands to mean many other things too, like 'account' and 'reason,' or even 'proportion' or 'measure.' It's where we get all those English words that end in '-ology.' For example, 'theology' is giving an 'account,' a *logos*, of 'god,' *theos*; 'anthropology' is giving an 'account,' a *logos*, of 'man,' *anthropos*... (118).

Thus, embracing multiple definitions of *logos*, the minstrel figure in *The Waste Land* functions as a mouthpiece, longing to give an account of humanity that connects ages and ages of cultural realities.

Intriguingly, a contemporary to Eliot embraced this ambitious longing to articulate the *logos*, the grand story of humanity, as well. Hope Mirrlees, a contemporary poet and good friend of Eliot, published *Paris: A Poem* in 1920—although in its publication it is printed as 1919—with Virginia Woolf and *The Hogarth Press* (Briggs 80). *Paris: A Poem* is more acute in focus, prominently foregrounding modern society in Paris, as compared to *The Waste Land*, which reaches further to the past and beyond one single city. However, similarities between the poems are relevant for this study. The lack of scholarly research attributed to associations between *Paris* and *The Waste Land* is of interest as there are many similarities. Both in myriad ways portray the fragmented realities of current Western societies. Yet, most intriguing in both poems is the foregrounded portrayal of the speakers' frail attempts and longing to express the *logos* as discussed.

Mirrlees begins her poem articulating this ambitious longing, as the speaker utters, "I want a holophrase" (3). In *Reading Virginia Woolf*, Julia Briggs succinctly relates this initial desire for a "holophrase" to the desire for articulating the *logos* (85). Briggs says it well, referring to this longing, stating: "St. John appears as the witness of war and destruction and of the 'logos', another version of the 'holophrase', the all-embracing word (85).

The Waste Land also foregrounds this longing to utilize new means and methods to articulate the story of humanity. As an example of an artistic search for effective means to express the *logos*, *The Waste Land* subtly poses questions of preference as to which expressive methods and modes are most relevant. Is fancy and/or reason most effective? Is ambiguity or clarity most effective? What modes prove best for expressing current human experience?

With such questions in mind, it is necessary to recognize and explore the modernist concept that the blurring of boundaries was a key feature. Specifically, artists were utilizing a range of modernist discourses in their artistic endeavors. Different forms of media were thus blended and considered in the creation process. Each form of art was no longer its own separate entity. Albright suggests that

modernism can be described as a time where borders were being transgressed, stating: “Throughout the modernist movement, the major writers and composers both enforced and transgressed the boundaries among the various arts with unusual energy—almost savage at times” (xiii). Interestingly, this movement was not synonymous among artists, as “some artists tried to erase the boundaries among music and literature and the visual arts, while other artists tried to build foot-thick walls.” (Albright xii). Albright alludes to the opposing forces “as a tension between arts that try to retain the propriety, the apartness, of their private media, and arts that try to lose themselves in some pan-aesthetic whole.” (xiv).

Arguably, Eliot was of the school that attempted to merge different forms of media and aspects of culture to be immersed in a “pan-aesthetic whole” with a vision of articulating the *logos*. Essentially, Eliot is a key example of a modernist exploring a vast array of creative endeavors accomplished within Western Civilization. He incorporates references to Shakespeare’s drama and poetry— “Good night, ladies, good night.”; contemporary popular entertainment—“O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag”; comedy—“HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME”; music—“O City city, I can sometimes hear/ Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,/ The pleasant whining of a mandoline”; painting—“Above the antique mantel was displayed/ As though a window gave upon a sylvan scene”; religion— “O Lord thou pluckest me out”; ancient mythology—“Philomel”; and technological advancement—“The sound of horns and motors...” (Eliot In 172, 128, 141, 259-261, 97-98, 309, 99, 197). These examples do not cover all the different forms of cultural references and media, but provide a glimpse at the vast range of references Eliot aimed to blend.

This blending together of elements in such a modernist fashion is apparent in what I am arguing as the grand claim in Eliot’s *The Waste Land*. The speaker describes the scene of the “mountains of rock without water”, and to go along with the motif of sterility, the speaker utters a desperate, empty statement: “There is not even silence in the mountains/ But dry sterile thunder without rain.” (Eliot In 334, 341-342). This statement of “dry sterile thunder” is such a paradoxical statement and is seemingly not a reference to reality (Eliot In 342). Where there is thunder there are typically clouds full of water. But this thunder is described as dry and sterile. This oppositional statement actually proves to be the climax to the idea of blending cultural spheres as

I've argued in this essay. From a Post-structuralist perspective, the sound of the thunder and no rain can represent the play of signs. In other words, the sound of the thunder represents language. "Then spoke the thunder/ DA" (Eliot *Ln* 399-400). As Sanders asserts " 'DA' is the root of the thunder's Sanskrit utterances: Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata; indeed, it is a basic 'root' binding together into 'one family' the languages called Indo-European." (28). As the thunder produces no rain, and as rain is a necessity for life, in one sense, the thunder symbolizes the play of culturally constructed and interspersed signs that have no innate meaning or essence, they are essentially sterile. This succinct "DA" then functions as a centerpiece, like Mr. Interlocutor, Tiresias, acting as a unifying agent, sustaining the poem with an explosive energy. Perhaps the utterance of "DA" is Eliot's holophrase.

In this incredible artistic feat, Eliot seems to be suggesting that artists, citizens, and essentially all humans must always reflect upon how cultural constructions have been established and how they are currently being established. That is, cultural binaries should not merely be passed down from generation to generation accepted as if they will always be life-giving sources for humanity. It may be that society will be the worse off in adopting those established constructions, lacking sources of water like the grotesque "Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit" (Eliot *Ln* 339). Eliot's waste land portrays the danger of a blind acceptance of tradition with no intention to go through the pains of 'labor' to give birth to a new cultural moment, only instead maintaining and ruled by a static, "dry sterile thunder" (Eliot *Ln* 342).

4. Conclusion

Now categorized as a seminal work within the literary tradition, is it possible, considering this message of reconsidering tradition from generation to generation, that the relevance of *The Waste Land* as a lyrical/dramatic utterance ended with the modernist movement? Does the poem's cultural moment end as expected by the speaker, apparent in the apostrophic plea: "Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song, / Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long." (Eliot ln 183-184). Since *The Waste Land*, as Sanders suggests, does not end with any sort of punctuation, this plea implies and hopes that the song should not end and that the "Sweet Thames" should always flow (38).

This ever-flowing river is for sure needed in the arid landscape, a landscape filled with "mudcracked houses" (Eliot ln 345). The imagery of this fluidity references the blending of multiple phenomena. For Pound and Eliot dialects should not remain stratified but should merge, being incorporated into the aesthetics of art in all cultural spheres—high, middle, and low. In other words, there should be no dominant group, quenching the creative potentials of inferior groups. This leads to lifeless, boring, and stale realities, where dominant groups determine all cultural relevance. Pound and Eliot do not want this bland, conventional state of things in society. They "stand in the living mockery of the idea of cultural homogeneity." (North 67). Thus, in this study, I have argued that poetry is a cultural medium that can be used to examine cultural health or the lack thereof. Kevin McNeilly highlights that

neither mystical nor escapist, poetry and critical discourse are 'used' by both poet and reader 'to cut across all the present stratifications of public taste...and foster a refocusing of attention, a contemporary rethinking of social and cultural relationships" (26)

So, essentially, similar to a modern artist, one should enjoy the freedom to flow freely like a river throughout tradition and the freedom to flow among the nuances of contemporary culture and its multifaceted components.

Also, I suggest, Eliot would not consider *The Waste Land* strictly as a modernist poem. Although it has for sure been categorized as such, and is used to set boundaries as to what modernism is, it is possible this poem as a pillar of modernism is part of the ongoing play of signs, a river ever-flowing into the future, into the postmodernist era and possibly beyond. In this regard, *The Waste Land* as a poem that begs for new

blending of cultural goods and innovations has been accepted, interpreted, and reinterpreted over multiple generations. Simultaneously, *The Waste Land* has proved to reach back to the past. Eliot did not elevate the present to the superior position and place the past traditions and conventions in an inferior position, placing Dante and Shakespeare in an old forgotten warehouse of cultural artifacts. Instead, these historical phenomena are creatively blended together. Albright claims that “[i]f modernism can be said to reach out beyond the present moment, it is also true that modernism can be said to extend backward almost indefinitely.” (xi). Albright further states that “[m]odernism is partly confined to the first half of the twentieth century, but it tends to spill into earlier and later ages. Modernism created its own precursors; it made the past new, as well as the present.” (Albright xii).

In this five-part poem, Eliot worked with a broad stroke of the poetic brush, with the whole of Western Civilization, even, it can be argued, all of humanity moving and breathing within his scope of vision. Taking on the “*migratorius and musicus*” role, functioning as a hybrid, aiming to assimilate into the old having come from the new, Eliot was fit for such a grand project (Chinitz 4). Eliot seemed to take on the role of minstrel, a “minstrel troubadour” (Sanders 37). Incorporating a *mélange* of artistic media, he choreographed multiple voices in diverse situations and analyzed identity; explored religious, mythological, mystical, philosophical discourses; incorporated musical performances and critiques; considered sexuality and gender; referenced ancient and modern times; brought past, present, and future together (North 65). Corresponding with Derrida’s theoretical pursuit to reconsider humanity’s existence in modern times by looking to cultural discourses pre-Plato and pre-Aristotle, Eliot in *The Waste Land*, as Sanders suggests, alludes to the minstrel semi-circle, sending the reader of this poem on a journey to ancient times:

[W]e are transported back to the choral semi-circle of Greek drama and beyond to echoes of rituals and ceremonies existing perhaps before records outside of the archetypal images of a collective unconscious [that] came to be and crystallized into specialties known as ‘arts’. In sum, we are reminded of a common humanity, continued subconsciously in forms of public entertainment and thriving in the very bones of us all.” (36)

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Abstract

As a prominent High Modernist literary figure, TS Eliot has taken on an institutional aura of an elitist. Unfortunately, due to such categorization, Eliot himself and his most ambitious work, *The Waste Land*, both have been increasingly deemed culturally relevant only to specialists. My aim in this study therefore is to reconsider Eliot's seminal modernist text, *The Waste Land*, as a cultural artifact that embraces and embodies new positive ways of interacting in a rapidly changing and globalized society. Thus, the problem this study addresses is the categorization of *The Waste Land* as an exclusivist and elitist text, a prominently retrospective categorization that, I suggest, has negatively influenced the general reception and interpretive engagement with the text. This study will reconsider the fixed, established position of *The Waste Land* as a High Modernist text. To carry out what may seem to be such an ambitious task, I aim to consider in further detail what Charles Sanders in "*The Waste Land Minstrel?*" suggests are important elements in *The Waste Land*, namely, methods and techniques utilized from both the Minstrel and Troubadour traditions (37). These two traditions generally have not been focal points in previous analyses of this text. Thus, I contend that TS Eliot embraces and incorporates both Minstrel and Troubadour traditions in *The Waste Land*, as is evident in the text, and in doing so, foregrounds and envisions a culturally inclusive new reality of urbanized, international, and mobile means of human interrelations in the 20th century.

Keywords: TS Eliot / *The Waste Land* / High Modernism / Minstrel / Troubadour / British Music Hall / American Minstrel Show

Zusammenfassung

Als prominente literarische Figur des *High Modernism* hat TS Eliot eine institutionalisierte Aura des Elitären. Leider hat diese Kategorisierung Eliot selber sowie sein ehrgeizigstes Werk, *The Waste Land*, zunehmend als nur für Spezialisten relevant erscheinen lassen. Ziel dieser Studie ist es daher, Eliots bahnbrechenden modernistischen Text, *The Waste Land*, neu zu überdenken – als kulturelles Artefakt, das neue und positive Arten umfasst und verkörpert, wie in einer sich schnell verändernden, globalisierten Gesellschaft interagiert werden kann. Das Problem, das in der vorliegenden Studie behandelt wird, ist deshalb die Kategorisierung von *The Waste Land* als ein exklusivistischer, elitärer Text – eine offensichtlich retrospektive Klassifikation, die, so meine These, die allgemeine Rezeption und interpretative Beschäftigung mit dem Text negativ beeinflusst hat. Die vorliegende Studie wird die etablierte Sichtweise von *The Waste Land* als ein Text des *High Modernism* neu überdenken. Um diese auf den ersten Blick sehr ambitionierte Aufgabe anzugehen, sollen in detaillierter Weise diejenigen Elemente von *The Waste Land* analysiert werden, die von Charles Sanders in *The Waste Land Minstrel?* als besonders relevant bezeichnet wurden. Es sind dies Methoden und Techniken, die aus der Tradition des Minnesangs und der Trobadore übernommen wurden (37). Diese beiden Traditionsstränge standen bisher weitestgehend nicht im Zentrum der Analyse dieses Textes. Ich verfechte daher die These, basierend auf dem Text selbst, dass TS Eliot in *The Waste Land* beide Traditionen, die des Minnesangs und die der Trobadore, übernimmt und einbezieht; und dass er, indem er dies tut, eine neue, auf breiter kultureller Basis gründende Realität urbanisierter, internationaler und flexibler Ausprägungen zwischenmenschlicher Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert zeichnet und in den Fokus stellt.

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