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**THE STUDY OF SPACE IN T. S. ELIOT'S
“THE WASTE LAND”
BA thesis**

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ABSTRACT

The thesis at hand thematically studies the variety of spaces depicted in T. S. Eliot's poem "The Waste Land". The aim is to analyze the role of experience in the construction of literary space and discover how that space functions according to the themes of the poem.

The introduction gives an overview of the literary significance of "The Waste Land" and defines the scope of the thesis. The literature review discusses previous academic research about the poem, explains the background of modernist space, and provides the theories for the empirical analysis by outlining the major works of what has come to be called the spatial turn. The empirical part of the thesis first explains the combined methodology created on the basis of the theories by Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward William Soja. The following subchapters focus on the portrayal of physical and literary space within "The Waste Land", in which the analysis of space is divided according to the five sections of the poem. The conclusion of the thesis presents the main findings of the analysis.

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INTRODUCTION: EXPLORING “THE WASTE LAND”

Thomas Stearns Eliot’s poem "The Waste Land" is widely regarded as one of the most influential English language poems of the 20th century. The poem first appeared in literary magazines *The Criterion* and *The Dial* in 1922 (Britannica 2024) and was published in book form in the same year (Eliot 1922b). "The Waste Land" deals with issues topical to the modernist era, most notably with the aftermath of the First World War on London society. The 433-line poem is divided into five sections and dedicated to Eliot’s contemporary Ezra Pound who edited and helped compose the work. "The Waste Land" draws from an extraordinary amount of previous literature in various languages, from authors such as Shakespeare, Dante, and Chaucer, as well as various religious texts and Greek mythology. Thanks to the poem's experimental nature in form and style, as well as its bold exploration of modern issues "The Waste Land" has continued to be viewed as a central piece of modernist poetry, as well as a major influence for various works to come.

The extensive literary influence of this poem is evident from various references to it in later literature, as well as other arts and media (McIntire 2015: 2). We can see “The Waste Land”’s presence in literature from the title of Evelyn Waugh’s book *A Handful of Dust* (1934) or in the “valley of ashes” in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* (1925) (Bicknell 1954). The famous phrase “a handful of dust” can even be found in Estonian Russian literature, for example in Andrei Ivanov’s novel “Peotäis põrmu” (2011). The 2023 film “Oppenheimer” features similar themes to Eliot’s poem by portraying the main character’s struggle to accept modern developments in the world and the protagonist is even shown studying "The Waste Land" by heart in a montage (Cox 2023). The poem has also inspired several adaptations like a play and later a short film by the same name in 1996 (Warner 1996, “The Waste Land, 1995 -

2010” n.d.) as well as a comic book adaptation by Martin Rowson (2012), featuring a murder mystery thriller and a treasure hunt for the Holy Grail. Art exhibitions have been inspired by "The Waste Land" ("Journeys with The Waste Land" 2019) as well as a series of prints made by Colin Lanceley illustrating the five sections of the poem (Lanceley 1975). It is no surprise, therefore, that both the contents and the structure of the poem have also been thoroughly researched in academia (see subchapter 1.1.).

Although recent research has expanded the notions of modernism and thus also the geographical spaces covered (Mao and Walkowitz 2008: 737-738), I will focus on the so-called canonical high modernist spaces, as they serve as foundational pillars within the field that continue to need analysis, in parallel with the expansion of the research field. Due to the constraints of a bachelor's thesis, I will not be able to do justice to developments like New Modernist Studies. Modernism as a whole includes a broad spectrum of creative, literary, and cultural developments that reflect and respond to the significant social, political, and technological shifts of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This wider modernist era encompasses a range of techniques, styles, and movements from several artistic fields. As modernist studies have broadened, what is now retrospectively referred to as "high modernism" is commonly associated with the early 20th century interwar years and with the work of highly experimental writers in Europe and North America, like T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Ezra Pound, among others.

The works of high modernist authors are often specifically characterized by an intense experimentation with form, language, and narrative techniques, which reflect the disorienting effects of modernity and the trauma of World War I. T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" is a key example of what has come to be called high modernism. High modernist literature also represents a shift of focus from nature to the urban environment.

Although space has been studied extensively over the past few decades, there has not been an exhaustive study of the spaces portrayed in “The Waste Land”. There has been some research into this topic, however. For instance, Nayak’s research into nationalism in “The Waste Land” (2011) briefly touches on the topic of the city as the heart of Western civilization, yet does not directly study space use within the poem. Day (1965) proposes that T. S. Eliot himself may be the protagonist within the poem, as the reader follows him through various sights of postwar London via his representation of daily life.

“The Waste Land” has also been mapped as a part of the Mapping Literary London project by Bowers et al (n.d.). Jones (2021) has created a tour of the places mentioned in “The Waste Land” in London that can be booked to this day. These last two examples, however, are semi- or non-academic and regard only the real geographical locations mentioned in the poem. They do not take into account the relationship between experienced and imaginary spaces and do not aim to analyze them in the context of the time in which the poem was written.

My thesis thus seeks to contribute to the research by thematically studying T. S. Eliot’s construction of literary space in “The Waste Land”. I will analyze the poem based on the spatial theories of Edward William Soja and Yi-Fu Tuan, to provide a deeper understanding of the author’s construction of literary London in connection to experience, and as a literary setting for discussing contemporary issues.

In order to accomplish these aims, I will first give an overview of the previous research about “The Waste Land”. Next, I will discuss the characteristics of modernist space and the methods for studying modernist space via the spatial turn. In my empirical research, I will describe my methodology, analyze space use in T. S. Eliot’s “The Waste Land”, and lastly, discuss my findings.

CHAPTER ONE: ELIOT'S "WASTE LAND", SPACE, PLACE, AND LITERATURE

1.1. Previous Research About "The Waste Land"

Most of the previous academic research about T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" can roughly be divided into two categories, themes and form, for organizational purposes. Thematic research focuses primarily on the content and context of the poem. Research on the form of the poem investigates the text's structure and other formal features. However, these categories are intertwined in most previous research.

Thematic research about "The Waste Land" studies the aftermath of war, social isolation, and spirituality. This kind of research also concerns itself with the intertextuality of the work, identifying and analyzing the various references to other works of literature within the text. The atmosphere of loss, isolation, and disillusionment is discussed in almost all thematic research. Ross (1984: 134) claims that the general inability to make sense of the postwar world is reflected in "The Waste Land". Ross suggests that this is also evident from contrasting T. S. Eliot personal memories with the historical background. Rabaté (2015: 10) argues that "The Waste Land" is written as a means of processing the trauma caused by the Great War.

Perhaps this could also explain the many spiritual and religious themes in the text. The search for truth and understanding, both on a personal and a socio-cultural level, is central to "The Waste Land". Spurr (2012: 2, 6) suggests that Eliot uses the motive of the quest as a metaphor for the search for faith in a world in which old values and traditions have crumbled. "The Waste Land" indeed features a variety of religious texts, ranging from references to the Bible to Buddhism (LeCarner 2009). As concluded by Spurr (2015: 56-57), the various religious

references in "The Waste Land" and the possibility of a "redemptive outcome" make the poem distinctly religious.

The spiritual search is further established through Eliot's use of mythology in "The Waste Land". One of the two most prevalent legends is that of the Fisher King and the search for the Holy Grail. The wounded guardian character in the story is waiting for personal healing as well as the healing of his (waste)lands, similarly to the narrative of T. S. Eliot's poem (Frey 2022). The Holy Grail has also been thought to allude to women or perhaps even sexual failure, as evident from the research of Abdo (1984). However, it seems that the consensus leans toward the importance of pursuing hope in "The Waste Land" as a means of seeking closure from the ruins of the war.

The second most notable mythological reference in "The Waste Land" is to James Fraser's *The Golden Bough* (1890). According to Frey (2022), Eliot alludes to Fraser's work as a symbol of spiritual renewal. The modern, spiritually desolate society in "The Waste Land" is thought to need a transformation similar to the one of Aeneas, who by passing through a golden bough, entered the underworld and emerged spiritually transformed. This transformation, accompanied by the cycle of life and death in nature, alludes to rebirth (Sloan 2001).

The search for truth and belief throughout "The Waste Land" is additionally expressed in references to occultism. The knowledge and use of specific tarot cards in the poem, for example, has been studied extensively by Gibbons (1972) and Creekmore (1982). Not only does the topic of fortune-telling tie into the narrative search for a hidden truth but it also allows for the mystical elements to be connected to the mythological ones. For example, Ross (1984) suggests that the fortune told by Madame Sosostris in the poem is metaphorically extended to all humankind.

"The Waste Land" has been compared to other literary texts to trace the poem's intertextuality. A study of religious patterns in "The Waste Land" has been conducted through a comparison with Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (Tamplin 1967), a major inspiration for Eliot's poem. The influence of Virgil's *Aeneid* has been explored through a comparative analysis of mythology and symbolism (Donker 1974). Although intertextuality plays a role in spatial construction, it would be impractical and perhaps impossible to cover all references within this paper, especially since they have already been researched earlier (Williamson 1950, Tan n.d.).

The research regarding the form of the poem focuses on rhetoric, composition, metaphors, language use, spacing, and the fragmentation of the poem. I will not consider the composition process and rigorous editing of "The Waste Land" by Ezra Pound that have already been thoroughly studied (McLuhan 1979, Hollis 2022). I will, however, take into account the research about the final form of the poem.

The most prevalent rhetorical tool used in "The Waste Land" is fragmentation. Fragmentation is present even in the visual spacing of the poem. Spanos (1979: 226) argues that the spatialization in "The Waste Land" requires the reader to renew their attitude to language and thus perceive the work from a unique angle. For Spanos the fragmentation reflects modernist writers' sensibility of crisis and their pursuit of "absurd time" by juxtaposing events from the past and the present (Spanos 1979: 226). Korg (1960) compares the style and fragmented form of "The Waste Land" to contemporary artists (Cubists, Futurists, Surrealists, and Dadaists).

Fragmentation is also thought to reflect the broken and isolated British society at the time. The fragmented use of various texts, poems, and different religious allusions can thus, according to Rabaté (2015: 10), be attributed to the author's attempt to piece the world together again. The continuous search for answers within the spiritual context is also present in the poem's rhetoric. For example, Burton (2013) studied Buddhist rhyming techniques used in "The

"Waste Land" in the light of the characters' inability to connect. The use of the Sanskrit word "shanith" has been studied by Chandran (1989) who concluded that the repetition of the mantra as the ending lines of "The Waste Land" provides, on the one hand, a message of hope and, on the other, ironizes the use of a hopeful message in a time of utter hopelessness.

Studies of theme and form intertwine in the analysis of metaphors. Various war-related metaphors have been studied. For instance, Ross (1984) sees the title of the poem as a metaphor in itself. Ross interprets Europe as the "waste land" in the aftermath of the First World War when the poem was written. Gilbert (1999) notes the weight of the metaphor of the "rats' alley" as a reference to the trenches of the war. Eliot uses these metaphors to comment on the ruins and loss brought on by the horrors of the First World War.

As can be seen from above, there is already extensive research on different aspects of "The Waste Land". While some of the studies touch on the spaces of the poem, this has not been the main focus of the research of the scholars cited above. This requires closer inspection of modernist space.

1.2. Modernist Space

Literary modernism emerged towards the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Developments in science and technology, the process of urbanization and industrialization, and the general disillusionment of the time called for new means of literary expression. Modernists began experimenting with new forms and rhetoric. Thematically, modernist literature is often viewed as a painful and critical reaction to the process of modernization and the tragic events of the First World War, as for many people the world they knew changed beyond recognition. Modernist literature is thus also often said to center around

crisis, on the personal or societal level, or perhaps even on the level of language that could not keep up with the rapid developments of the time. Consequently, prominent themes of modernist literature include loss, death, alienation, and inability to communicate, as well as the ambiguous treatment of time (Lewis 2007). While more affirmative elements also appear in modernist texts, traditional academic treatments of high modernism have tended to focus on the pessimism.

Modernist literature also required a different setting. Although ‘the country’ did not disappear from literature (e.g., Woolf’s *To The Lighthouse*, works of D. H. Lawrence and Jean Rhys), during the modernist period the city became the central setting as the defining symbol for political and economic developments of the period. The modernist city setting is at times depicted as an incomprehensible machine in which humans do not matter, for example in Franz Kafka’s *The Process* (1925). The city came to be perceived as indifferent to humans, and almost incomprehensible. The space is thus often portrayed in fragments, various settings are used interchangeably, and described through the senses, symbols, and metaphors (Lewis 2007). For instance, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, the chime of the Big Ben is a symbol of the inescapable passing of time (Falcetta 2007: 129). The novel’s stream-of-consciousness style allows the author to explore modernist space through the inner thoughts and remarks of characters.

The loss of millions of people in the First World War accounts for various descriptions of the modernist space as empty, dystopian, or ruined. The trauma and the city’s perceived physical emptiness changed the atmosphere of familiar settings, in Eliot’s case London, and made the city seem “unreal” (Eliot 1922), or deserted like in “The Hollow Men” (1925). Metropolises as dystopian landscapes have thus become a common trope of the modernist space. Through exploring new ways of expression, the authors attempted to understand the modernist space as they lived in it. This understanding of space, however, can be enhanced by incorporating ideas from the so-called spatial turn.

1.3. Spatial Turn in Literature

Space is inseparable from literature, as all works require some sort of setting (Tally Jr. 2017). The term “spatial turn” in literary studies refers to a shift in the humanities toward analyzing the role of space and setting in shaping literary texts and their interpretations. The movement became prevalent in literary studies in the second half of the 20th century. One of the earliest and most foundational works in the field is *The Production of Space* by Henri Lefebvre (1974), detailing how through social interaction humans also create social space. This theory opened the discussion of space as something more than merely physical.

The term “spatial turn” was first retrospectively proposed by Edward William Soja in the 1990s (Winkler et al 2012). Through analyzing how various authors conceptualize space and portray settings in their texts, scholars can observe the intricate relationship between physical environments and how they are molded to create literary meaning (Guldi 2011a, 2011b). Yi-Fu Tuan's early concept of “topophilia” (Tuan 1974), which studies the bond between people and place, challenged the traditional ways of thinking about space in literature. Tuan's *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977) is foundational to the works of many following scholars exploring how the use of setting contributes to the reader's “sense of place” in literature (Acharya 2022: 20, Gabbert et al 2007). He connects the concept of space to individual experience and feelings (Shin 1998, Withers 2009: 640). According to Tuan (2007) “The *ideas* ‘space’ and ‘place’ require each other for definition. What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (Tuan 2007: 6, emphasis mine). Tuan thus ties the concept of space and place to experience, knowledge, and feelings. This enables the author to create a world of their own from familiar settings and to evoke emotional experiences in readers. According to Tuan, intricate human experiences regarding

space can be both recorded and explored in literature (Tuan 2007: 6-7, 178). Tuan suggests that while the concept of place provides security and allows one to take a pause, it is space over which the mind has the freedom to roam (Tuan 2007: 53). This will be one of the key aspects to which I will return to in the empirical analysis. By studying how the author, narrator, or characters interact with and are shaped by their spatial experiences, scholars are able to analyze their subjectivity of experience and social interactions within literary texts. Tuan's theory thus provides scholars with the conceptual framework to analyze the relationship between space, place, and the creation of literary settings.

Edward Soja (1996: 1) urges academics and casual readers alike to expand their understanding of space as an integral part of human existence. Similarly to Tuan's approach, Soja's concept of space transcends ideas of space as merely physical or abstract and interprets space as a combination of material and subjective dimensions. The theory of *Thirdspace* presents the combination of real, imagined, and symbolic spaces, and emphasizes the interplay between these environments and their socio-cultural meanings. Soja emphasizes the importance of the three layers of space to grasp the intricacies of contemporary life and to create "critical spatial awareness" (Soja 1996: 10). Soja's work builds on Lefebvre's space theory of the "perceived-conceived-lived triad" (Lefebvre 1974, cited in Soja 1996: 10). Developing Lefebvre's work, Soja adapts his theory for the analysis of narrative.

According to Soja (1996: 10) space is categorized into real, imagined, and lived spaces. Real spaces are labeled as 'Firstspace', and refer to material and physical locations and environments, "things that can be empirically mapped" (Soja 1996: 10), measured, and directly observed. 'Secondspace', or the imagined space, is, in essence, the conceptual space based on the physical environment. Secondspace covers the subjective and cultural perceptions of spaces as they are experienced by people in everyday life via interactions, routines, and social practices

within a given space. ‘Thirdspace’, the lived space, combines the real and imagined space, in an “attempt to capture what is actually a constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances, and meanings” (Soja 1996: 2). Thirdspace incorporates the subjective experiences, perceptions, and memories of Secondspace with the objectively real physical space of Firstspace. This merging of real, perceived, and symbolic aspects of spaces creates a complex and layered theory for analyzing space and its effect on narrative.

In literary studies, Soja’s theory can be applied to explore how authors construct and manipulate spaces in their works. Since fictional spaces are not confined to one concept of space, Thirdspace allows authors to create allegorical, symbolic, or metaphoric realities in which various contemporary social, cultural, political, and even personal dynamics and issues can be discussed. These author-constructed spaces, or literary settings, often also affect the development of the characters and the storyline, and perhaps most importantly the narrative (Soja 1996). This is especially relevant to the observation of dystopian landscapes in modernist literature. By examining how authors use Thirdspace to explore and critique real-world problems, academics may gain further insight into the intricacies of contemporary society and its psyche.

CHAPTER TWO: ANALYSIS OF SPACE IN “THE WASTE LAND”

2.1. Methodology

To prepare for my study, I first identified spaces mentioned in the text. These spaces range from physical locations, such as street names and landmarks in London, to metaphorical descriptions of landscapes of the urban setting. Secondly, I applied Soja’s theory of *Thirdspace* (1996) to explore how Eliot blends real and imaginary spaces in “The Waste Land.” I analyzed

the author's use of symbolism, mythological allusions, and historical references related to space descriptions to study the layers of meaning within the spatial landscape of the poem. Thirdly, with the support of Tuan's theory of *Space and Place* (2007) as experience, I studied the emotional reactions to various spaces in the poem and observed the characters' and narrator's interactions with space. I analyzed how the author describes various settings in "The Waste Land" through the sensory experiences, memories, and psychological states they evoke, and how these descriptions create a literary "waste land".

2.2. Physical Locations – Streets and Landmarks

Physical locations, or Firstspaces, in "The Waste Land" are easily identifiable by street and place names, and such research has already been done by Bowers et al (n.d.). References to specific street names (such as Queen Victoria, King William, Lower Thames, and Lombard Street), as well as locations (such as the Metropole and the Ionian Hotel, the Tower of London, and London Bridge) easily identify the main setting of the poem to be London. Bowers et al (n.d.) found that the majority of physical locations are concentrated around industrial areas at the East End of London with various references to what are today called the London Financial District and London Docks. According to Morrison (2015: 25), Eliot creates a specific sense of place by mimicking his own journey to his workplace at Lloyds bank, as even the tube stop closest to it (Moorgate) is mentioned in the poem. The author alludes to the functions of locations around the time of composing the poem. For instance, in the third section of the poem, "The Fire Sermon", Eliot refers to The Cannon Street Hotel and The Metropolis Hotel. The first was used for various conferences and for moving war supplies (Jackson 1969: 177-178), the second was "requisitioned as accommodation for Ministry of Defense staff working on the war

effort” (“I Spy: Secrets of the Hotel: Discover London” n.d. para. 5) The transactional conversation between the narrator and Mr. Eugenides (lines 209-214) reflects an experience of impersonality within the space. This is why some locations in the poem, constructed by experience, can also be called Secondspace.

The mentioned areas outside of the city, such as Greenwich and the Isle of Dogs, are respectively tied to manufacturing and shipping. From this data, Bowers et al concluded that the author views London as an industrial city, which is in accordance with “the theme of desolation and emptiness” as “these areas can be liberally viewed as the center of the hollowness of modern life” and subsequently also its undoing (Bowers et al n.d.: para 1).

2.3. Literary Space and Place

From the map provided by the research of the “Mapping Literary London” group, it is evident that the locations mentioned in “The Waste Land” follow the geographical flow of the River Thames (Mapping Literary London n.d.). Thematically, the poem also employs the motif of flowing water throughout and even focuses on the Thames in its progression. The first section of the poem, “The Fire Sermon”, opens with thirst: “April is the cruellest month, breeding / Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing / Memory and desire, stirring / Dull roots with spring rain” (lines 1-4). The motif of land lacking replenishing water continues throughout the poem via references to clutching roots, dead nature, and dry landscape, contrasted to images of rain, the sea, and dripping water. Lehan (1999: 134) suggests that the author uses the lack of water as a metaphor for disconnection from the rhythms of the land and loss of spiritual meaning, which is most prominent in the second and third stanzas of “What the Thunder Said”. These motifs

and symbolism transform The Thames from a Firstspace to a literary Thirdspace, in which Eliot comments on the modernist inability to connect.

As water often symbolizes spiritual cleansing, the image of the polluted Thames running through the heart of the city and the space of the poem sends a powerful message. In “The Fire Sermon” River Thames is described as one that “sweats / Oil and tar” (lines 266-277) under the constant “brown fog” (lines 61, 208) of the city. Describing water, a force that is to be used for spiritual renewal, as tainted by oil and gas from industry refers to the spiritual and urban desolation of the modern period (Morrison 1995: 35-37).

Anxieties about the moral and cultural loss of faith can be read out of the references to local churches in the poem. The Saint Mary Woolnoth Church that “*kept* the hours” (line 67, emphasis mine) in the poem, had to be temporarily closed around the time of Eliot writing this poem due to its crypt being overcrowded with bodies after the First World War (“St Mary Woolnoth – The Church with the Underground in the Crypt” 2020), and the Magnus Martyr Church (mentioned in line 264) was among the 19 churches threatened with demolition at the time (London City Council 1920). The closing of local churches in Firstspace affects a religious person’s view of the spiritual state of the world on the Second- and Thirdspace levels. The keeping of the hours is also tied to the changing idea of time, as the church bells no longer call worshippers to religious services, but mark the time when workers are expected to be at work. Religious time has been transformed to a more pragmatic time in modern society.

The Thames also plays an important role in the progression of the poem’s narrative through the image of fishing (Morrison 1995: 35-37). “The Fire Sermon” introduces the first instance of the narrator fishing at “the dull canal” (line 198). The scene features a collection of disturbing images of bones, bodies, and rats around the Thames. The background to this setting is created by the sensory experience of sound: “But at my back from time to time I hear / The

sound of horns and motors” (lines 196-197). This creates an eerie and depressing setting of a “waste land” where the modern metropolis lives on while the people in it do not.

The second instance of fishing is found almost at the end of the poem, in “What the Thunder Said”. This time the narrator sits on the bank of the Thames, “with the arid plain behind me” (lines 423-424), suggesting the self-destruction of the Second- and Thirdspace city has perhaps already taken place. This combined with the reference to the tale of the Fisher King (as discussed previously in subchapter 1.1.) leaves the possibility of healing open. The following question “Shall I at least set my lands in order?” (line 425) can thus be read both as an ironic comment on the state of the cityspace or as a sign of hope.

2.3.1. “I. The Burial of the Dead” – the Space of Memory vs Reality

In the first section of the poem, “The Burial of the Dead”, we are introduced to a narrator named Marie. She recounts a childhood memory of a sled ride in the mountains with her cousin: “And when we were children, staying at the arch-duke’s, / My cousin’s, he took me out on a sled, / And I was frightened. He said, Marie, / Marie, hold on tight. And down we went” (lines 13-16). Although she describes being frightened at first, she is comforted by her cousin. This scene thus mixes the feeling of fear and comfort in the Secondspace, and it seems that Marie regards that memory with a sense of nostalgia in her adult years. The memory evokes a sense of past space that is now distant and inaccessible. The space she experienced as a child has been transformed into a Thirdspace. The following line, “In the mountains, there you feel free” (line 17) describes a longing for physical freedom and perhaps also freedom of mind. The vastness of the described landscape in her memory contrasts with the contemporary desolate space after the events of the First World War. Although we are not dealing with climate change in this

poem, this emotion can be likened to solastalgia, distress about changing world (Albrecht et al 2007). The narrator's next statement, "I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter" (line 18) reinforces a desire for escape.

The space of the surrounding reality is portrayed as barren in the next scenes of the poem. The space is described as "stony rubbish" (line 20), "where the sun beats, / And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief, / And the dry stone no sound of water." (lines 22-24). The lack of shelter and no sign of relief create a hellish Thirdspace, which one is unable to make sense of: "You cannot say, or guess, for you know only / A heap of broken images" (lines 21-22). The narrator of this section uses these descriptions of space to comment on the contemporary state of the world and human existence. The last few lines of this verse, "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;" (lines 27-29) create a spatial experience similar to human life running its course. The very last line of the stanza "I will show you fear in a handful of dust" (line 30) alludes to the fear of death and the insignificance of life in the contemporary world in general.

Marie's memories once more resurface after stanzas describing the contemporary desolate world. The theme of longing and nostalgia continues in the hyacinth garden section (lines 35-42), where she reminisces about being called the hyacinth girl as a child, possibly alluding to a now lost sense of liveliness. Although the memory is somewhat romanticized, similarly to the last one, it also offers insight into the inability to connect. The narrator's inability to speak and the way her "eyes failed" (line 37-39) suggests a feeling of disconnection from the surrounding space. The following lines "I was neither / living or dead, and I knew nothing, / Looking into the heart of light, the silence." (lines 39-41) intensify that feeling, and therefore Marie's account of yet another childhood memory transcends the limits of the lived

Secondspace. Her memory of the hyacinth garden becomes a Thirdspace as a combination of nostalgic memory, experience, and some sort of existential or spiritual revelation. The scene also functions as a literary tool to juxtapose the horrors of contemporary space with a more romantic past memory, which amplifies the emotions tied to both of these described spaces.

Despite the feeling of hollowness and the inability to grasp the contemporary world, the narrator nonetheless seeks to gain some sort of understanding. The next section of the poem reveals the workspace of a medium, Madame Sosostriis. "I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring" (line 56) may be a reference to crowds of people stuck in a vicious circle. The closing lines, "One must be so careful these days," (line 59) convey a sense of anxiety in an uncertain world, where people have to make their way through a confusing reality and unfamiliar space that offers no consolation.

The inability to comprehend contemporary space is also reflected in the author's recurrent choice of words regarding the physical location, or Firstspace, of the poem. The setting, London, is repeatedly referred to as "Unreal city" (first instance in line 60), which conveys the disillusionment of the modernist period. In contrast, Eliot's spatial awareness in the Firstspace is evident from the accurate descriptions of London streets and locations in the last stanza of "I. The Burial of the Dead". Interestingly, the narrator describes the public street scene commemorating war dead as a Secondspace experience. The narrator observes the zombie-like crowd "flowing over London Bridge" (line 62) and introspectively comments on the circumstances. The lines "so many, / I had not thought death had undone so many." (lines 62-63) reflect a state of shock and paralyzing dread. Descriptions of sounds and behavior, "Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled, / And each man fixed his eyes before his feet. / Flowed up the hill and down King William Street," (lines 64-66) shape the experience of once familiar space as traumatic and detached.

The interaction between the unnamed narrator and a character named Stetson (lines 69-76) thus offers even more insight into the poem. By directly addressing the acquaintance, the narrator momentarily breaks the alienation and anonymity of the scene. The narrator attempts to connect to Stetson, longing for personal human interaction, but receives no answer. Stetson may not even exist in this space, which could be read as a commentary on the destruction caused by the war. The reference to the ancient Roman naval battle Mylae (line 70) as a substitute for the First World War creates a Thirdspace level that implies a shared experience in battle.

Additionally, the one-sided conversation reveals a disturbing instance of a corpse being planted in Stetson's yard. The space that the author has created in that monologue seems to treat the garden as a meeting place for life and death, meanwhile ironizing its morbidity: "That corpse you planted last year in your garden, / "Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?" (lines 71-72). The next line "Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?" offers an interesting contrast of the cold being ruinous, as opposed to the beginning of the poem, where "Winter kept us warm, covering / Earth in forgetful snow" (lines 5-6). The anxiety around the dog digging up the corpse could hint at a deeper worry regarding disturbing the dead or the narrator's desensitized view of death that has become omnipresent.

The concluding lines of the section "You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!" (line 76) roughly means "You, hypocrite reader!—my likeness,—my brother!" in French (Rainey 2006: 85-86). Here the author breaks the fourth wall by provoking the reader directly. The Thirdspace experience conveyed in the poem is extended as an invitation to observe ourselves in the interaction between the people occupying the space and reflect on its implications.

2.3.2. “II. A Game of Chess – Emotional Detachment from Space

The second section of the poem, “A Game of Chess”, relies heavily on the senses to build a literary Thirdspace. It opens with a description of a lavishly decorated space of a wealthy upper-class woman, created through vivid descriptions of decorations and scenery, mostly via utilizing the senses of sight and smell. Her place has marble floors and coffered ceilings, with various exquisite decorations such as “golden Cupidon” figures (line 80), an antique mantel (line 97), colored glass (line 86), and the “sevenbranched candelabra” (line 82). The extravagant space mirrors her social prestige, as “the chair she sat in” is likened to a “burnished throne” (line 77). In this way, the author establishes her position in society via the excessive luxuries of her place, while also commenting on the shallowness of such wealth and pointless consumerism.

The woman’s place is described as filled with the glitter of her jewels (line 84), the glow of candlelight, and “strange synthetic perfumes” (line 87). This abundance of sensory aspects, as well as the use of the words “strange” and “synthetic”, creates a feeling of excess and artificiality within the space. The overwhelming mixture of different smells, described as “Unguent, powdered, or liquid—troubled, confused” (line 88), creates a sense of emotional confusion and disconnection between the woman and her space. The space thus begins to reflect both sides of her inner world, that of wealth and shallowness. The imagery of the woman’s “drowned sense in odours” (line 89) and the “savage stillness” (line 110) of her hair further suggest a lack of vitality, but also function as a description of inner turmoil in the process of self-soothing by brushing her hair (lines 108-110). This sort of underlying decay amidst the portrayal of a luxurious space juxtaposes natural beauty and liveliness with artificiality and anxiety. Therefore, Eliot is able to use the machine-produced goods in the woman’s space as a commentary on the industrialization of art and consumerism (Chinitz and Daniel 2015: 78-79).

The last few lines that make up the literary Thirdspace of the wealthy woman offer insight into the emotional world of the character. The reference to Philomela (lines 99-103) combined with “Footsteps shuffled on the stair” (line 107) foreshadows the anticipation of a non-consensual or unwanted affair. The space being surrounded by “staring forms / Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed” (lines 106) suggests a sense of anxiety and the uncomfortable feeling of being watched. What follows next is a broken conversation between the woman and her partner (lines 111-138) in which they are unable to connect to each other or the space around them. The various sounds, such as “the wind under the door” (line 118) create a sense of anxiety and unease between the individuals and their space, as well as each other.

The man’s inability to speak or be present in the moment (lines 111-16) is presumably due to war trauma, as he cannot help but revisit memories of bodies on the battlefield. The traumatic experience of the character has caused him to be stuck in the traumatic Thirdspace of a “rats’ alley” (line 115), which disturbs his ability to connect to the current space around him. This section thus constructs a literary Thirdspace to comment on the inability to connect to other individuals, as well as the disconnection of the self from a once familiar space. In Tuan’s terms, the place that is familiar and fosters emotional connections has now become an insignificant and unfamiliar space.

The literary Thirdspace flows from one setting to the other, and we are now observing a scene between two female friends at a bar. Their conversation touches on topics of abortion, raising children, and the forced obligation for women to keep up appearances (lines 139-172). The space in which the two friends converse is entirely created by their own conversation. As is the case with public spaces, their established Thirdspace is often interrupted by outside factors, such as the last call “HURRY UP PLEASE IT’S TIME” (lines 141, 152, 165, 168-9).

This wording, however, leaves room for interpretation, as it could also be read as a commentary on the general anxiety present in the London Secondspace at the time.

2.3.3. “III. The Fire Sermon” – Disconnection Between Space and the Self

The third section of “The Waste Land”, “The Fire Sermon”, opens again with the image of water. The unnamed narrator observes the broken tent of the River Thames, suggesting a broken connection to a once familiar and lively space. The following lines “the last fingers of leaf / Clutch and sink into the wet bank” (lines 173-174) create a feeling of decay, setting the scene for a disturbing experience. The portrayal of this space in the poem refers to waste, “The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers, / Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends / Or other testimony of summer nights” (lines 177-179). The excessive materialism of modern society portrayed as litter is foreshadowing something even more disturbing. The semi-imaginary Thirdspace is likely created by describing the experience of the space on the Secondspace level and combining it with images and allusions to transform it into a literary Thirdspace.

The description of wind that “Crosses the brown land, unheard” (lines 174-175) suggests the absence of life in a once vibrant space. The phrase “The nymphs are departed” (lines 175, 179) underscores the loss of spiritual connection to the environment. There is nothing alluring about postwar London. “And their friends, the loitering heirs of city directors; / Departed, have left no addresses.” (lines 180-181) is further proof of the fact that people are looking for an escape, with no intention to return. Mournfully addressing the River Thames directly (lines 176, 183-184) acts as a literary tool to seek comfort from a once familiar space in the midst of chaos.

The next stanza of the section focuses on the disturbing scene of what now replaces the litter on the bank of the Thames. The narrator noting “A rat crept softly through the vegetation / Dragging its slimy belly on the bank” (lines 187-188) creates quite a disgusting scene filled with death and decay. The use of vivid descriptions and imagery in the lines “White bodies naked on the low damp ground / And bones cast in a little low dry garret, / Rattled by the rat’s foot only, year to year” (lines 193-195) create a disturbing Thirdspace within the poem. The space composed with imagery of death and rot evokes emotions of despair and disgust. The city sounds in the background of this scene, however, can be directly attributed to the construction of space via the senses (as mentioned in subchapter 2.3.), relying on experiences on the Secondspace level. The city sounds also juxtapose the narrator’s introspective contemplation of previous historical and societal collapse (through different intertextual references). Through these implied literary Thirdspaces, the author is able to create vastly multi-dimensional scenes and meanings from one location.

The following scene of the typist’s apartment offers perhaps the most direct discussion of imbalanced power dynamics within a relationship through space in “The Waste Land”. The scene begins in the evening with people heading home from work (lines 220-221). The specific wording of “violet hour” could allude by sound to the word “violent”, which foreshadows the sexual violence of the scene (Badenhausen 2015: 148, Scully 2018: 176). The imagery of “the human engine waits / Like a taxi throbbing” (lines 216-217) implies the sense of restless energy and pent-up desire that pervades the scene. In Tuan’s terms, this use of language thus constructs a place via emotions. The descriptions of intimate scenes in the typist’s home also offer insight into the role of space portrayed in this section. The lines “The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, lights / Her stove, and lays out food in tins” (lines 222-223) create an intimate and familiar domestic scene. The portrayal of her flat, as well as the character being referred to by

her occupation rather than her name, portrays the Secondspace experience of the modern working woman reduced to a cog in the machine. This semi-liberation also meant small salaries, hence the tinned food, and cramped apartments with a sofa that also functions as her bed (in line 226). The lines “Out of the window perilously spread / Her drying combinations touched by the sun’s last rays,” (lines 224-225) further illustrate the limited financial opportunities, while also symbolizing her upcoming sexual exploitation, as her private business is now made public. (Chinitz and Daniel 2015: 75) The personal details, such as her “Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays” (line 227) combined with the language used to construct the space create a feeling of vulnerability in her space.

As expected, the young man arrives very self-assured (lines 232-234). His advances are met with a sense of resignation (lines 235-242), which highlights the imbalanced power dynamic between the two. This juxtaposition of aggression and indifference also reflects the theme of alienation, disconnection, and sexual violence in modern relationships. The man’s entitlement to her body thus seems to be reflected in his entitlement to her personal space. The last lines of the scene (247-248) where the man “Bestows one final patronising kiss, / And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit . . .” seem to blend the body of the typist with her apartment. The woman’s physical existence thus becomes tied to her experience of First-, Second-, and Thirdspace.

In the following stanza describing the aftermath of the scene (lines 249-256), the typist is occupied with self-soothing. According to Suárez (2001: 748-49), this is reflected by the mechanic nature of the woman’s routine. The pacing, smoothing of her hair in the mirror, and putting a record on the gramophone (lines 254-256) help her regain her comfort in and through her personal space. The author’s use of recorded music in this scene could also signify the loss of personal connection between the typist and her space (Chinitz and Daniel 2015: 73).

In the transition to the next stanza, Eliot uses music from the gramophone to move to the next space. The perspective shifts from the typist's home to that of an unnamed narrator on the streets of London (line 257). "The Fire Sermon" section continues with descriptions of a Secondspace (lines 257-265), such as the ambient chatter of people and music "Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street" (line 260). As before, by describing the city atmosphere, the narrator addresses London directly – "O City city, I can sometimes hear" (line 259). The personification creates a sense of the city as a living machine, which contains various levels of space from the intimate home to public places and streets (discussed previously in subchapters 2.2. and 2.3.).

The disconnection from the surrounding space is evident in the following stanzas, which display a sense of shock or apathy. The narrator's disoriented drifting from one location to another creates a sense of displacement. The references to locations named Elizabeth and Leicester cleverly hint at the recurring theme of love gone awry throughout the poem (Rainey 2006: 73, 111). Linking the names of people with Firstspace locations draws a parallel between their desolation. The lines "Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew / Undid me. By Richmond I raised my knees Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe" (lines 293-295) transform the theme from an event in the Secondspace to a Thirdspace scene enriched with literary imagination. The descriptions of the splendor of the Magnus Martyr Church's interior of "Ionian white and gold" (lines 263-265) juxtaposes the polluted River Thames described in the previous lines.

The lines of the next stanza "My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart / Under my feet" (lines 296-297) create a multilayered Thirdspace, in which the world is made up of both her experience in the Secondspace canoe ride, as well as the character's internal emotional reflections on the Thirdspace level. The lines "On Margate Sands. I can connect Nothing with nothing" (lines 300-302) suggest a sense of emotional vacancy. The lines "My people humble

people who expect / Nothing” create the wordplay of “nothing” standing alone on the last line may also stand for the emotional state of the narrator, as the disconnection from the surrounding space and people seems to be driven by the disconnection from oneself.

2.3.4. “IV. Death by Water” – Cyclical Rebirth Through Thirdspace

The fourth section of the poem, “Death by Water”, is both the shortest and most formally organized scene. It describes a merchant called Phlebas the Phoenician, who has died by drowning and is now in the hands of the sea (lines 315-318). The setting is once again tied to the image of water and serves as a callback to the prediction by Madame Sosostris to “fear death by water” (line 55). The image of water now becomes the literary Thirdspace, functioning as a setting for the scene. This use of aquatic Thirdspace combined with addressing the ones still living (lines 320-321) prompts them to consider their own morality and regeneration through the story of Phlebas, whose bones cyclically return to nature after death.

2.3.5. “V. What the Thunder Said” – the Self as Space, Possible Redemption

The fifth and final section of the poem, “What the Thunder Said”, opens with a summary of spatial experiences throughout the poem. “After the torchlight red on sweaty faces / After the frosty silence in the gardens / After the agony in stony places / The shouting and the crying” (lines 322-325) we are met with “reverberation / Of thunder of spring over distant mountains” (lines 326-327). The imagery of thunder foreshadows rain, and thus the imagery of rejuvenating water is present in the space description of “waste lands” yet again. Although the landscape is expected to begin healing through water, a pessimistic tone prevails: “He who was living is now dead / We who were living are now dying” (lines 328-329).

This tone continues in the next stanza, describing a desolate space with “no water but only rock” (line 331). The imagery of dry rocks, sand, and mountains, creates an unforgiving and harsh space. This barrenness may also illustrate the sense of suffering and desperation. The hostility of the surrounding space is portrayed by “red sullen faces sneer and snarl / From doors of mudcracked houses” (lines 344-345), focusing on the effects of the landscape on its people.

In the next stanza, the narrator imagines an alternative space where water does exist. By envisioning this other reality, another wishful layer of Thirdspace is created via the senses by observing the sounds of nature (“the sound of water over a rock” (line 356)). By creating an imaginary Thirdspace centered around nature, “Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees / Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop” (lines 357-358), to contrast the harsh realities of the lived Secodspace experience of the city, the author highlights the human desire for connection to its surrounding space. Continuing with a contemplation of “Who is the third who walks always beside you?” (line 360) on “the white road” (line 362) reflects a sort of journey through an imagined Thirdspace which can be interpreted as the course of life.

The following stanza describes a desolate landscape characterized by a “Murmur of maternal lamentation” (line 368). The “hooded hordes swarming / Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth” (lines 369-370) add to this vast and empty image of Thirdspace by relying on the sense of unease and dislocation on the Secodspace level. The reference to “cracked earth” once again conveys the need for water for the lands (and consequently its people) to heal. Describing a “flat horizon” (line 371) creates a sense of indifference, which is juxtaposed with an image of “the city over the mountains” that “Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air” (lines 372-373). This could act as an imaginary Thirdspace version of reality, which offers comfort yet is unreachable. Even the idea of a perfect city is fleeting. References to cities such as Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria”, and to the fallen Austro-Hungarian Empire

(lines 375-376), add a historical and cultural dimension to the construction of the Thirdspace in the poem. Comparing London to these crumbled First- and Secondspaces symbolizes its downfall on the levels of both real-life experience and literary allusion. The deterioration of London is also evident in the reference to “Falling towers” (line 374), and the repetition of the phrase “Unreal (city)” reminds us of the emotional experience of a negatively changing landscape (line 377).

Lines 378-381 create a strange and disorienting Thirdspace. The spatial description “And crawled head downward down a blackened wall / And upside down in air were towers” (lines 382-383), gives the imagery of upside down towers in the Thirdspace to symbolize the feeling of the world being turned on its head in Secondspace. The once-familiar cityscape is distorted. The stability and security of the Secondspace city are flipped in the literary Thirdspace as a sign of chaos and confusion, as can be seen from the nostalgic reference to a once familiar church in the First-/Secondspace – “Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours” (line 384). This remembrance of past space and its memories is continued in the last line of the stanza, “And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells” (line 385), bringing the echoes of the past into the present and the future space.

This physical and emotional detachment is also reflected in the following stanza. The section continues with a description of an empty chapel that is “only the wind’s home” (line 389), symbolizing spiritual emptiness. The disregard for faith is also reflected in the chapel’s physical setting, located in “this decayed hole among the mountains” (line 386). The familiarity suggested by the use of the word “this” assumes an acquaintance with the described space, which has been introduced throughout the poem via Thirdspace descriptions of real Firstspace locations and landmarks. In the lines “a flash of lightning. / Then a damp gust / Bringing rain” (lines 394-395) one can finally assume redemption within the portrayed Thirdspace.

The reference to the sacred Indian Ganges River being parched (line 396) creates a tension within the space while also commenting on the desolation of spiritual landmarks. The thirsty landscape and the “distant black clouds” (lines 397-398) suggest that relief is close but intensified by the wait. The foreboding by describing thunder that breaks the silence evokes a sense of awe and conveys emotional intensity. Therefore, the author builds this Thirdspace mainly through anticipation and heightened emotions. Furthermore, the narrator seems to imply that true existence cannot be found “under seals broken by the lean solicitor / In our empty rooms” (lines 409-410), which may symbolize a lack of meaning in earthly existence. It seems that the tumultuous early 20th-century experience cannot be expressed fully on the Secondspace level, where social norms dictate how that space is perceived. The tool of an imaginative literary Thirdspace is thus used to make sense of the surrounding Secondspace and experience.

The following stanza, centering the image of lock and key, has seen much debate about its intertext (Versluys 1990), yet there is more to be read from its spatial meaning. The narrator introduces the imagery of a key turning in the door (lines 412-413), implying a moment of potential freedom, but leaving the narrator trapped. As “We think of the key, each in his prison / Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison” (lines 414-415), the key is metaphorically trapped within its intended (Third)space, the lock, and so the narrator is also imprisoned in their respective (Second)space. This idea could therefore extend to the general society of the 20th century, as the longing for freedom inherently reinforces one's sense of imprisonment within modern space. The last two lines of the scene refer to a sort of momentary transient freedom, as “Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours / Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus” (lines 416-417). The reference to the brief revival of Coriolanus’ spirit (one that is heroic yet corrupted by pride) at night may symbolize a temporary relief in Thirdspace from the restrictions of the self in Secondspace.

In the next passage, the narrator creates a Thirdspace setting, in which a relationship between the calm sea and the beating heart is portrayed as an image of a boat in the hands of an expert sailor (lines 419-423). The harmony between nature and the individual, as well as between control (“controlling hands” in line 423) and freedom (the sea as space in Tuan’s terms), reflects the idea that a balance between the vast inner self and self-control or discipline makes for a more fulfilling and joyful experience of life in the Secondspace.

The very last passage of “The Waste Land” opens with the narrator fishing (as discussed in subchapter 2.3.) and offers a sort of closing introspection. Although the poem displays a sense of purposelessness, the question of “Shall I at least set my lands in order?” (line 426) conveys a moment of ambition. Agency may be the cure for the disaster and fragmentation pictured throughout the poem. This, coupled with the foreboding image of healing rain, forms the idea that despite modernist literature being perceived as inherently pessimistic, there is still room for a silver lining.

Characteristically to Eliot’s poem, though, we are again met with descriptions of destruction in the following lines – “London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down” (line 427). The use of this specific nursery rhyme encapsulates the horrors of the “Unreal city” that we have witnessed throughout the poem, such as the general theme of collapse of a once familiar cityspace. The famous quote from the end of the poem, “These fragments I have shored against my ruins” (line 431), has many interpretations. The line may be read as likening “the ruins” of the space to oneself, by transforming the self into *the (Third)space*, or landscape. This suggests an inherent attachment between space and its occupants, which accounts for both the chaos of the surrounding First-, Second-, and Thirdspace, as well as the confusion in one’s inner world.

The fate of the space portrayed in the poem is linked to the fate of people, and vice versa. This confirms Soja's and Tuan's theories of experience being linked with the perception and literary portrayal of space, and in turn proves that the literary Thirdspaces in "The Waste Land" were likely constructed through a combination of experiences in the Secondspace, as well as a collection of various references and allusions, to interpret that experience through Thirdspace.

CONCLUSION

Applying spatial theory to analyze T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" (1922) provides insights into the construction and interpretation of the poem's landscape and themes. By engaging with theories of spatial experience provided by Edward William Soja and Yi-Fu Tuan, this thesis has uncovered how Eliot's use of literary space is tied to experience and helps to discuss the modernist condition. Although intertextuality serves a purpose in space construction, its significance was not the focus of this thesis. Instead, the thesis studies Eliot creatively uses various spatial representation techniques (e.g., spatial experience, location references, and imagery) to convey the disorientation and fragmentation of the modernist space portrayed in the poem.

Academic research of modernist space has shown that high modernist writers, such as T. S. Eliot, struggle with the changing spatial dimensions of the early 20th century, when society was facing fast urbanization, various technological and scientific advancements, and social changes. These themes drove (high) modernist writers to focus on the city as a setting. The spatial turn in literature refers to a shift toward studying how space influences literary texts and their interpretations. The two foundational theories that shaped the thesis are Tuan's *Space and Place* (1974) and Soja's *Thirdspace* (1996). Tuan's theory of space and place in connection to

individual experience and emotions provides a foundation for understanding how T. S. Eliot creates vivid literary spaces by relying on experience, emotions, and senses. Tuan's insights into the concept of place (a space with intimate emotional connection) and space (an abstract concept of freedom) resonate with Eliot's descriptions of the destruction and emotional corruption of a familiar cityscape, as well as his portrayal of space (memories, literary space) as a source for thematic literary exploration. Soja's theory further specifies the types of spaces used in the construction of the poem – Firstspace (physical location), Secondspace (the experience of Firstspace), and Thirdspace (experienced and imagined, or literary space). My thesis showed the connections between the three layers of space in "The Waste Land".

In "The Burial of the Dead" Eliot juxtaposes spaces of memory with reality, highlighting the fleeting nature of existence and the difficulty of human connection, a central theme of previous research. Memories of past spaces evoke a more positive emotion than contemporary modern space. The spatial study of "A Game of Chess" shows an emotional disconnection from space, as it is constructed primarily through feelings and the senses. "The Fire Sermon" vividly conveys physical and moral desolation across public and private spaces, by creating a literary Thirdspace from detached experiences in the Secondspace. Interestingly, some scenes liken the woman's body to the landscape, highlighting the (dis)connection between space and the self. The typist's home scene portrays assault across three layers of space, and in the canoe scene, the author metaphorically stretches the woman's body along the landscape, linking names to Firstspace locations. In "Death by Water", however, Eliot transforms the motif of water from a symbol to a Thirdspace, exploring the theme of rebirth through environment. Lastly, while "What the Thunder Said" is scattered with descriptions of ruined landscapes, the analysis suggests redemption through rain. Linking the body to space reoccurs in the last section of the

poem, with the narrator saying that they have metaphorically “shored” broken pieces against their destruction.

My spatial analysis of “The Waste Land” thus shows how experience contributes to the construction of literary Thirdspaces within the poem. Eliot uses real Firstspace locations to place the reader in a defined setting, in which Secondspace experiences are used as building blocks for a literary Thirdspace. Through his experimentation with First-, Second-, and Thirdspace, Eliot discusses the modern condition. The author interprets various themes related to the modern experience through literary imagination by constructing spaces based on emotions, experience, and the senses. The spaces set the scene and transition the perspective between spaces via blurring the senses (e.g., music, emotional scenery). The portrayal of space is thus connected to the themes of previous academic research, as alienation from the self and others is reflected in the desolation and detachment from the surrounding space. The worrying effects of industrialization are reflected in the mechanization of the cityspace and the settings of private spaces. Although much research focuses on the negative themes of the poem, the positive emotions tied to memories of past spaces, as well as the persistence of hope through the imagery of rain shows that modernist literature is not thoroughly pessimistic.

This thesis thus highlights the potential of spatial analysis in literature. Spatial studies could prove particularly fruitful when analyzing modernist literature, as it is rich in its spatial construction and fragmentation, and often focuses on themes connected directly to the land- or cityscape and its perception. The analysis of private spaces may also offer insight into characters, as seen from the contrast between the descriptions of the wealthy woman’s space and the typist’s apartment. Finally, a more in-depth study of the connection between body and landscape, as well as the imagery of water in space construction, would be compelling.

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RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Liisbet Aruste

The Study of Space in T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land"

Ruumi uurimine T. S. Elioti teoses "Ahermaa"

Bakalaureusetöö

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Lehekülgede arv: 39

Annotatsioon:

Käesolev bakalaureusetöö uurib T. S. Elioti ruumikäsitlust tema luuletuses "Ahermaa". Töö eesmärk on analüüsida kogemuse rolli kirjandusliku ruumi loomises, leida selle ruumi seos luuletuses käsitletud teemadega ning uurida, kuidas see mõjutab lugejate ruumitaju.

Sissejuhatuses antakse ülevaade "Ahermaa" kirjanduslikust tähtsusest. Kirjanduse ülevaade tutvustab varasemat uurimistöö seisuga, avab modernistliku ruumi mõiste ja tutvustab töös kasutatavaid ruumilise pöörde tekste. Töö empiirilises osas tutvustatakse kõigepealt Yi-Fu Tuani ja Edward William Soja kirjandusliku ruumi teooriatel tuginevat meetodikat. Järgnevates alapeatükkides keskendutakse füüsilise ja kirjandusliku ruumi kujutamisele "Ahermaa" viies osas.

Töö näitab, et Eliot loob kirjanduslikku ruumi toetudes kogemusele, emotsioonidele ning aistingutele. Ruumi loomises mängivad olulist rolli ka intertekstuaalsus ja sümbolism. Ruumile antud omadused peegeldavad modernistliku luuletuse keskseid teemasid, mida on välja toonud ka varasemad uuringud. Ruumi kujutamine on otseselt seotud selle tajumise kogemusega ning seeläbi saab ruumi häving üheks isikliku hävinguga. Luues ruumi läbi ilmekate kogemuste, suudab Eliot tuua lugeja kirjanduslikku ruumi, andes neile vahetu kogemuse modernistlikust mõttemaailmast.

Märksõnad: T. S. Eliot, "Ahermaa", ruumiline pööre, modernism

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