CONTENDING HETEROTOPIC ARTISTIC SPACE AND SPATIAL/STRETCHED TIME IN T.S. ELIOT'S "THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK"

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T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" has been received with mixed responses but with an almost unanimous consensus —though implicit at times— that the notion of '*Time*' occupies a position of artistic and thematic centrality in this poem (and in Eliot's other work, mainly the *Four Quartets*), and also with wider concerns about issues of intertextuality, allusion, echo and debts of origin. It was Stephen Spender who, in 1975, asserted that Eliot was "obsessed with time" (Spender 1976: 2). In fact, it is hardly necessary to acknowledge how the idea of time in Eliot's work has been a major preoccupation for critics, as it so frequently and explicitly features in critical responses to his reservoir (see, for example, Bay-Petersen 1985; Spender 1976; Bodelsen 1966; Bergsten 1960; Gish 1981; Weitz 1952; Patrides 1973; Lynen 1969). In this paper, I argue that it is the notion of '*Space*', the seemingly absent, absented and/or camouflaged, which constitutes the centre of the poem, overriding the superficial notion of time.

Categorically speaking, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" recruits a complex form of 'heterotopological space' a term theorized by Michel Foucault in "Of Other Spaces" and *The Order of Things*. Introducing the term *Heterotopias*, Foucault argued that the nineteenth century was an age concerned with the development of history (past time), while the twentieth century was an age of space as a domain of simultaneity and juxtaposition, whereby space becomes a means by which time is controlled, held and overcome (Foucault 1986: 23). Heterotopology,

Foucault explains, represents the co-existence of many various incompatible spaces in a particular real place (25). In *The Order of Things*, he rethought the term and gave it further possibilities while arguing that heterotopology is the interweaving of disjunctive, fragmentary spaces in one impossible space, whereby *heterotopology* becomes a creation of an order and a sorting of priorities (Foucault 1994: 31ff.; 330ff.). Whether the experience is to take place in a real or in an impossible location, there is a complexity of contending spaces to be experienced together in one space, real or unreal, the latter sense pertaining perhaps to dreams, as might be figured out from Foucault's following distinction and elaboration:

> This problem of the human site or living space is [...] that of knowing what relates of propinquity, what types of storage, circulation, marking, and classification of human elements should be adopted in a given situation in order to achieve a given end or epoch as one in which space takes for us the form of relations of any sites. (Foucault 1986: 23)

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault argued that various types of episteme relocate themselves in varied cultural spaces in different times. As such, Foucault's heterotopological space represents an awareness of the relations that can be established among fragments of space(s) along with contending thoughts and/or feelings, whereby the contest turns out to be between places that are repository locations of those thoughts/feelings. In the end, this is a definitely 'psychological space' which recognizes the simultaneity (co-existence) of present and re-lived past thoughts, feelings and actions, experienced altogether in an impossible (unreal) or even real location, depending on what 'real' means, as for example in the case of a dream or fantasy.

This distinctive psychological space, where the past retains a cause-effect relation with the present, was central in Freud's discussion of memory and the unconscious:

> There is a kind of forgetting which is distinguished by the difficulty with which the memory is a wakened even by powerful external summons. [...] A forgetting of this kind has been given the name of 'repression' in psychology. [...] What is repressed, it is true, as a rule makes its way into memory without more ado; but it *retains the capacity for effective action*, and with the influence of some external event, it may one day bring about *psychical consequences.* (Freud 1953: 34, emphasis added)

The past maintains its significant influence on present action, a co-existence of the two.[1] St. Augustine's remarks on memory seem relevant here; he thought of memory as a dualistic activity where one part of the mind recalls the past and the other listens, watches and reacts; for him, memory is:

> like a great *field* or a *spacious palace*, a *storehouse* for countless *images* of all kinds which are conveyed to it by the *senses.* [...] When I use my memory, I ask it to produce whatever it is that I wish to remember [...], allowing my mind to pick what it chooses, until finally that which I wish to see *stands out* clearly and emerges into

> sight from its hiding *place* […] and as their *place* is taken they return to their *place* of storage, ready to emerge again when I want them. (Augustine 1961: 214, emphasis added)

Augustine's perception lays emphasis on notions of object, place, and human senses, whereby the co-existing past and present are spatialized and objectified. Eliot himself discloses a similar vision of memory in the *Four Quartets*:

> There are three conditions which often look alike
> Yet differ completely, flourish in the same hedgerow:
> Attachment to self and to things and to persons, detachment
> From self and from things and from persons; and, growing between them, [indifference
> Which resembles the others as death resembles life,
> Being between two lives —unflowering, between
> The live and the dead nettle. This is the use of memory:
> For liberation —not less of love but expanding
> Of love beyond desire, and so liberation
> From the future as well as the past. "Little Gidding", III, lines 152-161)

Eliot's self is clearly a combination of the self, the things and the persons, a holistic vision of the person's context, which affects one's present in which the experienced past and the conceived future are actively involved. Nonetheless, memory helps one overcome *emotional* attachment to things and persons of one's past whereby these things and persons participate in the present objectively, away from their original subjectivity, a matter Eliot calls "liberation". The past is hence recalled not as time but as object.

In the following discussion of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" I will examine the fragmented and contested spaces in Prufrock's (Eliot's) mind and try to trace their assimilation in the poem, which I think should be related to the implied dream ("Till human voices wake us, and we drown", line 131),[2] or what might be called the dream-poem, a matter that is perhaps reminiscent of John Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale": "Was it a vision, or a waking dream?/ Fled is that music —Do I wake or sleep?" (lines 79-80).[3] My focal endeavor will be to show how Prufrock is moving across different sites of his life, superficially associated with time (his past) but, in the underlying texture of the verse to be closely read, presented as spaces, or spatialized times, drawing the map of the conflicting locations of the journey of an individual, young/old, layman/intellectual, atheist/Christian, potent/impotent, poet/philosopher etc. In particular, the following close analytical reading of the poem will target the identification of these various sites, examine their implications and then underline the relation or contest between them.

In fact, the central figure of the poem, Prufrock, is haunted by a heterotopic space as he strides along various sites, shifting through and creating multiple forms of

spatiality that collide, intermix and/or contend each other(s). Early in the epigraph, the reader encounters a journey, indeed, a descent into the underworld, the Inferno, becoming a kind of rite, whereby the reader, the persona and the invited 'you' —this last perhaps the repressed, hiding, unconscious double of Prufrock— seem to be destined for a state of limbo. The underworld, or simply the grave, is a spatial location with spiritual, religious and/or philosophical implications such as issues of life, death, afterlife, mortality and immortality. As seen earlier, Eliot's possible connection with Keats is found in a context of concerns about death and immortality in art, matters that constitute Prufrock's *overwhelming questions.* Nonetheless, the reference to Dante's *Inferno* might be seen as a visit to a literary site, again with preoccupations about death and immortality, a recurrent act in the poem, as will be further established in due course. Prufrock's journey is a search for meaning in two directions (locations); a journey inward (into the self) and simultaneously outward (into life/city), with death at the back of his mind.

From the start and in the first stanza (lines 1-12), Prufrock announces his intent to set out on a journey. It is a pity that a dominant notion of space in this stanza, and later throughout the poem, should be compromised in critical response for the sake of the idea of time, based on the superficial appearance of the words "evening" and "night" ("When the evening…", "restless nights…", "one-night…"). To start with, the evening (time) is itself spatialized here; transformed into place, space and/or location ("spread out"), and associated with concrete objects; time has become a person in a designated place/space ("a patient etherized upon a table").[4] Prufrock (re)visits various sites, urban spaces such as hotels, streets and restaurants in the city, along with related objects and persons; one may also think of implied frightening spaces and associated concrete objects like hospital, patient and surgery-room table. The initial action proposed in the poem, "go" (repeated in line four and also later throughout the poem), targets a space/place, and when Prufrock's fellow traveler seems to be avoiding the journey, he is pressed for the discovery of place in an attempt to search for a meaning/answer ("do not ask, 'What is it?'/ Let us go and make our visit"); the street and argument are seen as one and the same thing, "streets that follow like a tedious argument", whereby the *argument* is also objectified and spatialized.[5]

Immediately afterwards, space is further identified with a sudden entrance into a room: "In the room the women come and go/ Talking of Michelangelo". The room becomes a central point of spatial concern in Prufrock's journey and this room persists in the persona's mind up till line thirty-five, whereas the people associated with that room, the women, take over from that point up to line sixty-nine. These women "come and go", acts that emphasize notions of place and suggest also the tyranny of imprisonment in (limited, claustrophobic) space. The reference to Michelangelo, a *person* belonging to a certain time in history, might

be considered as a further preoccupation with space; Michelangelo here might be, rather than the person/artist, an artistic space, like the earlier visit to Dante and the later reference to Hamlet and other literary sites, to be underlined in due course. The modern almost-naked women selling their flesh in the room seem to be comparing themselves to the *puritanical* naked women in Michelangelo's paintings, whereby the reference turns out to target the artist's paintings (artistic space), along with concerns about modern notions of sexuality, prostitution, male-female relationship and art criticism.[6]

In the second stanza (lines 15-22), the process of wandering into sites and of spatializing time continues in the traveler(s) journey in the fog. The journey proceeds across a vague place with lack of clear vision, fog featuring in an image of a creature. But it is site/location that is leading: "upon the window-panes", "upon the pools", "upon its back […] from chimneys", "by the terrace". The "corner of the evening" is a further example of Eliot's objectification and spatialization of time, like that of the "evening" in the first stanza. The creature-like fog then seeks rest in a place "Curled once about the house" not inside it, a state of homelessness, and placelessness; the persona searches for but fails to find a permanent resting place since the room following the journey in the first stanza is claustrophobic, occupied, crowded, noisy and *shameful*, and the house by the end of the journey in the second stanza is locked and access to its interior denied.

In the third stanza (lines 23-34), Prufrock's journey into space faces a problem; time might be running out, space and movement being at risk, an intervention becoming essential. Time should be provided, but how? Time (limited) should be stretched out, spread out on the table, a matter that receives fuller explanation shortly afterward. Place is not at all absent here ("along the street", "on your plate"); but the desired resting place is beyond reach and Prufrock immediately returns to the room, though found uncomfortable earlier ("In the room the women come and go"). During the rest of the tiring journey in search of the wished-for place but not finding it, Prufrock keeps revisiting the room every now and then, which becomes like his bed-and-breakfast ("Before the taking of a toast and tea"). Having in mind his later desire to be "Scuttling the floors of silent seas", it seems as if Prufrock is taking a quick dive to find a lost object down in water and come back to the surface (the room). Time is needed for the sake of entering a place and performing actions "To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet", "to murder and create", "for all the works and days of hands", along with psychic unsettlement of a state of "a hundred indecisions/ And for a hundred visions and revisions", before finding the desired space/place where Prufrock might enjoy "the taking of a toast and tea". But the spaces/sites (along with the related actions) in this stanza are not necessarily all physical; some are spiritual, questioning aspects of death and afterlife: "To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet"; others

intellectual and philosophical: "That lift and drop a question on your plate", here the plate on the table perhaps a reference to ancient philosophers who used to sit around a table and ask and answer questions that became philosophies of their and of later times, Eliot wishing to be placed on the list of famous philosophers. Or they may be creative: "murder and create", creating but destroying works of art (poetry) the quality of which the artist was not satisfied with until with hard work, "works and days of hands", their quality improved and he decided to keep it, particularly that "Prufrock" was the first poem Eliot wrote "that he wished to preserve" (qtd. in Sultan 1985: 78).[7] Mortality/immortality underline Prufrock's (Eliot's) spiritual, philosophical and artistic concerns here and later in the poem, for he wants to be immortalized by the products of his creativity, to overcome forgetfulness by time.

Problematic time persists in the fourth stanza (lines 37-48) as the journey restarts, but Prufrock now more assured of himself having rested for a while (in the room, his bed-and-breakfast, his motel) and regained confidence: "And indeed there will be time" and later in the stanza "In a minute there is time"; it is here that he once again challenges and spatializes time, linking it to a stair: "Time to turn back and descend the stair". Prufrock's assertion that "In a minute there is time" is yet another case in hand where time is spatialized; time ("minute") is a designated place/space associated with a preposition of location and positionality ("in"). In fact, this relates to a distinctive notion of time, what might be called "lengthened or stretched time" to render an enriched place, in connection with notions of memory or dream, for the persona is, by the end of a poem, revealed to have been dreaming. It seems that Prufrock is in a hurry, perhaps a reflection of the journey into the unconscious, as in a dream where many things happen in a concentrated moment, a piece of stretched time.

Apparently, a minute cannot encompass all the actions Prufrock does or intends to do, unless the length of a minute is stretched. Here lies the significance of what might be called "temporal space"; more time, whether strung out and stretched, or slowed down and suppressed (in the sense of impeded movement), makes possible elucidated acts of re-experience.[8] Along with spatialization and objectification, stretched-time reinforces the ability of the *observer* (as the persona comes to see the objectified and spatialized) to re-experience the contemplated object, which is no longer a distanced entity as is the case in photography, which Angela Cozea described as a case of "emotional detachment" (1993: 210), Walter Benjamin a lack of "contingency" (243), and Roland Barthes a sense of *mourning* called "flat death".[9] That is, the distance between the rememberer and the disclosed (objectified) remembered experience vanishes and the rememberer relives the remembered. It thus seems that Prufrock is not in a hurry but rather is hurried by fast-moving time, as if approaching his death by the end of the poem, and he,

therefore, tries to slow time down to relive what he revisits, to avoid mere mournful looking at what would hence be a "flat death" of his past. Prufrock's assertion that "in a minute there is time" is an act of *stretching* the minute, spatializing it to the length he needs to experience the past and present simultaneously. The coexistence of the past (remembered and relived) and the present turns Prufrock's psyche into a stage/theatre full of action, dialogue and negotiation between characters/objects from his past and present. Gaston Bachelard, a significant persuasive champion of poetic space, examined the psychological complexity of space while remembering and recalling past experiences, his major concern being to see "how can an image, at times very unusual, appear to be a concentration of the entire psyche?"; and in answering this question, he attested: "the reader of poems is asked to consider an image not as an object and even less as the substitute for an object, but to seize its specific reality" (1994: xviii; xix). Bachelard argued that one has "to relive it [experience] entirely", a reliving enabled by spatializing the memory, for space constitutes "a localization of [our] memories" and "contains compressed time"; "space is everything, for time ceases to quicken memory" once it is objectified and spatialized (xxxii; 8; 9). In simple terms, the concentrated psyche in its entirety is a state in which the past and present are experienced simultaneously. In other words, memory should be performed with *uncompressed* time, to be, as Bachelard asserted and put into practice himself, *slowly* read and thus relived (38).

Prufrock, then, is slowing time down as he spatializes it. Even physiognomy is determined by place, location and direction "bald *spot in* the *middle* of my hair […] *to the chin… asserted by a simple pin*" (emphasis added). Nonetheless Prufrock still suffers psychological unsettlement with "decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse", a matter that continues in the next stanza with further recruitment of the image of the "pin", along with notions of (shaky) positions and states "formulated, sprawling on a pin", "sprawling on a pin", "pinned and wriggling on the wall", to end up wishing to be in "the floors of silent seas". Sara Trevisan examined Eliot's emphasis on "pins" and "thinness" in the description of Prufrock, and suggested two possible sources: Chaucer's "General Prologue" (the description of the Monk, lines 195-197), and the common English saying "not worth a pin", in connection with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Trevisan asserted that "Prufrock actually depends on the pin, as the pin gets to be the objective correlative for Prufrock's entire persona" (2004: 221-222).[10] It may be added here that the possible connections with these works of literature add to the notion of "artistic space" that constitutes an essential site in Prufrock's journey.

In the fifth stanza (lines 49-54), the women in the room become a preoccupation for Prufrock, along with persistent references to time "evenings, mornings, afternoons". Nonetheless, Prufrock immediately returns to his spatialization and objectification of time as he measures out his life "with coffee spoons", perhaps suggesting the hourglass, thus turning abstract time into an object, coffee/sand,

which is an attribute of space. Likewise, music is spatialized along with his nodal point of space, the (farther) room ("*Beneath* the music from a farther *room*"). Space/location becomes Prufrock's devise for grasping the dimensions of his being. Consequently, in the sixth stanza (lines 55-61), language becomes a site: "The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase". As the preposition "in" indicates, language becomes a place and a location, whether real or hyperreal. Perhaps there is here a reference to John Donne; the "eyes" to which Prufrock refers might be seen as the archetypal locked eye beams of the two lovers, directing us towards an allusion to Donne's "The Ecstasy": "our eye-beams twisted, and did thread".[11] Another "artistic space" shows up in the poem, a space that Eliot definitely visited with enthusiasm, as his critical preoccupation with the metaphysical poets shows. And it is here that Prufrock links time and space: "days and ways".

Eliot's preoccupation with language as a site recurs in his poetry; consider the following significant presentation of the matter, where he emphasizes creativity and immortality, along with language:

> Words move, music moves
> Only in time; but that which is only living
> Can only die. Words, after speech, reach
> Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
> Can words or music reach
> The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
> Moves perpetually in its stillness.
> Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,
> Not that only, but the co-existence,
> Or say that the end precedes the beginning,
> […]
> And all is always now. ("Burnt Norton", V, lines 140-152)

Time is treated here as space and object. Eliot asserts that time should be stilled, its movement impeded or hindered, stillness becoming the only possibility for (immortal) existence. Something should be said about this distinctive perception of time. The only real aspect of time is that of the past, not the present as many tend to believe; that which is happening in the "now" cannot be considered as having materialized until completed; for example, a statement is reversible or alterable before reaching the full stop, and the same can be said of an action, unless completed; and once completed it becomes past. The notion of "stillness" that Eliot discloses warrants the closest attention. It is related to a "Chinese jar" which "Moves perpetually in its stillness", abstract time having thus become objectified and concretely associated with "form, the pattern"; there are two types of movement here, one the linear movement of time in historical terms and another circular in nature ("the end precedes the beginning") within the past object itself

which becomes, as it were, kept in a shell, recoverable to be revived at certain times. This is a distinctive definition of a "then", which is not nostalgically recalled as that which existed in the past but does not any more; rather, it is that which existed and is still existing somewhere (in the objectified memory), hence creating a co-existence of "now" and "then", present and past: "And all is always now". Stillness, therefore, is an objectification of time, a mechanism that preserves time to be resurrected once needed. Such an act is, in a sense, a spatializiation of time, making it a concrete entity. Stillness is not silence, the former a preserved past, the latter a dead one. Perhaps, the idea of stillness and the image of the "Chinese jar" are reminiscent of John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn", with its initial image of stilled, slowed-down time in art: "Thou *still* unravished bride of *quietness/* Thou foster-child of silence and *slow time*" (lines 1-2, emphasis added), and its concluding stanza about immortality in art: "When old age shall this generation waste,/ Thou shalt remain" (lines 46-47). This is another example of artistic space which is a marker of Eliot's talent revising tradition.

The connection between time and pattern, along with the two aforementioned types of spatial movement, brings into play Einstein's theory of relativity, a matter that was examined by Ole Bay-Petersen who argued that Eliot's idea of time and eternity forms a pattern in which "all times co-exist" a matter similar to Einstein's space-time continuum, whereby time does not develop and rather becomes a "static phenomena in which events manifest themselves in their totality" (1985: 153).[12] The possible influence of Einstein on Eliot might be considered an "intellectual space". Nonetheless, my main question here is about how an "event" should be thought of, as time or space? I think it is both, or, in other words, space in which time has become stationary.

It is to be noted that "stillness" comes by means of objectifying and concretizing abstract time, an act enabled by language. As Eliot himself reveals, objects come to have identity only when we can "show that it and our self are independent entities, and to do this we must have names", naming being the essence of language (1964: 133). Eliot's preoccupation with language as a space by which to conquer abstract time, objectifying and spatializing it by and in language, features also in the *Four Quartets*:

> So here I am, in the middle way, having had twenty years—
> Twenty years largely wasted, the years of *l'entre deux guerres*—
> Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt
> Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure
> Because one has only learnt to get the better of words
> For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which
> One is no longer disposed to say it. (Lines 1-7, section V, "East Coker", the second of the *Four Quartets*)

Abstract things once uttered and written as language, using what Eliot calls "better of words" —those which objectify the abstract— get preserved and immortalized, having been objectified and made concrete. As Karl Malkoff has put it, "For Eliot, struggling with time, the most significant confrontations of words are with the abstract" (1984: 255). Earlier Malkoff said that "in Eliot an emphasis on time and eternity is accompanied by a tendency toward the abstract" (146). Therefore, time can be overcome once concretized and spatialized to be grasped by the human senses for, Malkoff attested, "time is an experience of the intellect rather than the senses" (255). In view of that, place, a realm of the senses (and of the intellect), becomes the redeeming factor, since "Eliot struggles to give body to his abstractions", the struggle with time and abstractness being major issues of twentieth-century poets and poetry (Malkoff 1984: 266).

In the seventh stanza, Prufrock etherizes the bodies of the women of the room on his examination table. Ekphrastically, he associates their arms with length, position, location, size and shape: "Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl". Having spatialized time and the female figures, he then escapes the oppression of the room and the women to move forward in the eighth stanza (lines 70-72) and afterwards, describing all of that as a past experience, making the past a piece (space) of his memory, with present-tense designation and narration of what happened before he continues: "Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets"; yet it is still his policy to unite time and place "dusk […] narrow streets […] from chimneys […] out of windows". The recurrent couplet about the women coming and going in the room in the first third of the poem is now left for a different space, mostly intrinsic, though superficially extrinsic: "I should have been a pair of ragged claws/ Scuttling across the floors of silent seas" (The "floors of silent seas" might be taken literally as real space). He is no longer on the floor of the room staring at women nor outside a locked house; he has now set out on a symbolic journey, that targets the hidden, mysterious and mute unconscious, a major archetypal symbol for which is the sea.[13]

It is from this point onwards, stanza nine (lines 75-86), that he starts to leave life-like outward space, and has recourse to excursions into memories (flashbacks) of it ("stretched on the floor, here beside you and me"), towards a more inward journey into the self, experiencing psychological, spiritual and other types of space. His spiritual fear of having sinned and his desire for redemption for having "wept and fasted", "wept and prayed", targets a religious site, a space in the Bible, the story of John the Baptist, along with an emphasis on place and location "my head […] brought in upon a platter".[14] His desire for redemption retains a humble note, that he is no more than a sinful human being and not a prophet, a matter that is accompanied by the notion of fear as he sees the "moment of my greatness flicker". It is worth noting here that his redemption is associated with figure/object and

place "prophet […] here is […]" and his fear is linked to time, the "moment of my greatness […]". He feels safe in space and afraid in time.[15]

In the tenth stanza (lines 87-98), Prufrock comes again to spatialize his frightening past as a piece of memory over which he negotiates himself; looking back in anger, anguish and/or regret:

> And would it have been worth it, after all,
> After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
> Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me[.] (lines 87-89)

Prufrock negotiates his memories, his past actions, along with a clear preoccupation with time and a greater one with space; he refers to times when he enjoyed drinks ("after the cups") but he is also haunted by positions and places ("among […] among"), when these items are definitely references to places where they exist(ed), locations that are domains of regret for Prufrock. Nonetheless, and in relation to elements featuring soon after in stanza eleven (lines 99-110), the cups, marmalade, porcelain, the sprinkled streets, dooryards, novels, teacups, and skirts that trail along the floor might be a reference to Victorian times, perhaps even to the Victorian novel, designating hence a literary space. Here one may argue that the women in the room, present throughout the poem and revisited at this point, are Victorian ladies having leisurely discussions of art and novels: "If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,/ And turning toward the window, should say [/…] That is not what I meant, at all". This could be an instance of Eliot's well-known anti-romantic and anti-Victorian critiques exhaustively commented on by critics.[16]

Nonetheless, it is worth referring to Christopher Krogstad and James Alexander who, in a brief note, found in Eliot's phrase "among some talk of you and me" (line 89), a marker of a relation between Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*, building their argument on lexical similarity and solid evidence that Eliot read the work of Khayyam in translation (Krogstad and Alexander 1994: 53). This connection, if it exists, may add to the notion of "artistic space" in Eliot's poem. It is also interesting that Khayyam's translated work had a clear connection with the Victorian age. Referring to Hugh Kenner who, in 1959, called Eliot's "Prufrock" the best known poem (3), Stanley Sultan argued that critical reception of Eliot's poem "since 1959 reveals 'Prufrock' to be a most eloquent cultural artifact —both as harbinger of Modernism and as paleomodernist specimen", whereas the modernism of Eliot's Prufrock lies in its being anti-romantic, notwithstanding the "remote ancestors who also are relevant", such as Dante, Virgil, Swinburne, Baudelaire, Laforgue and others (1985: 77; 80-82). Sultan concluded that "What Eliot 'had taken', his originality metamorphosed in 'Prufrock'", this being a modest attempt to account for Eliot's borrowings while maintaining the poet's originality and contribution to

modernism, a contribution Sultan found "implicit in this poem ['Prufrock']" and remained implicit in Sultan's study as well (1985: 88; 89). I may add here that a major aspect of Eliot's modernism is his spatialized and objectified notion of time.

However, Prufrock does not want to be understood as suggesting the need to go back to the Renaissance to find literature and art that are of value, as opposed to the art and literature of the Victorians; he asserts:

> No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
> Am an attendant lord, one that will do
> To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
> Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
> Deferential, glad to be of use,
> Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
> Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
> At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
> Almost, at times, the Fool. (lines 111-119)

The reference to Hamlet clearly strengthens the sense of "artistic space" in Eliot's poem, a matter which achieves additional significance when linked with critics' findings of further connections that extend beyond Hamlet to Touchstone, Richard II, the critic Walter Pater —this last suggesting a "critical space"—, *Crime and Punishment*, Kurtz in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress", Rudyard Kipling's "Love Song of Hart Dyal", and Rainer Maria Rilke's "Love Song: A Poem", in addition to other connections outlined earlier.[17]

Nathan A. Cervo considered the name "Prufrock" to be an allusion to John the Baptist —as supported by the initial "J." in the title of the poem— against the background of Herod, Herodias, and Salome, hinting at the triumphant royal name "Alfred", and eventually reaching the court jester Touchstone, the "proof rock" in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. In particular, Cervo convincingly gathered evidence to argue that Prufrock "functions as a touchstone of the fallen parody of Arden" (1999: 227-228). Robert Fleissner traced a connection between the line in which Prufrock's dissociates himself from Hamlet and a critical essay by Walter Pater where Pater writes "No! Shakespeare's kings are not, nor are meant to be, great men…", a statement that occurs in a discussion of Richard II, and enabling Fleissner to link together Prufrock, Pater and Richard II (1966: 120-122). In addition Eugene Hollahan examined the "parallel specifically between a passage in the *Inferno*, Canto II, 31-42, and the passage in "Prufrock" beginning "No! I am not Prince Hamlet […] although the implications of the parallel extend throughout Eliot's poem", a matter he considers significant for an understanding of Eliot's poem "particularly in respect to his [Eliot's] projection of Prufrock's experience against the epic Dantean background" (1970: 91; 93). Using the epigraph from Dante's *Divine Comedy* at the beginning of Eliot's poem, Jay

Dougherty also argued for a relation between Guido and Prufrock who are both "faced with 'overwhelming' questions" (1984: 38). Amer Al-Rashid and Ahmad Abu-Baker (2005) suggested a possible connection between the bald Prufrock and Kurtz in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*; Harold Bloom, in his well-known analysis, read Prufrock's past intention "To have squeezed the universe into a ball" as an echo of Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress".[18]

All of these cases of allusion, echo or intertextuality ascertain that the notion of artistic space is a major domain in Eliot's psyche as etherized upon the lines of this poem. Artistic space, as Eliot both appreciated and denounced, dominates the poem towards its end; the mermaids who will not sing to him, along with the beach, as a romantic domain, may fit into Eliot's anti-romantic sense, and also oppose his modern world of the waste land. Eliot is dissatisfied with escapist poetry that evades direct treatment of social problems by hiding in a piscatorial dream-world ("We have lingered in the chambers of the sea/ By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown"), for once reality has reasserted itself the sea becomes the nightmarish world of death "Till human voices wake us, and we drown". Interestingly, Eliot's concluding lines reveal how he is haunted by space (chambers of the sea), a space that has been disclosed as an archetypal symbol of the unconscious. It also seems that Prufrock's preceding journey into various locations and sites is no more than a journey within his unconscious, featuring artists, critics and philosophers he read, appreciated, disagreed with, or was influenced by, in addition to Christian aspects of his life. However, the dominating sites of this journey are mostly artistic, though the artistic sites revisited represent wider concerns about life, pertaining to philosophy, religion and society. These sites come together in the poem which ends up with an assertion that it is a dream to be finally awakened from, a journey into the chambers of Prufrock's unconscious.[19]

Thus, the connection with Keats's concept of the "dream poem" surfaces once again. Preoccupation with the relation between dreams and poetry is also central in his "Sleep and Poetry" and "The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream". Nonetheless, in "Ode to a Nightingale" time is redeemed or overcome by resorting to space, for early in the poem the persona passingly mentions time as he sets out on a journey into space: "One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk" (line 4). In addition, death also occupies a position of centrality in the poem: "for many a time/ I have been half in love with easeful Death,/ Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme"; this he did, indeed, as in his poem "When I have Fears that I may Cease to be".[20] Nonetheless, Keats's concern about death is part and parcel of his wider preoccupation with immortality by means of art and poetry, as is evident in his poetic reservoir; in this poem, he says "Thou was not born for death, immortal bird!" (line 61). Death, in its religious and non-religious terms, troubles Prufrock's

mind, along with his desire for immortality. While he might be seeking an after-life in Christian (religious) terms, he definitely desires immortality through artistic success, the second raising doubts about belief in the first. Eliot was concerned about the need for a separation between the self and not-self (subjectivity and objectivity) being essential for a balanced, objective judgment in the understanding of Christianity; in *The Idea of a Christian Society*, Eliot stated:

> The Idea of a Christian society is one which we can accept or reject; but if we are to accept it we must treat Christianity with a great deal more *intellectual* respect than is our wont; we must treat it as being for the individual a matter primarily of thought and not of feeling. The consequences of such an attitude are too serious to be acceptable to everybody: for when the Christian faith is not only felt, but thought, it has practical results which may be inconvenient. (4-5)

This thoughtful reasoning about religion (Christianity) perhaps constituted a major aspect of Eliot's psyche. Christianity, Cervo told us, might be behind the "psychic chasm" Prufrock experiences as a result of his taking Christianity seriously while living in the company of "worldly sophisticates" who would make fun of him if he revealed that belief; due to this "psychic chasm", he turns out to be an introvert who suffers "ego-toxicity and self-pity", his case being "a psychological pastiche", showing "conditions of hallucination" (Cervo 2002: 208).

Prufrock, Eliot's rememberer (of personal, religious and artistic past), like St. Augustine's, is often a dual being (the schizophrenic "you and I"): a voice and an ear, a speaker and a listener. The chasm within himself is that of the division between the memory and the present and Eliot unites the two parts of the self as he visualizes, externalizes and objectifies the memory and then brings both the memory and the rememberer to negotiate selfhood. Eliot presents memory and remembrance within a focused act of objectification of past time, an act rooted in a psychological vision of remembrance. Throughout the poem there is a strategy to objectify recalled fragments of memory and turn them into live-action. Therefore, the remembered-past is problematized in the poem by Eliot's making of it an object and a space experienced, to be experienced and re-experienced again and again. That is, the objectified fragments of memory are relived in what might be called a "simultaneous recall". As such, once time is objectified, localized and concretized in material form, it becomes, therefore, self-contained, redeemable and defeatable rather than elusive and overwhelming, for the result will be a dialogue between living and remembering, present and past.

Consequently, Prufrock oscillates between many places; he shifts to and fro between various and multiple sites in the poem. He is a traveler revealing and/or gaining experience through a series of journeys or a fragmented journey into various spaces seeking answers to his overwhelming questions. Such wandering into spaces, as Edward Soja argued, "produces a phenomenon of a new order, one by

which geography overtakes knowledge", space becoming meaningful only when it determines the relation between the conceived and the lived, the conceived being the intellectual and abstract whereas the lived space is the passionate and sensual, while both (conceived and lived) are compromised by the passage of time and only when spacialized and objectified do they become graspable, space being a creation of a knowable order (1998: 26; see also 2001). Prufrock's dilemma lies in coming to terms with the contending spaces in his mentality/psyche, as he wavers amongst the dialectics of space. In fact, Prufrock's journey is a hyperreal wandering through multiple sites of heterotopic space, trying to achieve a reality that is only achievable in the hyperreal territory framed in the poem. Prufrock's desire and search for imaginary (hyperreal) locations in which to engulf a total and simultaneous experience of his life seems to have been frustrated by the failure to find a satisfactory hyperreal space, except for the poem itself, which is a concentrated presentation of his unconscious (entire psyche) when written. The poem becomes a record of the contending domains of his psyche (past actions, thoughts, feelings etc.) which exert a constant pressure on his moving present. These contending sites are artistic, intellectual, philosophic and religious, though mainly artistic and associated with aspects of tradition that Eliot's individual talent felt anxious about. The richness of Eliot's poem lies in its intense recruitment of past poetry, art, poets, authors, philosophers and artists, becoming hence a space/place for contest between those various revisited sites and itself.

Notes

[1]. David Hume perceived the relation between past and present as a matter of causation: "Had we no memory, we never should have any notion of causation, nor consequently of that chain of causes and effects, which constitute our self or person" (qtd. in Watt 1974: 21; originally from Hume, Bk. I, pt. 4, sect. vi).

[2]. All quotations are from Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" in Kennedy and Gioia 1995.

[3]. The possible allusion to Keats underlines a significant notion of "artistic space" in Eliot's poem, a matter this paper underlines in due course.

[4]. Donald Childs examined what he considered Eliot's favorite clinical image "of a patient etherized upon an examination table", which features in various places in Eliot's literary and critical reservoir, pertaining to Eliot's philosophical perception of man's position in the world and serving, Childs argued, "as an acknowledgment of the pain that is a consequence of social interaction", a pain that is inherent in Eliot's preoccupation with "the same problematical tension between self and not-self that we encounter in 'Prufrock' and the dissertation" (Childs 1993: 381-382; 384). Simply, Eliot, the critic and the poet, wanted to examine (aspects of) human life (man, world, community, thought, feeling, action, knowledge, experience, subjectivity,

objectivity, identity, self, art and literature), whereby, Childs concluded, "Eliot and his *personae* remain both patients and physicians" (Childs 1993: 394).

[5]. Preoccupation with the "overwhelming question" might be an emblem of Prufrock's modernist task and attribute. According to Irving Howe, modernism is "a dynamism of asking questions and of learning not to reply. The past was devoted to answers, the modern period confines itself to questions. […] We present ourselves, we establish our authenticity by the questions we allow to torment us" (Howe 1971: 8-9).

[6]. It might be argued that these women perhaps assume the role of art-critics, a kind of criticism that seems irritating to Eliot, if seen along with a possible connection with the Victorian artistic taste with which Eliot was dissatisfied as will be acknowledged later. It is perhaps of value here to refer to the issue of sculpture, as treated by Roy Matthews and Dewitt Platt who argued for the sculptor's creativity being equaled to that of the divine, whereby art achieves divine significance and, interestingly, that in sculpture "human figures were liberated from the lifeless prison of their surrounding material"; such a connection may add to Prufrock's concern about death and immortality, seeking the latter in art. Matthews and Platt also underlined Michelangelo's most celebrated image of the heroic nude male (2001: 326; 327), which might be taken as opposed to the notion of a feminist (Victorian) critic.

[7]. Originally from the flyleaf of *Collected Poems: 1909-1962* (Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963).

[8]. For more on spatial form in narrative and narrative space see Eric Rabkin's (1981) discussion of spatial form (the relation between time and space, the temporal and the spatial, the diachronic and synchronic) in connection with plot; see also Ivo Vidan's (1981) discussion of "spatial form" and the polarization between spatial and temporal types of art.

[9]. Barthes argued that the photograph creates a paradoxical reality as "it establishes not a consciousness of the *being-there* of the thing (which any copy could provoke) but an awareness of its *having-been-there*", with a consequent psychological chasm between the 'here-now' and 'then-there' (Barthes 1977: 44). For a comprehensive treatment of the issue see Al-Joulan 2008, Chapter One.

[10]. A related comment was made by Nathan A. Cervo while examining Prufrock's psychic diffusion to the effect that the "simple pin" "holds together the simpleton Prufrock's disguise as a composed human being" (2002: 208).

[11]. All quotations from Donne are from Patrides (1991); regarding the interpolation between Eliot and Donne, Hal Blythe and Charlie Sweet argued that "Donne's seventeenth-century 'Song' may be a source for Eliot's twentieth-century 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'" (2004: 109). It may be noted here that critics, particularly, but not exclusively, those responsible for brief annotations, focused on Eliot's possible superficial influences by examining the connection that the epigraph, the title of the poem, the direct references to names and works and Eliot's critical work make, for example, with Dante (and Dante's Guido da Montefeltro), John the Baptist, the two biblical Lazaruses, Hamlet, Touchstone, the metaphysical poets and many more. See for example, Campo; Ledbetter.

[12]. This idea of Eliot's possible indebtedness to Einstein's theories, as acknowledged by Bay-Petersen, was first suggested by C.A. Patrides (1973) who referred to Eliot's translation of an article by Charles Mauron about Einstein (Mauron 1930). Patrides, however, considered Augustine, rather than Einstein, the main source of influence on Eliot's concept of time (193); another approach was also taken by Steven Foster (1965).

[13]. As for the sea as an archetypal symbol of the unconscious, see Grimal 1998; Jung 1981; Natoli 1984; Wright 1984. Nonetheless, Eliot's metaphor here was the concern of Hal Blythe and Charlie Sweet who, in a brief note, discussed Prufrock's desire to be a "pair of ragged claws" as a reference to the mating habits of shellfish, a connection that

helps towards an understanding of Prufrock's acceptance of "his failure in the arena of male-female relationship" (1994: 170).

14. James H. Ledbetter examined the references to Lazarus arguing that they might be Lazarus of Bethany, John the Baptist, Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, and Dante's Guido da Montefeltro (1992 41ff; see also Campo 1994; Sherfick 1987).

15. In a short note, Kathleen A. Sherfick drew attention to the theme of prophecy in Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", considering the references to John the Baptist and Lazarus (line 95) "suggest the value of prophetic gift" and concerning the controversy over which Lazarus is referred to in the poem, she argued, "Both references are appropriate" meanwhile asserting that the statement "I am no prophet" (line 83) which is a clear reference to John the Baptist, can also be a reference to Amos (1987: 43).

16. See Adam Kirsch's argument that Eliot was dissatisfied with the Victorians who "failed because they were not up-to-date enough" (2005: 13); see also David Spurr who discussed Eliot's anti-Victorian note (1988: 34-36).

17. For treatments of the similarities between Prufrock and Hamlet, se Frank J. McCormick (2004); Elizabeth Drew (1949: 34); Cleanth Brooks and Robert Warren (1960: 394); Harry Levin (1959: 7); Robert Seiler (1972: 41-43); and Grover Smith (1991: 44-51).

18. See also John Pope's (1945) investigation of Eliot's indebtedness to *Crime and Punishment*. One may also draw attention to a possible connection between Eliot's poem and Rudyard Kipling's "Love Song of Hart Dyal". An interesting case of comparison may be conducted on the interrelatedness of Eliot's poem and Rainer Maria Rilke's "Love Song: A Poem" in which a negotiation between souls or parts of the soul takes place (lines 1-3) in what might be related to Eliot's schizophrenic "you and I", and along with an objectification of elements of the unconscious presented in terms of aspects of motion and place: "Among lost objects in the dark/ In some quiet unknown place, somewhere/ Which remains motionless when your depths resound/ And yet everything which touches us, you and me […]" (lines 5-8, translated by Cliff Crego).

19. As for the notion of the "dream poem" in Eliot's poetry, Robert Silhol, in his discussion of the convergence of Lacan and T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, argued that "the structure of *The Waste Land* is that of the dream, and we must take unconscious desire into account to understand it[,] a Lacanian model of literary representation" (2004).

20. For a fuller discussion of the matter in Keats's poetry, see Al-Joulan and Al-Mustafa (2007).

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