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—

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUNCTUATION, RHYTHM
AND TYPOGRAPHY IN ELIOT'S THE WASTE LAND”

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This is one-hundred-percent to my parents

i miglior fabbri,

and to Eva and Inge

who would have loved to see me achieve this.

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“It has great beauty & force of phrase: symmetry; & tensivity.
What connects it together, I’m not so sure.”

—

Virginia Woolf on *The Waste Land* (Eliot, North 137)

1. INTRODUCTION

“The Waste Land” (henceforth given without inverted commas), published in 1922 by T. S. Eliot, is still regarded as one of the most important poems of the English language and a pioneer example of modern poetry. It is therefore hardly surprising how many critics and literary theorists have made it the topic of their discussions. The approaches to an analysis of *The Waste Land* have been numerous, ranging from gender studies, over psychoanalysis, to historicism. The composition of the poem, too, its varying styles and the peculiar existence of the accompanying notes, have attracted immeasurable attention from scholars. The quest for the “why” here seems to have, for the most part, overshadowed the analysis of the “how”, insomuch as interpretations of the text are usually content-based rather than form-based. Details on the form of the poem, ergo its visual representation, hardly ever go beyond metre, if at all, and then also only marginally.

This thesis means to put the “how” first and deduce “why’s” in further consequence, where possible. Eliot’s choices as to the visual representation of *The Waste Land* will therefore be treated as the aim of this analysis and motivation for all theories herein, in opposition to an analysis based on word and/or theme choice. Whereas prior studies on the topic only touch upon the matter of layout marginally and in order to support previously established theories regarding the literary content of the poem, the chapters of this thesis will put the first focus on the visual content of the poem. All possibly ventured interpretations as to the meaning of the text will therefore be based on the

established foundation of layout analysis. There is reason to believe that such a deeper study of visual aspects of *The Waste Land* could in the future serve as a framework on which to base further interpretations, respectively reconsider previous interpretations. Since this thesis is limited to the main body of the poem and does only make mention of Eliot's accompanying notes as for reference, the theories herein could furthermore be expanded onto the notes in future studies.

To analyse the visual aspects of *The Waste Land* as cohesively and comprehensively as possible, various fields have been taken into account, resulting in three broad topic areas: typography, form and punctuation. Due to the scope of this thesis, not all established subclasses of typography and punctuation could be considered, which leaves room for further studies. The subclasses to be discussed have been chosen with due diligence and are believed to be of priority in a typographical, respectively punctuational study of *The Waste Land*. Since this thesis does not mean to form new theories within the fields of typography or punctuation themselves, and since the typographical and punctuational concepts used for this study will prove to be fairly straightforward even to a novice on the subject, it has been decided, also with regard to the limited scope of this work, not to include detailed descriptions of the fields and their terminology.

This thesis is based on the assumption that T. S. Eliot composed *The Waste Land* with an undeniable and crucial focus on its layout and visual effects. The assumption is furthermore that Eliot consciously chose to present the poem in a specific form, partly only visible in minor details, and that said form and details in part substantiate or even create meanings in the text. With regard to typography, Eliot's use of italics and capitalisation, respectively his choice not to use either, will be analysed. Subsequently, the form of the poem will be studied as

regards line length and spacing; followed by an analysis of the use of inverted commas, commas and periods. Examples from the text will be given throughout and as deemed properly representative. Within the discussion of the examples, it will be illustrated how Eliot's use and choice of all features mentioned may shape the unconscious reception of the poem, in parts its purport and meaning, as well as its rhythmical possibilities.

Other than leaving out Eliot's accompanying notes, this thesis cannot yet analyse the form of the poem as a whole, but only in exemplary parts. The overall shape of *The Waste Land*, its division into chapters and the interaction of the examples discussed herein, could therefore be the focus of further studies, which could possibly implement the theories established in the subsequent chapters.

All references made to spelling, punctuation and layout are based on the 2001 publication edited by Michael North, as given in the bibliography. This edition has been thoroughly checked with regard to accuracy in spelling, punctuation and layout, since print copies vary slightly in these terms, and is considered a most reliable source. How important an absolutely accurate version is for the analysis, will be clearly evident in the respective chapters. Whenever the position, inverted commas and indentations of the direct quotes do not meet the standards and specifications of the stylesheet that applies for this thesis, it is due to the author wanting to portray quotes from *The Waste Land* in their unchanged form, in order to make any analysis of punctuation, spacing and/or indentations as comprehensible as possible.

2. TYPOGRAPHY

2.1. THE CURSE OF THE CURSIVE

*Frisch weht der Wind
Der Heimat zu
Mein Irisch Kind,
Wo weilest du? (Eliot 6)*

The example above is the first and also the longest of nine examples of italics in *The Waste Land*. It is in fact the only one exceeding one single line. It is worth noting that *The Waste Land* was produced in its entirety on a typewriter, on which italics are naturally impossible to create – yet, from the first publication, every reliable print version of the poem has the section above, and also the ones to be discussed hereinafter, in italics. Since we know that Eliot was very much involved in the editing and publication process, it is probable that he expressed his wish on how the respective passages should look, which again suggests that the actual visual appearance of the poem was of high importance to him. Indeed, in a long poem such as *The Waste Land*, a relatively small number of lines printed in italics have the potential of sticking out – if not immediately visually, then during a thorough read and possibly in meaning. If Eliot wanted those passages to stick out, it raises the question for the reason; and if Eliot had other reasons than visual emphasis for the use of italics, also those would have to be found.

With regard to the first passage, as quoted above, noticeable apart from the italics are also the strong indentation and the two blank lines above and below, framing the four lines with white space. In combination with italics, this could all point to the pursuit of letting the passage stand apart from the rest. However, had Eliot used only indentation and spacing, he would have achieved a similar effect, if not the same. Possibly, the

italics were meant to let the passage stand apart even more or to equip it with another feature of otherness.

Certainly in one aspect, the four lines are different from the preceding and following ones, for they are in German. And looking a little further, line 42 already makes for the second example of italics – also in German: “*Oed’ und leer das Meer*” (Eliot 6). The connection of the foreign language between these first two examples practically forces itself on the analyst as a possible reason for the italics. They might have been used to indicate the foreignness of the respective lines, as compared to the English lines all around them. The same reason could then also apply for lines 202 and 427-8 in French and Italian, respectively, as well as for line 429, also in French.

It is also sometimes the case in poetry and prose, that authors write lesser known loanwords or foreign words in italics, possibly to indicate that they have used a word in its originality and not translated it, so as not to confuse readers. At other times, writers use small quotes from other works and let them stand apart, not wanting to give the source of the passage in brackets or footnotes, but endeavouring to indicate their borrowing from somewhere else by creating white space around them or even by using italics.

One famous example could be Charlotte Brontë’s “Jane Eyre”, in which the author quotes “Fallen is thy throne” by Thomas Moore in two lines. She does not indicate from where or whom she has borrowed the lines, but clarifies that they have not originated from her mind by using spaces before and after the two lines and by using indentations. She furthermore emphasises the quote by putting it in quotation marks (Brontë 116). Like her, Eliot uses three means to let the quote stand apart, the two German examples included. The only difference to Brontë is that instead of quotation marks he uses italics,

which will be all the more understandable in the realm of this paper, once the matter of quotation marks will be looked into.

A different example of italics comes up in “A Game of Chess”, during the famous pub scene and here only encompasses one single word: “You *are* a proper fool, I said” (Eliot 10). Even though the quotation marks here have been added for this paper, to indicate the beginning and end of the quote, and are not present in the poem itself, it seems to be relatively clear to any reader of *The Waste Land* that the line is supposed to be uttered in direct discourse, since the pub scene is generally agreed on to depict a conversation amongst several people. Eliot himself describes the origin of the scene as a pub that really existed and that he used to watch people exiting it (Gordon 68).

These circumstances let Eliot’s use of italics here appear in a different light than the earlier examples. The probability that he was aiming at a certain feature of spoken language seems to be much stronger than any speculations one might express with respect to the previous examples. Giving emphasis to the word “are” would appear very probable here, while with other passages, stress is much more of a conjectured reason. In the case of line 163, the aim of emphasis is more prevalent, and therefore also more obvious, since it is put on only one word. If one word in a line is set apart from the rest, stress on this particular word is inescapable, while emphasis on an entire passage or line in italics remains an assumption.

Additionally, the stress given to this one word makes sense in spoken language, making the statement more pronounced or possibly even indicating backtalk or the expression of realisation. Given the content of the line, or rather the part before the comma, its utterer might be trying to contradict its counterpart by declaring that they are indeed a proper fool; or alternatively they have a certain tone of surprise or realisation resonating in the statement, as if only just now

finding out, or finding themselves confirmed, that their counterpart is a proper fool.

If one of the possibilities above is indeed correct – or a similar one in which the italics are supposed to change the way the word is read and add emphasis to it in order to indicate emphasis in spoken language – Eliot manages to bring spoken language closer and to make clear to the reader how a specific word was to be read, by using a visual effect, namely that of italics. He was certainly not the first one to make a word cursive in order to indicate spoken emphasis, yet does this instance serve as a good example of how Eliot used the visual level to achieve his aim.

What the cursive “*are*” furthermore bring to the pub scene, is an exception. After all, the reader knows, as much gossip as there is brought forward, fairly little after having read the scene. It may seem from the narrative that one person only is talking (apart from the interruptions from the barkeeper), but whether that is really so and also how many people exactly are present on the whole, is not determinable; and apart from certain features of dialect, nothing more can be said with certainty about the manner of speaking, whether it is loud or mumbling, excited or slow. It is possible that it is all uttered in one continuous flow without so much as stopping for a dramatic pause or a change in tone. “[A]*re*” however adds a change here, insofar as the reader knows this one time where the speaker puts their stress. Additionally, the reader may deduce a possible meaning from the stress. A possible result could be that the reader perceives the scene as more realistic, relatable and/or credible, once they have the feeling, even if only because of this one example, that they possibly know in what manner the speaker uttered this one line.

There are three more examples in *The Waste Land*, where italics also only encompass single words, now in Sanskrit. These can be found in lines 401, 411 and 418:

“*Datta*: what have we given?”

“*Dayadhvam*: I have heard the key”

“*Damyata*: The boat responded” (Eliot 18 f.)

As “*are*” before, they stand not alone, but in lines of else non-cursive print. Looked at in another way, however, the three words are very different from “*are*” and do indeed stand alone, insomuch as they are each followed by a colon. The situation of a single cursive word before a colon followed by a non-cursive line, and that repeated three times within 17 lines, creates the impression of emphasis or highlighting.

That the words are only in italics to, as illustrated before, indicate that they are foreign words, is still thinkable; but it should not be overseen that each one of them is preceded by “DA”, equally Sanskrit and foreign, yet not in italics. It is indeed true that each “DA” is written in capitals, which could possibly qualify as, so to say, auxiliary italics in order to explain the absence of italics in this case of a foreign word – but it would seem much more plausible that “DA” is written in capitals to achieve a certain effect, which will be discussed in “Investing Capital”, and that the other three Sanskrit words are written in italics for much the same reason, namely for effect. That the words are foreign could serve as an additional reason, but rather not as the only one. The presence of the capitalised “DA” before and that of the colon after the individual example highly suggests that Eliot wanted to put specific accentuation on these passages, very much exceeding the foreignness of the words.

One possible effect intended and achieved could be to let the respective words appear strong, in a way that they would

give the impression of a prominent beat. What would speak for this theory is the capitalised “DA” beforehand, capital letters suggesting superiority and strength, thus possibly heralding the start of the longer Sanskrit word in italics. Why the one would be written in capital letters and the other in italics, raises another question. The answer might lie in the meaning of the words themselves:

As is partly explained in the accompanying notes of *The Waste Land* and more so in edited editions, these Sanskrit words can be found in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, the Upanishads being a set of philosophical scriptures in Hinduism. The syllable *Da* is presented by God to three different groups of beings – gods, humans and demons –, each group having to interpret it as they understand it. Their interpretations are the three Sanskrit words Eliot put in italics, the syllable given by God still at the root (Eliot, North 18).

“DA” could therefore be written in capital letters to first of all illustrate the power of the syllable uttered by God; and second, to stress that this syllable will live on as a root in the next word, that is to show the connection between the word in capitals and that in italics.

Another reason for the capitalisation/italics distinction could be the matter of rhythm and stress. It is clear to any reader where to put the stress on a monosyllabic word, namely on that one syllable. But if Eliot had put also “*Datta*”, “*Dayadhvam*” and “*Damyata*” in capital letters, it might have confused many readers, since capitalisation suggests emphasis and the syllables of a polysyllabic word cannot possibly be stressed equally. The italics could therefore signal a continuation, though maybe altered, of the power behind these words, but also a change in the beat: the strong “DA” is followed by an emphatic “*Datta*”, into which each reader can put their own stress.

2.2. INVESTING CAPITAL

To begin a chapter on the use of upper case in *The Waste Land* is to begin with a famous line – in fact four famous lines: “HURRY UP PLEASE IT’S TIME” (Eliot 10). This is also the only time we can speak of extensive use of capitalisation in *The Waste Land*, it being the only time Eliot capitalises an entire line that consists of multiple words. The effect of and possible reasons for the use of capitalisation here, combined with the unique circumstances and situation created in the scene, therefore greatly differ from the examples that will be given later on in this chapter.

If capitalisation of those five words did not already attract considerable attention in the universe of print analysis, the threefold repetition of the capitalised line certainly would. Williams senses a threat of mortality in the utterance (27) – irrespective of the content, a line being repeated several times, and every time unaltered and in capital letters, could well be regarded as a threat or as developing into a threat.

Two possible theories on the reason of upper case in this example practically force themselves on the analyst – and, conveniently enough, the one does not rule out the other:

First of all, capitalisation turns this line into the interruption it is very possibly meant to illustrate. To explain, the words used here by Eliot are a typical call used by barkeepers toward pub guests when the pub closes, in order to clear the area. Eliot does not so inform us in the notes, but North luckily indicates it (10), supported by Lewis

(https://modernism.research.yale.edu/wiki/index.php/The_Waste_Land). Just as the barkeeper means to remind the pubgoers to leave, his words continuously remind the reader where the scene takes place and how time is passing during the conversation taking place (Williamson 137).

This background knowledge makes the scene all the more real and realistic, opening another level: the reader not only hears/reads the information that is meant to be shared with them; they are as much in the scene as the raconteur/-s. The audience listens/reads under the same circumstances as under which the talker talks. When the speaker is interrupted, so is the audience.

But it is not merely the content of the line that identifies it as an interruption. Were the line not written in upper case letters, it might mingle with the rest of the scene, be overlooked by some readers, misunderstood by others, confusing to all. As it is, however, it clearly takes on a special form. Were *The Waste Land* a film, the line would be easily identifiable as an interruption being uttered by an outside character, possibly shot from another angle. Were *The Waste Land* a song, “HURRY UP PLEASE IT’S TIME” would come from someone other than the lead singer and would probably throb out of only one of the speakers, thus indicating that it came from a world displaced from the song. But Eliot had no actors or singers, no camera angles or loudspeakers. And as he did not want to use the dramaturgic device of character names being followed by colons, he had only one thing left to communicate an interruption to his readers: a visual change in print.

Yet, how does capitalisation portray interruption? To answer that, the surroundings of the interruption have always to be looked at. If an interruption is indeed one, it has to be in some way or other opposed to what it interrupts. In this case, the difference is fairly easy to discern: upper case, as opposed to lower case, sticks out. If lower-case print is in the majority, as it is in the pub scene, it is the norm. Whatever mingles with the norm without any clear features of spatial distinction (for example spacing or indentation), interrupts the norm.

To follow up with the second part of the theory concerning the barkeeper's line, volume might also play an important role in the use of capitalisation. Given the afore outlined background of the utterance, namely the barkeeper trying to get rid of their guests, it is very conceivable that a certain sound intensity might be aimed at by the utterer. Eliot then, who quite manages to draw the reader into the situation, would want to portray that sound intensity in some way or other.

It could be said that he would want to indicate loudness in order to make the scene more realistic, though whether realism is really Eliot's aim here could never be said with absolute certainty. A thought that may be ventured, however, is that if an author already achieves drawing a reader in as much as Eliot does with the scene, by confronting them with a sheer avalanche of gossip with a cold opening, they would want to do that on all levels – therefore, when the characters in the scene experience interruption, the reader has to be interrupted in his reading flow, and if that interruption is particularly loud, the reader has to experience loudness too.

To indicate emphasis, more often than not loudness, by means of upper case is not all that unusual in modern literature and especially used in the world of comic books. While it might be hard to determine whether the use of capitalisation in a novel without pictures really is meant to portray loudness, if not specifically indicated so, it is much clearer in comic books where the audience has the benefit of seeing the character speaking in upper case. The portrayal of a, for example, duck in a sailor suit jumping off the ground, its fists clenched and its bill wide open, from which several lines emerge to illustrate the blast of its voice, makes it very easy to guess at the intent of the capital letters in the duck's speech bubble. That modern-day writers and, later, their readers might have the same immediate association of upper case, even if there is no helpful cartoon

picture around, possibly stems from the age of comic books and the development of a world in which visuals rate higher and higher.

Once again, the surroundings of a specific line have to be looked at when trying to discern the import of that line. It has been argued before that capitalisation can be regarded as an interruption due to the environment being in regular print. The same theory can be employed with regard to loudness. In real life, what makes an utterance loud is mainly its volume as compared to other utterances. People from different countries meeting are often left with the impression that the other one would talk particularly loudly or particularly softly, while volume is just part of an individual language culture. This shows that, in real life, loudness is quite a relative term, since there is no clear universal threshold from which on or under which a voice or noise is loud, respectively faint.

With that in mind, we can look at “HURRY UP PLEASE IT’S TIME” from another angle. Suppose that Eliot did want to indicate loudness, it can still not be said how loud he meant the voice really to be. The relativity of loudness in real life might be harder to discern in print, but is still there. Eliot employed the fact that a voice can only be measured in its loudness when compared to other voices, by creating a difference between the pub guests and the barkeeper. That difference lies in upper and lower case. In the end, the barkeeper might not have been shouting at all, they were just louder than the people they were sending home. Alternatively, the gossipers might have been extremely loud and the barkeeper needed to be even louder in order to make themselves be heard. All Eliot can do is create the contrast and thus show us that the barkeeper is louder than the others.

If it can be agreed upon that the use of upper case in the barkeeper’s line might indicate loudness, this theory still does

not rule out the afore explained theory on interruption, but even sustains it. After all, an interruption in spoken language is all the more an interruption if loud. Sound intensity is an important feature of the mere possibility of interruption and if Eliot imagined the barkeeper's voice to be a loud one and an interruption, he found a way to communicate that situation to his audience.

The triple "DA" in "What the Thunder Said" has already been discussed in "The Curse of the Cursive", especially concerning why "DA" would be capitalised when the subsequent "*Datta*" (etc.) is in italics. Apart from a connection in highlighting between capitalisation and italic face, it has been mentioned that the upper case spelling lets "DA" appear strong and prominent. Eliot might have felt a need to strengthen the word by means of upper case due to its shortness. The capitalised A in "DA" is possibly the only reason why the word is impossible to be overlooked.

As it is, it is not only not to be overlooked, but practically stands out and grabs the reader's attention. A two-letter word, to a reader unfamiliar with Sanskrit, might seem odd, out of place or even unimportant standing alone in a line; but with two upper case letters, it dominates the line. It no longer matters that it is a foreign word with no literal meaning to most, possibly all readers. Meaning is here communicated through other means than the Sanskrit command. One could almost think the word has fought for its right to stand alone – a fight it could only have won because of its prominence.

And once "DA" is looked at this way, it becomes clear that it is not strong despite its shortness but because of it. "DA" could never demonstrate the brisk, unnegotiable, split-of-a-second impact it does with its enlarged shortness, were it a polysyllabic word. It might not be much in letters, but it has

been inflated to the fullest size possible and even been given its own display to showcase its prominence.

It is probably even helpful to the impact of “DA” that it cannot have a literal meaning to the majority of its readers. As things are, the reader has to rely on their visual sense and imagination to get something out of “DA”. And when doing that, they are confronted by a strong sound (especially due to its beginning with a consonant); a sound that might not have any other meaning (as far as the uninformed are concerned) than the created sound itself – a sound that could easily resemble a closing or slamming door, a foot being put down (figuratively or literally), a person shouting something loud to scare you or the bang of a gong or drum. A modern-day reader could almost be reminded of the visual language of comic books, in which sounds are written down, often in capital letters, standing apart from the characters’ regular speech bubbles. And suddenly “DA” may become as imaginary and yet as pregnant with meaning as “POW”, “DANG” or “KABOOM” (<http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2012/05/the-language-of-comics/>).

“O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag” (Eliot 9) is another eye-catching example in *The Waste Land*. The question may be raised whether this example can even account for capitalisation, given that each of the four capitalisation instances consists of only one letter. It is indeed a capital O, but we do not know whether Eliot, had he spelled the expression differently, would have capitalised it “OH” or been satisfied with “Oh”. All analysis aside, the line appears to the eye of the reader as a big-time capitalisation because for a second the eye sees nothing but capital letters.

Now, the eye of the reader might be the very aim here. By spelling it single-letterly, monosyllabically, Eliot manages to

morph an expression, an exclamation or sigh really, into a single letter; and due to the form of said letter, into a visual effect. This effect is much heightened by the quadruple occurrence of it. The visual effect may be interpreted differently by each reader and even differently by one and the same reader; but so much can be said with some certainty on the letter “O”: it is a closed loop, it has neither beginning nor end, and it may be regarded as an opening, that is, a round entrance (or exit, for that matter). Building on that, it may even be regarded as the rounded mouth pronouncing the “O”, thus adding a subtle meta-poetic level.

Whichever way the “O” is seen and interpreted, the quadruple line of it unarguably stands out and catches the eye. The visual effect, whichever it is ultimately, is therewith rather inevitable. It is very much thinkable that Eliot had exactly that intention, which would explain his choice of spelling, i.e. the missing of an “h” or “H”.

To come back to the earlier question, whether the “O” can even account for capitalisation when it is only a single letter, we may imagine the opposite – what if all four “O”s were lower case? It would look like this: “o o o o that Shakespeherian Rag”.

There is an undeniable effect in that, which four identical letters in a row always must have, but it is hardly the same as in the case of the capital “O”. Despite being just as round, a lower case “o”, visually speaking, cannot appear as gaping as the capital version. It may remind one of a bubble to cross on an exam sheet rather than of a cave entrance or pit opening. To ascertain once again, whether a capital “O” leaves the impression of a cave or pit on anyone, has to be left undecided here; but the possibility of such an impression seems to be more likely with upper case.

What remains is the question, why Eliot spelled it single-letteredly and left out the possible “h” or “H”. Also here visualisation might help to find an appropriate answer:

“Oh Oh Oh Oh that Shakespeherian Rag” would be one example what the line could look like. The effect is certainly a very different one compared to the single-letter version – one might even go so far as to say there is no effect at all. What happens with the two-letter version, is that “Oh” is suddenly very distinctly the sighing expression and nothing beyond that. It cannot be taken for anything else and is deprived of its visual effect, that is the gaping look of it. Even though the “O” is still as gaping a circle as before, the “h” immediately draws attention to the word as a whole, not the look of just one letter in the word. What remains is the oddity of the quadruple occasion and whichever effect that evokes in the reader – but that effect could only exist because of and in the fourfold “Oh”, not within one single “Oh”.

Had Eliot instead chosen to write: “OH OH OH OH that Shakespeherian Rag”, at least the last remaining doubt about capitalisation would therewith be erased. Other than that, the results would not greatly differ from the lower-case “h”-version above: the visual effect of the single “O” would no longer exist. What is more, the now eight capital letters would almost drown the consecutive line and the lion’s share of the reader’s attention for the line would go to the “OH” avalanche. The effect would no longer be that of the quadruple “O”, which is odd enough to the reader’s eye as it is, but that of eight building bricks that have to be overcome before coming to the rest of the line.

Had Eliot spelled it “OH” or “Oh”, another effect would have been created: even though the number in syllables would not have increased, the words would be longer. Even though there would only be one additional letter in each case, the line would suddenly be lengthened by four letters. To compare:

Oh Oh Oh Oh that Shakespeherian Rag

and

“O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag”.

Even though an “O” is read just as fast as an “Oh”, the visual effect would be that of more to read before coming to the “Shakespeherian Rag”. All that the eye would see is a long stretch of sighing sounds before the comprehensible text runs on, instead of, as it is now, a quadruple letter that presents an oddly shaped introduction, a runway almost, to that notorious rag.

The mere fact that Eliot did not prolong the line by adding “h” or “H”, the mere fact that he did not make the sighing sounds visually longer or put visual obstacles into the reader’s way, accounts for the visual effect of the line as it is. It is not only its look and effect that makes this line into what it is and into one of the most peculiar lines of *The Waste Land*; it is not only how Eliot has chosen to write it, but also how he has not chosen to write it. Only when looking behind the curtain of what could have been, total awareness of what has actually been created, can be achieved.

Often enough, Eliot capitalises something in *The Waste Land*, or omits to do so, and the reader is very likely to read over it. It is none the less more likely than not that Eliot wrote every single word of the poem exactly as he intended to do. It is therefore not always the visual effect, the striking effect that influences our reading of *The Waste Land* when a capital or small letter directs us according to Eliot’s volition. Two examples for this may be found in *The Fire Sermon*:

„O City, City, I can sometimes hear” (Eliot 14) might not strike one as odd – yet, an intention behind the capitalisation of “City” may still be determinable. Eliot apparently does not merely talk about the city here, he addresses the city. The city becomes the recipient of his lamentations, echoed in “O”. That the city is treated more as the recipient than the topic of his address, becomes all the more apparent with the absence of an article.

With that, it is just becoming, almost appropriate to capitalise the city. In other words: once it is addressed as a character, it should appear like a character.

Many other examples of a capital initial letter in *The Waste Land* may make perfect sense immediately: “the Lady of the Rocks”, “the Wheel” and the “Hanged Man” are the proper names of the Tarot cards; “the Dog” that should be kept far hence is a living being and thus might deserve a capitalisation; “Jug Jug” refers to a bird sound (Eliot 6 ff.) and it would hardly make more sense to write the second “Jug” in lower case (albeit that is what is done to it later on in *The Fire Sermon*, on page 12); and the “Shakespeherian Rag” refers to a song title – but what about “the Hyacinth garden” and “[t]he Chair she sat in” (Eliot 6 ff.)? These two examples could of course be overlooked by any reader and it could thus be claimed that any theory on the initial capital letters here would be going too far. But the fact that these two examples integrated themselves so well into the flow of the poem and their surroundings that they may be overlooked, does not mean that they cannot still have an effect on the reader. And even if that effect is not immediately perceived as such, it can still be there. Maybe that is what made Eliot such an extraordinary writer and *The Waste Land* such an extraordinary poem: the effects are everywhere, one does not even have to be able to spot them all.

A chair is usually something spelled in lower case in the English language when not the initial word of a sentence. There must be some reason for Eliot to choose otherwise. As usual, the environment of the word is worth a closer look. The whole line runs: “The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,”. In the entire paragraph to follow (running well over thirty lines), Eliot does not capitalise another word other than sentence initials, proper names and the aforementioned “Jug Jug”. A reason for the capitalised “Chair” could be sought in the fact that it is the

first noun of the first line of “A Game of Chess”; but then again, if that had been the rule, Eliot would have broken it in “The Fire Sermon” and “What the Thunder Said”.

When looking at the whole line, it would appear to make more sense to capitalise the “throne” instead of the chair. A throne is a majestic thing, it can represent power, the right to rule, an important legacy and heritage. But looking at it a little closer, it would have to be acknowledged that there is in fact no throne in the story – only in writing. The throne only exists in similitude to the chair. If the chair in the first line of “A Game of Chess” were spelled in lower case and the throne in upper case, the reader would probably not stop and consider it strange – yet, in analysis: how much sense would it make to capitalise a throne that is not really there? Why not rather capitalise the chair that is really there and that is like a throne? Through the capitalisation of the chair, the comparison to the throne takes on greater significance: through capitalisation, the chair becomes the throne to which it is said to be similar. To capitalise the throne instead would be to raise the throne once again over the ordinary chair.

The case of the “Hyacinth garden” is a different one. Since Eliot makes no allusions to the passage in his notes, we are forced to rely on our own and others’ research, but what can be said for sure is that, while a hyacinth (lower case) is the common name for a flowering plant, Hyacinth (upper case) is the name of a hero in Greek mythology (Eliot, North 6). As it often has it in mythology, the fate of said hero serves as an explanation for the existence of the flower and gives it its name. There is therefore a relationship, one could almost say, a causal chain, between personage and plant, even though the former is only mythological. Eliot lets them both appear in his poem, with not one line between them and as subtly as possible, namely by capitalising the initial letter. Many a reader might not notice a

change at all, many others may notice it, but would not ponder over it. Eliot does not grant his readers a possible light-bulb moment by explaining or at least (which would have been more his style) throwing the bread crumb of an explanation by citing the source (Ovid possibly) in his notes; yet the plant and the mythological figure are still in the poem, less than inches away from each other, almost side by side.

The example of the Chair, afore elaborated on, and that of the Hyacinth garden share one characteristic: they may well be overlooked and seem absolutely normal, but there is some deeper meaning in them; but when it comes to said deeper meaning, they differ greatly. Finding a reason for the upper case in the Chair cannot ever be anything beyond mere theory; while the intention behind the upper case of Hyacinth is more apparent, even plausible and to a certain extent verifiable (there is an actual story, the myth, behind the upper-case spelling, Eliot's allusions to mythology are no secret, and several authors have identified the passage of the Hyacinth garden as a mythological allusion, such as Leavis (182)). But what we are left with is to identify the intention behind the intention, that is to find out why Eliot is in one line writing of the flower and in the next of a mythological character, without providing any apparent warning, explanation or transition.

The ancient Greek myth tells of Hyacinth, who was a lover of the god Apollo and killed in an accident brought about by the jealous West Wind. Apollo then, because he did not want to give up Hyacinth completely, let a flower grow out of his blood. Apollo's tears were said to stain the petals of the flower (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hyacinthus>). Apparently Eliot is not trying to recreate the myth in *The Waste Land*, but seems to reverse the order of events. While it is clear from the myth which of the two came first, in the poem it is the flower

that has to be mentioned twice before the Greek hero is brought up. Eliot furthermore covers up the appearance of the hero quite strongly by having him succeeded by the word “garden”. At first blush, the meaning of Hyacinth, even though in upper case, would therefore most naturally appear to still be that of the flower.

Without any help from the notes or otherwise, the reason for Hyacinth’s appearance cannot be easily discerned, perhaps not at all. The themes that can be found in the classical myth may be those of death, rebirth and mourning, as well as love and revenge (passion, says Leavis (182)). The speaker in the relevant passage is addressing someone in the first person and there are some faint hints at familiarity, but none distinct enough to call it a conversation between lovers or even friends. Neither does revenge seem to be a topic to catch the eye in those lines. Death, however, can be discerned in the words: “I was neither [l]iving nor dead” (Eliot 6). In a way, also rebirth may be identified in that line, describing a state in which someone is not quite dead or not quite dead any longer. On a different note, lines 38-42 are of quite a gloomy character, exuding helplessness and desperation, which may be comparable to woe and mourning. Thus, the self-description of “neither [l]iving nor dead” may have its basis in the confrontation with death, but that of another person. The state of a blank mind, the description of silence and an empty sea could well account for the melancholy of mourning.

While in the myth a flower blossoms out of this mourning, there seems to be nothing in *The Waste Land* to end the gloominess. The Hyacinth/hyacinth paragraph ends with “Oed’ und leer das Meer” and is followed by the recount of the tarot cards, which is, at least on the outside, unrelated to Hyacinth. The flower is indeed connected to the woe, but rather in the reverse position. It is first the flower that is the topic, but

then something changes in the story that also changes the mood and the first letter of the flower. There is a shift in time (“late”), there is a shift in space (“back”), and there is also a definite shift in narration, introduced by: “– Yet”. Not only does “Yet” mark a clear change that is to come in the narration; the dash before it furthermore cuts a clear break between what is to come and what has been said so far. It is very fitting that a dash is also called a break.

Looking into all those times Eliot chose to capitalise something, one is eventually bound to wonder whether the curiosity of capitalisation could also be looked at the other way around. To be more precise: when does Eliot use lower case, even though upper case would seem more “normal”? One would think that in a bulging total of 433 lines (blank lines not counted) created by no other than T. S. Eliot, one could find an abundance of anything; yet, of all those lines, there are only five that start in lower case. Of those five, one deserves a more crucial analysis, when the full meaning of lower case plunges onto the reader, even if they are outwardly oblivious to it:

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

burning

(Eliot 15)

Even though there is no full stop after “pluckest”, it seems relatively clear that “burning” is not a mere continuation of the preceding phrase. There are no full stops in the entire preceding paragraph, and with the additional blank line between “pluckest” and “burning” it must be agreed on that the latter is a separate utterance. Context-wise, obviously, there is a connection. “Burning” is repeated four times at the beginning of the short paragraph, in Eliot’s own words in the notes, from “the

Buddha's Fire Sermon" (Eliot 25). The succeeding line, "O Lord Thou pluckest me out" is part of St. Augustine's Confessions (http://biblehub.com/library/augustine/the_confessions_of_saint_augustine/chapter_xxxiv_there_remains_the.htm), although not so indicated by either Eliot in the notes or by North (that is only clarified with regard to lines 307 and 312 (Eliot 25). The line is repeated and broken off in its repetition – it does not appear in that shortened version in St. Augustine's Confessions; Eliot chooses to break it off himself and emphasises the break with a blank line. The return to "burning" lets one wonder: was the burning that what broke off the confession? Or was it that the confession had interrupted the "burning" flow and "burning" just had to take over again eventually? The rest of the line of the Confessions could have been *burned* away; or it could have been *plucked* out.

Eliot might as well have chosen to repeat the line and then shorten it simply because it looked and sounded good. With the repetition in the first line, a certain rhythm is created that, after a dive into silence with the blank line, is revived and finally killed off in the very same word. The final "burning" closes the cycle, going back to the first word, and at the same time closes the chapter "The Fire Sermon". What is shown with the initial small letter of the word is that "burning" is not the same as the beginning of the paragraph, "Burning" – we are not going back to the beginning, we are re-entering the burning process that has been described and has been going on also while we turned to the Confessions. "burning" might stand in a new line – but it is no beginning, it is much more the end, be it the end to "The Fire Sermon", the end to the paragraph or just the end to whatever has been burning. There is no reason to capitalise it, other than that it is a new line; but Eliot sacrifices the orthographic reason for the sake of meaning.

3. FORM

3.1. CREATING SPACE

T. S. Eliot does not follow a pattern in *The Waste Land* – or if he does, it is a pattern in his own mind, a pattern that makes sense for that and only that poem. Even though he does not follow the rules of stanzas, rhythm or flow, *The Waste Land* has stanzas, rhythms and flow, and it is a poem that every now and then may even satisfy the seeker for the “conventional” poem. And within those many different rhythms and flows – and the passages where one is prone to detect no rhythm at all – the text does even follow patterns and rules. All jumbled up and together, there is, as a result, the impression that *The Waste Land* is indeed that: just jumbled up. That is one of the things that makes this poem so impressively unique: while it seems as if Eliot was not able to follow any pattern at all, he actually followed hundreds of them alternately and at the same time – making up some of them himself. It need be understood and accepted that Eliot did not in any way fail at achieving a certain form with his work, but that his work presents a certain form. All that can be gathered from it – more than anything, the parts that may appear “jumbled up” – is crucial in a study of *The Waste Land*. Especially in the case when a poem does not rhyme or does not rhyme continuously, it is up to the visual form to express the poem’s identity (Culler 252).

The Waste Land is too long a poem to have something stick out just once. If it were just one or two book pages short, it could not possibly be overlooked, a deeper meaning not possibly be ignored, to see a single word standing alone after a blank line; or four sudden rhythmic lines in italics between whole paragraphs of lines that seem no shorter than in a novel; or a few rhyming lines in a poem that otherwise does not rhyme anywhere; or an

expression all in capital letters. Since *The Waste Land* is long enough, it can afford having all that in it and more – and even multiply. Every time Eliot throws in something a little less commonplace, every time the reader has already gotten used to the more-or-less flow of the text, they are (even if unconsciously) reminded of the uniqueness and massiveness of it.

One of Eliot's means to shape *The Waste Land* is his use and creation of space. That means can be subtle and just nudge the reader in a certain direction without them even noticing; but it can also be very much out there and on the verge of being unsettlingly conspicuous. This chapter will look into different ways of how space can be created, different effects that space can create, and different levels on which space and its effect can work.

In *The Waste Land*, as it usually has it, the lines are numbered and the blank lines are not. This would seem understandable enough, were not the conditions of this poem so extraordinary. Eliot uses blank lines to shape the overall form of his poem, he uses them to shape the meaning of the lines pre- and succeeding the blank, and he plays with the blankness as if it itself could speak just as his actual words. The separation of stanzas is in general a crucial part in poetry, for it serves as a very visible token for structure or at least the possibility of one (Culler 252). In the case of *The Waste Land*, it may be ventured to say a little more: the blank lines are part of the poem, they are not arbitrary or random, and they are certainly not just there for the reader to rest their eyes a little in between.

Then why are they not numbered? Since Eliot refers himself to the line numbers in his notes, the mistake – if it can even be called so – lies not with later publishers or editors. Maybe the idea of numbering the blank lines, never entered the master's mind, or maybe he thought it unnecessary or a tad too

novel – which would seem surprising, given the overall experimentalism of *The Waste Land*.

The first more obvious example with regard to creating space with blanks starts at line 31 – or, due to the unnumbered problem, rather before that. To say the example starts with the line: “Frisch weht der Wind”, would miss the actual point by miles. The example starts between line 30 and line 31, stretches all over lines 31 to 34, and ends between line 34 and line 35:

Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

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

“You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;
“They called me the hyacinth girl.”

(Eliot 6)

Not only does this first example of Eliot’s creation and use of space start before the part the example is actually about, i.e. the German paragraph in italics – but it can also be seen in the respective paragraph itself, before and after the actual print. Space is created not only before and after the German paragraph, as well as to its left and right, due to indentations and the respective shortness of the lines. Eliot chooses the original passage from Wagner’s “Tristan and Isolde”, that is, uses the same line breaks (<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/tristan-und-isolde-7044/2>), and thus immediately creates a contrast to the preceding and succeeding longer lines, simultaneously creating unused space to the right of the paragraph.

A possible reason for Eliot’s layout choices here could be that he wanted the foreign lines, clearly taken from another source, to stand out as what they are, as has already been

discussed in “The Curse of the Cursive”. But to achieve that, he could have chosen half the indentation – that and the italics, let alone the blank lines before and after, would have done the job. Yet, Eliot wanted more: he did everything in his might to let the Wagner paragraph stand apart from the rest as much as possible. By that, two things are achieved at the same time: when there is no further explanation given, a thing standing apart from the rest is either raised above the rest or degraded. The only information the reader receives from the design is that the Wagner passage is not allowed to mingle with the rest of the text at all. It will not even meet its kinsman in *The Waste Land* text to come, for there will be no passage marked as clearly from an outer source or as clearly apart as this one. Without additional information, it is naturally impossible to say what exactly Eliot’s secondary aim was, i.e. what he wanted to communicate by making that passage the odd one out; but his first aim he achieved because the “Irish Kind” will never mingle with the hyacinths.

In *The Waste Land*, nothing should be overlooked or underrated. If we could suppose that the blank line between paragraphs, throughout the poem (apart from the example just given above, which is due to the indentations a special case), had no meaning at all, we would have to immediately ask ourselves: but then why are they there? In *The Waste Land* nothing should be taken for granted.

The blank lines between, for example, lines 18 and 19, 42 and 43, 59 and 60 all have one obvious and simple effect: they split up the text and create fragments. Whether Eliot thought it looked better this way, wanted to make the text more assessable or was meaning to clarify a change in the narrative, may be left undecided for the moment. The basis on which to do this analysis is that the blank lines are there.

Reading about *The Waste Land*, one is bound to stumble over the word “fragmentary”. Marianne Thormählen even gave her work on the poem the second heading: “A fragmentary wholeness”. That word could always be understood as regarding either the visual poem or the content of the poem. If we called the visual poem fragmentary, we could be talking about how different parts of it are divided by means of spacing, indentations, varying rhythms and single-word lines. If we called the content of the poem fragmentary, we could be referring to the changes in situations, settings, narrative voices and styles. Baxter makes it clear in her analysis that it is the conglomerate of fragmentariness in both content and visual style – the one “diverse”, the other “radically disorientating” – what makes *The Waste Land* so extremely difficult (68). One question this chapter wants to address is whether the blank lines dividing larger paragraphs support the fragmentariness or in fact diminish it.

If we look at the example line numbers given above, we can see a clear change in the story between lines 42 and 43 (first the hyacinth girl, then Madame Sosostris), and again between lines 59 and 60 (from Sosostris to the unreal city). Such examples can be found throughout the entire poem, when the blank line is the transition between different narratives. This transition may be called smooth and thus helpful. If Eliot had left all those blank lines out, there would be no individual paragraphs and except for the indentations and the breaks between chapters, *The Waste Land* would be just one enormous lump. The look of it might be less fragmentary, but the content would be just as fragmentary as before. If that were the case, readers would have an even harder time finding their way through the different scenes, now that there are no longer the tiniest indicators of transitions.

The blank lines therefore might make the fragmentariness of *The Waste Land* all the more obvious and

shows that there are indeed many different parts to this poem – but they also make it easier on the reader and prepare them, even if only briefly, for the change to come. In some cases of course, the change might be less obvious, wherewith the blank line only raises the question whether there is really a change to come or whether we might still find ourselves in the same scene narrated by the same character, only a second later. An example would be the first blank line, dividing lines 18 and 19. A change in tone may indeed be made out; but other than that, it could still be the same character talking, in the same situation. With the blank line Eliot is therefore possibly aiding the reader in understanding that there is a change in scene. The alternative would be that Eliot is misleading the reader into believing there is a change in scene.

Now that it has been established that blank lines could be regarded as indicators of change, it should be studied whether those changes are indeed so big that *The Waste Land* deserves the often-mentioned predicate “fragmentary”. Smith does spot unity in *The Waste Land*, but one achieved psychologically (48). That does not yet dispute the fragmentariness, but only speaks for the legibility despite the ostensible fragmentariness.

But not everyone that speaks of fragmentariness, speaks of it in a deprecating way. Richards compares the arrangement of *The Waste Land* to music, and like music the arrangement was not designed to carry a message, but all the effects together would create a coherent feeling; and even if *The Waste Land* could not be understood as a whole, “every fragment, as a fragment, comes victoriously home” (71 f.). “[S]omething in the nature of musical organization” is also detected by Leavis (175). Jain, too, accepts the fragmentariness as a necessary feature of *The Waste Land*, especially as she sees in it a reflection of the fragmentary, chaotic world of Eliot’s time (vi). Jain backs this up by referring to a writing of Eliot from the year 1926, in which he laments “the age’s formlessness” which he would want

to integrate in his work (qtd. in Jain vi). That was four years after *The Waste Land*, but can still be regarded as explanatory. Similarly, Larissy believes the poem to represent “an isolated, disconnected state of mind” and compares its fragmentariness to Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” and “Gerontion” (60 f.). Morrison indirectly agrees with that, in so far as he sees an order in *The Waste Land*, but one that mirrors the city, its development and destruction (25).

It has been said before that blank lines form transitions between fragments. Whether those transitions appear smooth or not, may lie in the eye of the beholder. The less smooth they appear, the more fragmentary the whole poem probably appears. Moody regards the changes as rather abrupt, “further increasing the reader’s confusion”. But also he does not detect a lack of plan or slovenliness in that, but “a lesson in mutability”, which he connects to modernism (126) – something Jain sees similarly (vi). Most critics would see an intention in the fragmentariness: even if *The Waste Land* consists of fragments, there is still “a unifying strand” (Larissy 59). To let most eloquent readers detect a unifying theme (or unifying themes) in his poem while sustaining the visual and at-first-blush form of chaos, once more speaks for Eliot’s enormous gift.

Of course, when critics write of *The Waste Land*’s fragmentariness, they never utter the term “blank line”. They speak of the fragmentariness in content. But in *The Waste Land*, visual form and content go hand in hand. The space lines are there and form the poem, just as much as they are not enough there to be addressed by critics – they are unnumbered and therefore not really, not officially part of the text. But if they are not part of the text, there is no poem, but only scattered snippets. As much as the blank lines rip the text into paragraphs and thus add to the, partly lamented, partly acclaimed, fragmentariness,

they also bind the paragraphs together. They communicate change, or at least the likely possibility of change, in speaker, situation and/or context, and they do that in the simplest, most overlookable way. To the reader's eye they are not even there, because they are not supposed to be noticed; to the poem they are indispensable, by crucially shaping the overall form, creating differences and at the same time giving the opportunity to detect and compare differences, thus also unity and unifying elements – for if there were no separate paragraphs, we could not compare the different parts of *The Waste Land* to each other.

But, as has been alluded to before, not every space line makes it too easy to discern a change in scene. The example of the four-line Wagner passage has already been discussed. In this case, it seems rather clear that the passage, despite the blank lines, is supposed to be contextual to the story before and after. The blank lines therefore serve as distinguishers within the context.

With the space between lines 110 and 111, things become more difficult. There is no clear indication that with line 111 a new story starts. However, that we are still in the very same story, is not much clearer. What has hitherto often served as a helpful indicator of change, now proposes a conundrum – the visual design of *The Waste Land* makes the literary content all the harder to grasp.

Several features point to lines 110 and 111 belonging together in narrative despite the space between them. First, the story told up to line 110 seems to suggest a minimum of two people involved: a female person plus the narrator. We cannot be sure of that, since the pronoun “we” never occurs before that point in “A Game of Chess”; but the descriptions of the female person imply an involved observer, heightened by the different senses that lead to the description: the “synthetic perfumes [...] drowned the sense in odours”, “Jug Jug” to dirty ears” and

impressions that can be connected to eyesight, such as “Glowed” and “Reflecting light”, as well as the tactile sense (“the air [t]hat freshened from the window”) (Eliot 8). That plurality of people makes a plausible, albeit not necessary, connection to the speaking beginning with line 111. There is no clear indication of dialogue, but the quotation marks and certain phrases (“Stay with me. Speak to me.” (Eliot 9)) point to at least one person addressing another. In addition, “Glowed into words” in line 110 could be a further link to the words that are to come.

If we therefore decide to take line 111 as a logical narrative continuation of line 110, we do that out of our own reasoning and *despite* what the form in that part of the poem suggests, not *because of* any clarifying elements. In cases like this, the space line is therefore not only no helpful identifier of change, but a misleading creator of fragmentariness that has to be identified as such and overcome by the reader’s wit.

And the 110-111 conundrum does not end there. The same problem can be seen before line 115 and after line 116, as well as before and after line 307. The latter could easily belong to the paragraph before as well as the one after. It could be the binding link between the two or nothing of the sort. It “compel[s] the imagination not by [its] relation but by [its] loneliness” (Donoghue 15). A linking to the succeeding paragraph would make sense, due to line 309 being from the same source (St. Augustine’s Confessions) – still, that is no insurance. Not an insurance either, but a possibility, suggests the word “then” in “To Carthage then I came” (Eliot 15). It has to be remembered that also this line comes directly from a source, but the temporal indicator could link the line to the preceding paragraph: *first* the lines 296-306 happened, *then* he came to Carthage.

Therewith we have three possibilities created by line 307: it is either a remnant of the preceding paragraph, indicated

by “then”, raising the question why to use a blank line at all; or precedent to the succeeding paragraph, indicated by the parity of source; or it is both, which would explain the blank lines best, since we could then regard line 307 as a bridge dangling between the two paragraphs.

If none of the above is the correct inference, line 307 is the loneliest in all *Waste Land*. It would not even find its kin in line 311, because there the relationship to the preceding paragraph has already been established (in “Investing Capital”). Line 307 is therefore a unique case in *The Waste Land*.

Also line 433 stands alone only in theory— the relationship to its preceding lines is much clearer than in the case of line 307. The space before line 433 could be regarded as an intensifier: it is the very end of the poem and since line 395 there have been allusions to the Upanishads. An Upanishad quote makes up the second last line and the “Shanti” repetition of the final line (Eliot 18 ff.) represents, as Eliot puts it himself in the notes, “a formal ending to an Upanishad” (26). Not only does this statement of the author clarify the relationship between the poem’s last paragraphs and the very last line; it could also explain, at a closer look, the blank line before it. Eliot presents part of an Upanishad and then ends formally, as he says himself. If the author is convinced that a formal ending would be appropriate, and if the author is convinced that he is providing the appropriate formal ending, then he would also try to make the setting appropriate. With the blank line before the last line, Eliot reserves space for two things: one, for “Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata” to have its full effect; and two, for the “Shanti” to have their full effect. The reader sees space after the second last line and therefore has time before the poem comes to its end – the reader is thus slowed down. The words can sink in. Space is reserved for them, so they must be of great meaning – a realisation on the reader’s side (whether conscious or not) that

adds the grandeur and spirituality to the last lines at which Eliot would have likely been aiming when he reached for a philosophical-religious content as the Upanishads are.

But the blank line is by far not the only creation of venerable space here:

Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.
Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.

Shantih shantih shantih

(Eliot 20)

The blank line apparently was not space enough for Eliot – he created more by help of the indentation of the last line, moving the first shantih to the height of the middle of the preceding line. With the combination of a blank line and a strong indentation, the last line is set apart from the preceding paragraph as much as possible without dividing the two parts so much that a kinship in context would be hard to grasp. To set the last line that much apart has the effect of making it stand out and attributing significance to it. “Memorable quality [...] seems to require clear space on all sides”, says Donoghue of the layout of *The Waste Land* (114). The shanti line is supposed to catch the eye of the reader both as a carrier of meaning and as the grand finale. From the moment when the reader finishes the second last line, they are visually prepared for a venerable ending. Eliot does not end *The Waste Land* abruptly – so to say *ex medias res* – but creates a quite peaceful setting. As chaotic and unsettling the poem may have seemed at different stages, the ending is supposed to smooth those edges. Eliot might have found he could best smooth the edges by letting them disappear altogether. The shanti line experiences so much “edgelessness” around itself that it can hardly be called a line anymore. It has space above and below, at its left and right, and even in between. No commas obstruct it, and no period puts an end to it. It is literally hovering in space. “The Peace which passeth

understanding” (26) is Eliot’s translation of “shanti”. And peace he creates by slowing the reading pace inevitably down. No matter what the rhythm was throughout *The Waste Land*, whether long paragraphs of long lines, or a flow of staccato, the ending is unlike any example of space before. “Shanti” comes up three times in the last line, but between them there fit eight tabs of the spacebar. Even though just a repetition of the preceding word, the reader needs to see each “shanti” in its own realm. Of course, anyone could read the last line fast-paced if they wanted to; but a reader mindful of or amenable to the visual design of the poem, i.e. how it uses line length and spacing to shape the rhythm, will automatically slow down facing the great gaps between the three last words.

Eliot does not do the same to the second last line, but something of a similar purpose. Also line 432 contains three words, thus is in its shape already approaching the form of line 433. The three words are not identical, but all start with the same syllable, which can, next to the length of the words, be another element in setting up a rhythm: when three words in a row start with the same syllable, the reader is drawn to stress that syllable which in turn influences the reading rhythm. But one thing is concisely different from the succeeding line and that is the period after each word. While the full stops have been left out in the last line, presumably with the intention to not obstruct the flow and the space that has just been created, they paradoxically have a similar effect as the eight-space gaps between the shantis: they slow the reader down.

The simplest explanation for that would lie in the way we are generally taught to read. We are supposed to leave a short, for a non-native speaker hardly audible, break between two sentences that are separated through a full stop, in order to make it clear to a potential listener how the read text is structured, and also to give each finished sentence the possibility

to stand and function on its own. An eloquent speaker, reading a poem to an audience, would never hasten through the lines without making clear where there is a stop.

There might be yet another reason for why the periods in line 432 have a similar slow-down effect as the big spaces in line 433: the periods make the words in line 432 seem important and importance slows down the reading so that the full meaning may be grasped. The explanation of why the periods let the words seem important may be coined “grammatical conscience” for the sake of this paper. Grammar teaches us that a full stop should – ideally – only appear after a full sentence. Line 432 features only three words and each of them stands for itself – words that could not be understood by a majority of the readers – but the periods communicate completeness. They communicate that, whether it is actually so or not, each of those three words represents a meaning of such an integrity that it justifies being followed by a full stop. The full stop signifies that nothing else would have to be said to bring home the message lying in each of those words.

Eliot thus manages to set up a pace and rhythm with the help of full stops and sustain that pace with the help of another feature, completely different in its look, namely spacing. Why he chose periods in the one case and space in the other, might be explained in two steps:

First, it must be considered that even though there are three words in each of the two lines, those word sets are very different from each other. In line 432 the words belong together, are of the same source and share the initial syllable; still they have different meanings, while in line 433 the three words are a repetition. The spaces of line 433 would have created a flow in line 432 destructive to the words’ individual meanings. On the other hand, too, the full stops of line 432 would sever the flow of line 433 brought about by the repetition. Additionally, the

initial sound of “shanti” is much softer and smoother than “Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata”, which makes periods much more appropriate to the rhythmic mantra of line 432.

Secondly, to use the same feature with the set goal of the same effect twice in a row, might have brought about a complete cancellation of the desired effect. Eliot might have wanted to slow down the reader’s pace by introducing periods and thus shaping the rhythm of the second last line, and he might have been aiming at a very similar effect by putting big gaps between the shantis – still the latter is an official ending to an Upanishad and as such must stick out. Eliot obviously saw an importance in the philosophy of the Upanishads or he would not have made it so prominent in the last sections of his work. The two last lines might seem equally exotic to an unacquainted reader – but they are utterly different in meaning to someone who deems them expressive enough to clad a poem’s ending. In other words, Eliot needed to make those lines look different, even if meant to be read at an equal pace. The last line is the formal ending to an Upanishad and at the same time the ending to a long poem – with that twofold importance in mind, Eliot managed to let it stand out elegantly and yet unobtrusively impressively.

“Use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation” (Thormählen 26). To what extent Eliot followed the imagist principle may lie in the eye of the analyst. An analyst focusing on the visual makeup of *The Waste Land* may however extend the principle as follows: use absolutely no word position that does not contribute to the presentation. And the same analyst would say that Eliot proved to be quite devoted to that.

When people speak of the fragmentariness of *The Waste Land*, they could speak of its content and thereby mean to say that the poem seems to consist of various stories and that they do not seem to be connected or if they are, it is not always clear

how. They could, on the other hand, be speaking of the poem's form and by fragmentariness mean how the great differences in line length, the spacing and the indentations let the entire text appear like fragments scrambled up. They could also be referring to the changes in metre and rhythm, or the changes in style. They could be referring to all of those at the same time when they talk of fragmentariness, or they could be talking just of the first option without realising that that had a lot to do with the second one.

The basis of this paper is the assumption that Eliot meant to use every single word of *The Waste Land* – the double entendre of “use” being intentional here: on the one hand, he meant every single word he used; on the other, he meant to use every single word he used. The first claim complies with the imagist principle, ergo Eliot only used words that would contribute to the text. The latter claim goes one step further: Eliot used the words to contribute to the presentation in a visual sense. This goes in great part hand in hand with Austin's theory of performative (as opposed to constative) utterances, which already achieve that to which they are referring. Typical examples would be the utterance of a promise or warning: the expression of a warning is already the warning and not merely the pointing to one (in Culler 125 f.). What is however not automatically implied in that theory, is the visual level on which utterances may accomplish (or partly accomplish) the content of their own utterance.

The form of *The Waste Land* is shaped by the length of lines, the length of paragraphs, indentations, blank lines and the choice of how all those features are combined among each other and within the poem. That means that even though an indentation is something that has the power to contribute to the form, it is how, when and where the indentation is used that actually shape the

form of the poem. To clarify what is meant by that, an example shall be assumed: if the first half of the poem had no indentations at all, and in the second half every other line had the same indentation, the indentations would also shape the form of the poem – but their effect on the form would be incomparable to the actual state of *The Waste Land*. That means to say that the analysis of the form of Eliot's work does not begin and end with the discovery of indentations and the fact that line length in *The Waste Land* varies to an extent bordering on motion sickness; but that the vital analysis lies in *how* he applied all those features and *what* they did to the form of the poem precisely because of the way they are applied.

Space has already been discussed in this paper, with examples ranging from the space surrounding the Wagner passage, “burning” and the three shantis, to space in the simple form of blank lines that can have not so simple effects. When looking at lines 117-138 (making up about the second third of “A Game of Chess”), a first quick glance might be very misleading. The reader would probably see a lot of white space between individual lines – yet between all those 21 lines, there is only one blank line. Eliot achieves this poetic *Fata Morgana* by creating his own space. In other words, he creates space without drawing on the most conventional form of introducing space, that is space (as for example available in space lines), but by using indentations. His indentations, in this example of lines 117-138, are all but one rather strong, i.e. the beginning of the indented line is moved far into the paragraph. What is more, the indentations vary, so that not every indented line starts where another has started. Were all the indentations the same, the effect on the form would likely be a more structured and composed one. If that were the case, an intention of shifting between two different line beginnings could be assumed, which is not the case as things are. An intention similar to that

hypothetical one, however, may be made out in lines 117-120, i.e. the first two indentations of the paragraph here discussed:

“What is that noise?”

The wind under the door.

“What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?”

Nothing again nothing.

(Eliot 9)

Eliot uses in both lines the same indentation, which amounts exactly to a double indentation, i.e. the tab key, on both modern-day computers as well as key-lever typewriters (to which either Eliot or his printers might have had access, which would explain the exact same indentation length then and now). The use of the same indentation might be explained with the same intention for both lines. It may be assumed that the four lines, as depicted above, form a dialogue. What speaks for that assumption are the quotation marks, the second and fourth line presumably answering the questions posed in the first and third line, and the third line making a reference to the answer in the second line. If the intention was to illustrate two people in dialogue without using phrases such as “he said” or “she asked”, Eliot would have possibly defeated that image, had he used different indentations in the second and fourth line, or at least would have made it harder to grasp. As the layout looks now, two people are easily assumable, the one line beginning where the first person is, the next beginning where the other person is. This may be compared to a third party (e.g. a role the observing reader would take on) turning their head back and forth between two talking people. If the fourth line had a smaller or bigger indentation than the second one, it could create the impression that there were three people talking, or the impression of people talking to each other could be generally blighted due to an increased level of confusion. Interestingly, also Leavis speaks of shifting with regard to the passage on hand. While he gives an example with a

clear indentation, he is however concerned with the shifting of themes and predominance, and fails to clarify whether the indentations bear any significance in his theory (178).

What can also be seen in the first and third line in the example above is repetition: a similar question is put in both lines, the four first words being identical. Eliot here set up a repetition that is not immediate, since it is broken by a line in between. The repetition of the indentation in the second and fourth line however helps to sustain the repetition of the lines between inverted commas. Thus, a visual repetition sustains and even supports a textual repetition. Had the second and fourth line no indentations at all, they would be on one level with the first and third line, ergo not stick out. As a result, they would bear no feature that could be repeated. There would still be the textual repetition, but its effect would be strongly diminished by all four lines being on the same level, thus melting into each other, and without the support of the visual repetition.

But whatever rhythm of repetition has been set up, whatever picture of going to and fro between two speakers has been painted, line 121 comes in time to destroy it. What makes for the disruptive change, is the strong indentation:

“What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?”
 Nothing again nothing.
 “Do
 “You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember
 “Nothing?”
 I remember

(Eliot 9)

Line 121 consists only of opening quotation marks and a single word. Its indentation consists of five strikes of the tab key, letting it start where the preceding line stops. A quick glance at the page would make that line the first one to appear blank.

Within the reading process the reader might be immediately guided from the last word of line 120 to line 121, thus skipping the blank part or acknowledging it only peripherally. When the paragraph is looked at as a whole, the white space in line 121 however greatly contributes to the visual design and cannot possibly be ignored.

If we act on the assumption that the dialogue theory for lines 117-20 stands, the development from that into line 121 specifically and from then onwards generally, suggests two possible paths: line 121 is either a continuation of the dialogue or a disruption of it. For either possibility there are clues, on which further theories may be grounded.

What speaks for a continuation of the dialogue are the inverted commas, also used in lines 117 and 119, and in the content of line 122, in which the repeated reference to “nothing” could be understood as a reaction to “nothing” in line 120. Also the manner of dialogue would see its continuation in lines 121-2, when since line 117 question and answer have alternated, whereas the question always contains a reference to the answer or assurance given before.

A sign for a break in the dialogue starting with line 121 could be detected in the indentation, which puts a visual difference between this line and its predecessors with inverted commas. The space between the two speakers, if there are two, is considerably widened, which “puts at risk the continuity between relations, as between one person and another” (Donoghue 115). But there would remain the question how to interpret blank space on a page: it could be one person moving physically away from the other, then returning to say their line after all; or it could be elapsing time before line 121 is begun, possibly only a few seconds more than in the case of the responses made before.

Another theory could be that the indentation does not mean to interrupt the dialogue, but simply to introduce another

speaker. Building on the image mentioned before, this could mean that each speaker in the conversation is denoted their own length of indentation, comparable to an image of individuals being in individual spots and not all on top of each other. There are however no other obvious indicators of a third character.

If Eliot meant indeed line 121 to be a disruption of the dialogue, that would raise the questions why he would not make the change clearer by introducing a full blank line, respectively, why he would affiliate two separate scenes by connecting features, i.e. the inverted commas and the “nothing” reference, as well as the sustained question-answer alternation. The indicators for a continuation of the dialogue therefore seem to win by number, wherewith there is a basis for further theories in the quest for the reason for the long indentation.

A first solution, which could be regarded as a by-product and would not have to exclude any other thoughts, could be found in the extraordinariness of line 121. By being different from the preceding lines, it sticks out and introduces something new. It is possible that Eliot did not want the rhythm of repetition, which he so skilfully set up in the four lines before, to continue and thus become boring and/or bring too much orderliness into the structure. In addition, the dialogue form of the first four lines would become more apparent and graspable with every repetition of the question-answer/no indentation-indentation alternation and Eliot possibly wanted to avoid the obvious.

But line 121 certainly has more to show than that. Eliot sacrifices his textual-visual tango of lines 117-20 in a break-neck way and there must be a reason for that. As for the indentation, it paradoxically created two things simultaneously: it creates space and the same time reduces it. The space created can be seen in the blankness before “Do”; but it reduces space insomuch as the text of line 121 moves closer to, even docks at

the text of the preceding line. Line 121 could therefore influence the dialogue in two very different ways: it could be imagined either that there is quite a pause between the assurance of line 120 and the next question; or that “Do” is uttered immediately after “nothing” of the preceding line, bordering on interruption.

Not only the indentation renders this example a peculiar one. Despite the indentation, more than “Do” would have fit in the line; yet the rest of the question is saved for line 122. This could be purely for visual reasons, since line 121 sticks out precisely because of its odd-positioned shortness. The circumstances arguably also have an effect on sentence stress: having a whole line for itself could give “Do” the edge in stress over the rest of the sentence. A question in which stress looks like this: “*Do* you know nothing?” (emphasis added), puts the whole question in a light different from for example: “Do you know *nothing*?” (emphasis added). The latter sounds as if the asking person has just found out the other one knew nothing; while the first one could be understood as the asking person doubting that the other one knows nothing.

Another possibility could be that Eliot, with all his talent in creating space, was actually in need of space. If we look at the quote once again:

“You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember
“Nothing?”

(Eliot 9),

it seems that Eliot either could not help but let the final “Nothing” stand alone, or that he wanted it to stand alone. Since he could have easily avoided it standing alone by moving some words from line 122 to line 121, and since Eliot does not seem the author to whom something just happens because he cannot help it, the latter option seems more probable. If Eliot wanted “Nothing” to be all on its own, it might be that he had to move

one word of line 122 to a separate line, thus creating line 121, in order not to make line 122 too long. That theory however cannot stand up to scrutiny, since line 179 in “The Fire Sermon” is longer than line 122, approximately just as long as line 122 would be with the “Do” in it (considered that the inverted commas of the “Do” could be left away since there are already inverted commas at the beginning of line 122).

Another possibility could be that the autonomy of “Nothing” adds stress to it, just as has been argued before in the case of the autonomous “Do”. After all, the word “nothing” plays a major role in this part of the dialogue, so that Eliot might have wanted to emphasise it once more and give it its own stage.

Line 124 starts again with an indentation. In accordance with the dialogue theory, this line would belong to the answering person, coming after a series of questions and not beginning with inverted commas. Its indentation, after the two lines before were not indented at all, could also, just as stated before, account for the dialogue moving to the other person. However, the indentation is only about a fourth of those in lines 118 and 120, in which it was established that indentation forms a crucial part in identifying who is speaking. To compare:

“What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?”
Nothing again nothing.

“You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember
“Nothing?”
I remember

(Eliot 9)

A reduction in space should not be regarded as synonymous with a reduction in significance. Even though Eliot is here creating less space than in the indented lines before, he is still creating space with the indentation, and he is still making use of

space. Were the indentation the same as in lines 118 and 120, a new theory on it could hardly stand, since the old one would still be applicable. As it is, however, it can be investigated why Eliot reduced the indentation at all.

It has already been argued that the indentation may not only be there for the creation of space, but is also, naturally, significant for the position of the words in the indented line. In the case of “”Do”, that meant that the indentation actually brought the autonomous word closer to the ending of the previous line. Line 124 would allow for a similar interpretation: a longer indentation would have meant more white space, which could appear as a gap or pause between lines 123 and -4. As it is now, the two lines overlap, are however, due to the indentation, still not on the same level. The overlapping could be interpreted as an interruption or maybe just a quick answer. Since it has been argued before that the effect of the back and forth between indented and un-indented lines could be regarded as a visualisation of the spatial position of the speakers, it could be said of lines 123-4 that the two speakers are now closer to each other.

A sudden change comparable to the one brought about by the long indentation before “”Do”, can be spotted in line 127 – the circumstances are however different. As in line 121, the long indentation creates so much space that the line could at first blush be mistaken for a blank line. This time the indentation is even longer and there are no inverted commas. If we still cling to the theory of two different people speaking alternately, it has to be clear with this line that the creation of wide space is not an attribute belonging to only one of the two speakers. What has been said about the indentation in line 121 bringing the “”Do” closer to the end of the previous line, cannot be said of line 127: “But”, if anything, interrupts the preceding line rather than docks at it.

But after all, things do not have to be the same only because they share a similar feature, and it would hardly be like Eliot to make things easy on the poem and its reader. What lines 121 and 127 share is the extraordinariness, which lets them stick out. Even though the preceding text has not been the most orderly one, line 127 still announces a change. What is noticeable, is that the visual change in this case fits the textual change. “But” introduces a contradiction or an alternative; it announces another view. This is heightened by the word’s self-sufficiency in the line and its outstanding position due to the indentation. Only the fact that the word stands alone grants it the liberty and possibility to speak on its own and carry a meaning. Thus, the visual circumstances of the word, existing in its environment, i.e. in space, makes its textual content what it is. The lonely “But” has a greater effect of a lifted finger or emphatic interjection than it could have at the beginning of a full line.

The next, and last, time Eliot’s play with indentations looks even remotely as eccentric and diverse as in the part discussed, would be in “The Fire Sermon”:

Down Greenwich reach
Past the Isle of Dogs
 Weialala leia
 Wallala leialala
Elizabeth and Leicester”

(Eliot 14)

The sing-song two-liner – again taken from a Wagner opera – reappears little later, starting at line 290, a reminiscence of which comes in line 306 with “la la” (15). All three appearances have the same indentation, which seems to bring order into the indentation-based upbreaking of the paragraphs that run from line 266 to 306. There seems to be a much clearer rule here than in the examples from “A Game of Chess”: sing-song interrupts

the text, therefore it is marked as the odd one out by means of indentation. It is likely that the reason for the indentation is another one – but whatever it is, it is applied on the repetition and even the fragment (“la la”) in the same measure. Eliot is none the less playing with space here – space for which he does not even need to change the indentations. In fact, because he does not change the indentation in all three instances, is exactly why he can and how he does play with space.

The play with space appears when we look at the two paragraphs (which arguably are connected, due to the reminiscence in “la la” of the former Wagner sing-song), running from line 266 to 306, as a whole – that is take it in visually, not textually. If a reader looks at that text passage as a whole, they very possibly be under the impression of mixed-up text fragments, not unlike the visual impression of the part in “A Game of Chess” discussed before. There are however fewer indentations in the passage in “The Fire Sermon” and the indentations are all at the same level. The impression of fragmentariness must therefore stem from somewhere else mainly. This is where Eliot’s play with space comes in. With three indentations, all of the same length, two even consisting of the same two lines, the author of the poem achieves a different effect in each one. The key lies, as so often in *The Waste Land*, in the environment: the lines surrounding the three indented examples, are of different lengths, thus altering the perceived position of the indented lines, even though the indentation itself never changes.

By way of illustration, the first example, lines 277-8, has already been quoted above. Here, the preceding and succeeding line each reach into the indentation, though not surpassing it. They could be compared, visually speaking, to a jaw vice with the indented lines securely in the middle.

The repetition, i. e. lines 290-1, looks different already. The preceding line ends where the indented line begins and the

succeeding one again reaches into the indentation. If we compare the two illustrated examples visually, the second instance looks, due to the short reaching preceding line (that is line 298), as if it had been moved further toward the page centre than the first instance. In reality, the two examples have the same position – only the environment has changed.

Line 306 then comes with several changes – only the indentation stays the same. The reminiscence of the Wagner sing-song occupies only one line and is much shortened. In addition, lala has been split up into two words, creating more space. Again it is the environment that plays a crucial role in the visual effect. The preceding line ends short of the indented line, even shorter than line 289; and after “la la”, there is a blank line. Both those circumstances plus the space within the indented line, created by the split of lala and the shortness of the line, let line 306 appear much more autonomous than the two examples before. While the first one is firmly stuck between lines, only reaching outside, and the second one has already more space above, the “la la”-line practically hovers in free space.

Further reasons why the two paragraphs might leave the visual impression of fragmentariness and incoherence, might be on the one hand the actual blank line (between lines 295 and -6), whereas in the example paragraph from “A Game of Chess”, the first blank space comes after the example, that is before the pub scene; and on the other hand the varying line lengths. From 267 to 298, the lines are comparatively short, creating a staccato rhythm. A rhythm might still be detected from line 292 onwards, the lines are however longer and vary more amongst each other. The staccato rhythm from before cannot be kept up here.

Other long indentations can be found in “Death by Water”, in lines 315 and 319; lines 346 and 423 in “What the Thunder Said”; and, in the same chapter, the already mentioned final line.

“Death by Water” is with its only ten lines astoundingly short when compared to the rest of the poem, and by far the shortest chapter of all five. Two long indentations within so little space are therefore bound to attract attention. Since the two indented lines share two important features, they do not cause as much fragmentariness as they could by indentation, but possibly even add a certain sense of system to the chapter. The two common features are the indentation length and the position of the indentation with regard to the environment: both line 315 and 319 start their indentation right where the preceding line ends, depicting the possibility of a smooth transition between the indented line and the line before. Due to the length of the indentations, wide space is again created to the left of the lines. A first look at the chapter could therefore, as we had it before, make believe that there are two blank lines, while “Death by Water” is in fact one block of text without any space lines.

The space to the left of lines 315 and -19 is created through the indentations; the space above is created through indentation and the length of the preceding line. The two indented lines can only have the same indentation and additionally start at an equal position – i.e. the end of the respective preceding line – because the preceding lines are of the exact same length. Therefore, while the indentations seem to be the centre of layout design here, the design already starts long before that what eventually catches the reader’s eye. The indentation of line 315 would not amount to much space above it, were not line 314 shorter than lines 312 and -13. The design held in store for line 315 therefore already begins with the length of line 312.

What remains visible to the reader, even if unconsciously, is a pattern, built through the repetition of two long lines, one short line and one indented line. Even lines 316 and 320, i.e. the successors of the indented lines, are, except for the comma at the end of line 320, of the same length. That

supports the building of a visual pattern immeasurably, since with it the surroundings of the two indented lines are basically the same in both cases. The two indented lines are not the same length – it is however only one word that makes the difference, which, the equality in all other visual feature considered, does not disturb the repeated pattern much. Also the full stops at the end of lines 314 and -18 add to the pattern, insomuch as they are another visual feature that is repeated in the same position.

To arrive at a theory as to the reason for all those undertakings, it would have to be imagined what the opposite of the status quo of “Death by Water” would look like. If lines 315 and -19 were not indented at all, the chapter would be one continuous text block. Since ten or more continuous lines without any remarkable spaces in between are not the rarest event in *The Waste Land*, the thought of “Death by Water” having that end-to-end look is, visually speaking, not exactly atrocious. However, the current visual components might add to the visual attractiveness of “Death by Water”, insomuch as they let it appear more vivid, in a way that a continuous text block alone could never achieve. In all other cases of ten or more continuous lines, it has to be remembered that they are paragraphs imbedded in longer chapters. In those cases, longer paragraphs without any visual breaks could present welcome changes from other paragraphs that seem more fragmentary. That means that in those cases, seemingly unremarkable paragraphs (visually speaking) serve a visual purpose just the same, namely that of normality or opposition to prevailing fragmentariness.

Within “Death by Water”, all that cannot be the case, due to the shortness of the chapter. With regard to its position in the poem as a whole, a chapter that consists of one continuous block might indeed serve as a break from fragmentariness (especially since it immediately follows the stirring fragments of the ending

of “The Fire Sermon”); but within itself, it might be unflattering to the chapter in a visual sense to have no indentations or other visual effects. To follow that theory, the state of “Death by Water”, with the pattern set up not only by indentations, but also by the composition of line length, could well be there to serve as an enticer.

That would mean that the looks of “Death by Water” are there to attract the reader’s interest for the short chapter and thus regard and appreciate it as a thing of its own and not just as part of a bigger text. Whatever adds to the text – and the cunningly composed pattern here does – adds to its capability to stand alone and dissociated from other text parts. Without its visual extravagancies, “Death by Water” might still have the same weight intertextually, but it also might have the look of something merely shoved in between two longer chapters. It might look like something that for some reason received the right to be its own chapter, but could visually not be distinguished from other longer continuous paragraphs, wherewith the right on autonomy would not be comprehensible other than on possible intertextual grounds. As it is, however, the chapter has a pattern of its own, one that is not to be found repeated in other parts of *The Waste Land*, and can thus produce a reason for autonomy that goes beyond content. Once more, therefore, it is a visual aspect of *The Waste Land* that supports the content.

As has been remarked before, other outstanding indentations can be found in lines 346 and 423. Whole paragraphs divide them, yet they should not be dismissed as utterly unconnected, particularly as they occur in the same chapter. The two lines share two features: they are both concerned with water and their indentations have the same length. In *The Waste Land*, that could already mean much, but certainly does not have to. Apart from those two features, the two lines differ in several aspects.

With regard to the similarity of the indentation, those differences could however be investigated not as a hindrance to association of one with the other, but as a change or development that takes place somewhere or all the way between the two examples.

From doors of mudcracked houses
If there were water
And no rock
If there were rock
And also water

(Eliot 17)

Line 346, “If there were water”, should not be regarded as dissociated from its surrounding because of the indentation. The theme of the absence of water already starts in line 331 and continues throughout the paragraph leading up to the indented line. Line 335 even reads: “If there were water we should stop and drink”, and only three lines later an emphasised lamentation occurs: “If there were only water amongst the rock” (Eliot 16). With the indented line 346, the drought-themed paragraph finds change and at the same time continuation. The words of the line are not new at that point of the text, yet the reutterance in connection with the long indentation adds stress to them. That stress could even be described as poignancy or insistence, the dreariness of the forerunning paragraph and the fatality of thirst and drought considered. The content of the line is therefore a continuation of the paragraph, but its visual aspect suggests emphasis.

That is not the only possible change or interruption detectable in the indentation. If the paragraph ended with line 346, it might just be regarded as a strong emphasis on the drought. If those were the poignant closing words of the paragraph, they could be interpreted as an ending in which there is no end: the conditional in the line would remain unfulfilled, which would heighten the infinity of suffering under thirst.

For a short moment, the reader's eye might indeed be tricked into believing that those were the closing words, due to the – now already seemingly old – ruse of the creation of space. The long indentation once again serves as fodder for the mirage of a blank line. And were the content of the ensuing lines (347-358) of a different nature, the indentation could also be regarded as a break in the narration that wants to connect two storylines and yet distinguish between them – but that is not the case, for the draught continues for the rest of the paragraph: line 346 is followed by a slightly indented text block, touched upon in the direct quote given above, that cannot only be tied in content to the preceding lines, but also logically to the indented line: the conditional of line 346 is not concluded in its succeeding line – and, for that matter, also not in the lines to come – but prolonged. That prolongation is in text logically tied to the indented line, first through “And” in line 347, then through the reintroduction of “If” in lines 348 and 352.

But lines 347-358, i.e. the text block following the indented line, are not a mere continuation of the draught theme – they bring a change into the theme. On the one hand, line length and therewith rhythm change drastically; on the other hand, there is the indentation. There are several indentations in *The Waste Land*, also pairs of lines and with the German Wagner quotation even a quadruplet – but never before or after a block of thirteen lines. The indentation is not long, but still could not be missed. The main reason why a short indentation is enough here to attract attention, could well be found in the space over which it stretches: had only one single line the short indentation, it would stick out considerably less. On the other hand, were the indentation of the text block in question stronger, it could be harder for the reader to tie the text to the preceding lines as fast as the content would demand.

That leads to the question why line 346 had to have a long indentation at all, when the text to which it logically belongs is already indented. As has been hinted at before, line 346 brings change and at the same time continuation to its predecessors. It could be regarded as a bridge or transition between two text parts that are kindred in theme, but differ in communication of the theme. “The chief function of one word is to lead the mind to the next” – that theory would not have to stop at the word, but could also account for a whole line. After all, the sentence begun in line 346 is not grammatically finished with the end of the line. And so the reader would have “to move forward until the [...] affiliations are complete” (Donoghue 114).

The change in communication is heralded by the long indentation and subsequently present in a long block of short indentation. Were line 346 not indented, the change would still be present in the indented block, yet possibly not as outstanding as it is now. Line 346 makes it stand out, first of all in content, because it places the logical beginning of the block (i.e. the first part of a conditional) in an extraordinary position; and secondly, in a visual respect, for it allows the indented block space above, created through the long indentation.

A conditional of what there would be if there were water, is in total begun five times in the entire paragraph (i.e. lines 331-358). Only once it is also finished: “If there were water we should stop and drink”. After the lamentations and descriptions of draught provided sumptuously in lines 331-345, line 346 seems like a bracing-up for the final conditional. It is, as has been said before, never finished, but only prolonged. If the entire indented block could be regarded as one single conditional that is repeatedly renewed and reinforced, the indentation of a whole text block seems to receive new justification: the visual aspect heightens the cohesiveness of the block.

To return to the beginning of the discussion on hand, namely the comparison – if one can be made – between lines 346 and 423, that analysis is now one step further, since there is now an understanding of how the first of the two examples may be regarded. As a reminder, it is two features the two lines share, why they stand in comparison at all: the same indentation length and the prevailing theme of water.

That theme has changed greatly over the roughly eighty lines between. While it is the absence of water that only makes the one line possible, it is the presence of water that brings the other into being, when the narrative I suddenly sits “upon the shore” (Eliot 19). Despite their opposite water situations, the two lines have a similar distance to their respective situation: line 346 does not explicitly state that there is no water – yet it is clear from the conditional that there is none; line 423 does not explicitly state that there is water – yet the mention of the shore is a good case to believe that there is water, which is seemingly confirmed in the succeeding line with the reference to fishing. But even though there might be water, the person is still not in it, but above it.

While the theme has changed, so also has the indentation or rather what it does to the line it decorates. Line 346 juts out from under a paragraph, while line 423 protrudes over its succeeding lines. Line 346 also has text following it, the lines of which are however short enough to give line 346 blank space underneath. Line 423 on the other hand has text underneath, yet above it two full blank lines. It could be said that the one example, visually speaking, has a roof but no bottom; and the other example has firm ground on which to stand and lean over, but no roof above. The “roof” over line 346 has to some degree already been explained: it is the paragraph out of which the indented line develops. There is a connection in content that lets

line 346 and all the lines before literally touch upon each other, while the change is visible in its protrusion.

I sat upon the shore
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me

(Eliot 19)

The indented line in the example above is severed by two blank lines from its preceding paragraph. There might be a connection in content – which is as hard to determine as anywhere else in *The Waste Land* – but if there is, it is not as discernible as in the example of line 346. There is mention of a boat five lines before, which could, but does not have to stand in relation to the shore in line 423. As line 346 stands in relation with its succeeding lines and even belongs logically with them (“And no rock” as a continuation of the conditional “If there were water”), a clear relation can also be seen between line 423 and its succeeding line, all indentations aside. “I sat upon the shore [f]ishing” might as well be one line, if we only look at the meaning. As it is, the case of the indentation could be an example of typographical visualisation of a situation that is else only portrayed in text:

There is a personal pronoun in line 424, but the narrative I occurs in the protruding line. The person speaking therefore, while in words sitting upon the shore, also literally sits upon its two succeeding lines. We have to imagine a person sitting at the (presumably) sea, in a position in which it is possible to fish – possibly on a landing stage or gangplank. For a person standing on a flat sand strip, fishing would be rather hard. Some sort of construction that juts out a little over the edge of the water is therefore assumable. Even if we still assume the person standing on the level beach holding a fishing rod, the rod would protrude over the edge of the water and not stop right at the border – after all, the text says “Fishing” and not “holding a rod over dry sand,

stopping short of the water”. The protrusion of the narrative I by means of the indentation would therefore be reflected in the protrusion of the body from land toward water.

That the action of fishing is helpful for this theory, but only occurs in the line after the visual protrusion, does not defy the theory. It is first the position of the person that is depicted, only then the action follows, substantiating the water-related position. This could be regarded as a continuation, or superlative even, of the prevailing theory that a poem may be treated as “an imitation of the experience of the subject” (Culler 109)

But the picture painted with help of the indentation does not end there. With lines 424 and -5 stopping about halfway into the indented line 423, the latter has blank space underneath its second half. Visually speaking, that blank space could easily represent the open sea, while the lines, i.e. the ground under the first half of line 423 would represent the land or the shore over which the narrative I is leaning. This would be backed up by the fact that English as a Latin language is read from left to right: the movement in the lines on hand is therefore from the land away toward the sea, i.e. in accord with the movement of protruding over the edge, and in accord with the direction in which the narrative I would be looking.

Also the content of the first follow-up line works with the theory: “with the arid plain behind me”. When the narrative I is facing the sea, which is to the reader in the 2-D world of the paper to the right, the I has automatically line 424 in its back, respectively underneath it. The words “arid plain” are still not in the part of the line intersecting with line 423 and are therefore “behind” the narrative I. The theory that the lines underneath the indented one could be regarded as solid ground or land, would therewith also be sustained.

A year after *The Waste Land* was published, Eliot distinguished between the “narrative” and the “mythical method”, both

methods of fiction. The former would be the one easy to grasp for the reader: there is a difference between subject and object. Meaning is communicated through words mostly and that also in an unalienating way. The latter “is based on immediate experience”, where the distinction between subject and object is blurry at best, or rather not existent. Donoghue gives the persona of Tiresias as a perfect example (124), another application of Eliot’s theory would however not have to be ruled out. That the narrative I becomes one with the line in which it speaks, and said line one with the position it describes, could be a possible application of the subject-object theory. Here also, the immediate experience that the reader makes when visually taking in words and lines outside a position that would be regarded as “commonplace”, plays a role: the reader reads of the person sitting on the shore in the same moment as seeing a line protruding over another line. The reader thus has an immediate experience of both subject and object, between which the boundaries are clearly vanishing.

3.2. GOING LENGTHS

The use of space has so far been discussed in relation to the active creation of space with indentations. It could be said that indentations enabled Eliot to use space horizontally, since with the length of the indentation he decided how broad to make a line. But the use of space must be limited neither to the horizontal level, nor to the factor of active creation – quite on the contrary, line length may say a thing or two about vertical use of space.

The easy way would be to say, a long line uses more space, a short line less. But already in the chapter on indentations, it has been established that the use of space is not limited to the space

filled by print. On the contrary, space, actual blank space, can be said to be used exactly because it has intentionally not been filled. While indentations were an example of horizontal space used through the active creation of unfilled space, this chapter will deal with vertical space use.

After all, the shortness of a line says nothing about its significance. A poet has not less to say if their lines are short (or in Eliot's case: shorter than in other places of the poem). When Eliot opts for a line break and thus cuts a possibly cohesive sentence in half (or more lines), the content is simply presented vertically and not horizontally. That decision may well influence the portrayal and reception of the lines – it is, after all, an effect on the visual style – but the content itself only relocated and did not change in words. Thus, with intentionally short lines, Eliot does two things: first, he uses filled space (as opposed to blank space) vertically instead of horizontally; and second, he still uses the blank space horizontally, even though not creating it actively as he did with indentations.

If a short line in *The Waste Land* is however autonomous, that is, not clearly grammatically part of a phrase broken into two or more lines, the theory on vertically filled space cannot apply, since in that case Eliot does not create multiple lines through a line break; but he would still use blank space horizontally – even increasingly, due to the shortness of the line. It could therefore be said that an indentation is an active creation of space (because here Eliot would actively use the blank space for the positioning of his words, respectively actively position his words in a way that seemingly more space is created), whereas a comparatively short line is a passive creation of blank (horizontal) space. The latter could still be regarded as a creation of space, since there is unarguably comparatively more blank space than in a longer line. The adjective “passive” could then be added because the focus

would still lie on the words of the line and not on the blank space next to them, while the indentations were in most cases, as established, worked into the content of the lines. Indentations are moreover an intentional feature, whereas with a short line it could never be proven that a creation of space was the intention behind the shortness of the line.

While line length varies throughout *The Waste Land*, lines so short that they stick out because of their shortness are rather rare. The German Wagner passage in “The Burial of the Dead” would be an example, but it is merely a quote. It might be, the shortness of the lines were another aspect Eliot liked about them and that he wanted to introduce an in-between change in line length; but it might as well be he liked the quote despite the line length or that it had nothing to do with his choice.

There is however one passage in *The Waste Land* of comparatively short lines that deserves a closer look. Lines 266-291 immediately catch the reader’s eye because of length: on the one hand, because the lines are visibly shorter than in surrounding passages; on the other, because the passages themselves are long enough to let the short lines not be swallowed up by their surroundings. Moreover, the passage is granted blank space before and/or after, which gives it even more of a stage. This again proves that a short line does not at all equal a meagre line: Eliot simply spread the content vertically for a change.

The question is of course: why, all of a sudden, much shorter lines? The answer could lie in the rhythm. It is not as if Eliot’s longer lines had no rhythm – but in those shorter lines it is more identifiable in analysis and more inevitable during reading. In longer lines, the reader still has the possibility, at least in parts, to decide whether to read them rhythmically or narratively, like a work of prose. That option is blotted out when

the beat is clearly dictated beginning with the line: “The river sweats” (Eliot 14). The paragraph following that line may well be connected to the preceding one in content, as the theme of water is already introduced before. Nevertheless, a blank line comes before the paragraph in question (starting with line 266) and thus offers the new form of shorter lines its own stage – Eliot does everything to make the beat, and with that a possible rhythm, stand out.

In the water theme of the lines, a more specific theme of swaying is detectable: “drift” and “drifting”, “swing”, “wash”, but also other things that would add to the drifting or swinging, such as “brisk swell”, “rippled” and “wind” (Eliot 14 f.). A log drifting and swaying in the tides can be a very rhythmical thing. The rhythm of the swaying sea is influenced by several factors such as wind, hence subject to change, but still perceivable as a rhythmic sound or motion. Also with the “turning tide”, Eliot points to the rhythm of nature. Just as waves or streams can swell and abate, Eliot’s lines in this specific paragraph are far from the exact same length, but can be read in the same rhythm: from lines 266 to 271, a two-four time bar is discernible, in which each line consist of one two-four measure. The bar can be kept up beyond line 271, though with changes (for example, line 272 is longer, therefore consists of two two-fours). Together with the barges of line 268, the reader drifts to and fro, in short intervals, the end of one short line washing one’s eyes to the beginning of the next. But the swaying effect is not the only one achieved here:

The logical two-four measure is, from a rhythmical standpoint, basically impossible to destruct in those first lines; but since the individual lines vary in length, it is necessary to adapt the reading of the words to the beat. While the first three lines of the example on hand stay at three words each and then swell up to four words “[w]ith the turning tide”, we shrink down

to two and finally to one word in lines 270 and -71, each word consisting moreover of only one syllable. “Red sails” can therefore not be read just as fast as line 270 would have to be read to meet the two-four beat. In other words, the “Red sails” have to widen a little to fill out the measure, and it might not be a coincidence that the very next line reads: “Wide”. That line then is even shorter and has to be lengthened even more to keep up the beat (the alternative being the second of the two beats falling on silence, also fitting the abundance of blank space in line 271), which again fits the content of the line. Not only does Eliot thus widen the sails and widen the word “Wide”; he also connects the two lines by expanding the meta level begun in the one onto the next. Moreover, he actually manages to put into a word (“Wide”) what is happening with “Red sails” – thus describing the one line with the other.

4. PUNCTUATION

4.1. A DIALECTIC MYSTERY

Entangling the dialectic mystery of *The Waste Land* could be one on many levels. The voices in the poem seem to be several – how many, no one can say; let alone, which of them could be Eliot’s own or whether none or all of them are his own. What the reader gets, is different stories that sound as if told by different people; different speaking styles; presumable conversations and possible monologues; and even different languages – what to make of all that is where the mystery begins. While one might explain it as a larger number of voices that can be traced back to one dramatic voice, so to say the primordial voice, in earlier works by Eliot (Chinitz 326), another sees the voices as “shattered” and fitting the fragmentariness of the poem (Froula 275). While one might be trying to identify speakers in certain passages and then declares it impossible (Jain 134), another is sure to detect two voices, which stay for stasis on the one hand and movement on the other (Moody 125 f.).

While finding voices, and finding out what they say, whose they are and into what they develop, could be enough work for a thesis of its own, this one is not so much concerned with identifying characters, but rather with the techniques Eliot uses to make *The Waste Land* a dialectic mystery in the first place. The most obvious and easiest feature to indicate speech would be inverted commas, into the use – and possible lack – of which this chapter will look. While spacing, discussed in the previous chapter, is technically also part of punctuation, this part of the thesis means to discuss printed punctuation marks, more precisely full stops and quotation marks, the latter being of consequence to the “dialectic mystery” as described above.

Quotation marks are commonly accepted indicators of direct speech, and there are plenty of them in *The Waste Land*. Had Eliot however used them straightforwardly and consistently to indicate speech, there might be less of a mystery of who is speaking. To be sure, inverted commas cannot indicate who the speaker is; but if kept up systematically, they would at least make sure when Eliot meant to let a person speak and when to stay in the narrative form. That could have been basis for the theory that anything said without quotation marks is Eliot's voice in contrast to other people marked by inverted commas. But in the real *Waste Land*, those markers just blur things even more. Eliot furnishes the hyacinth girl with inverted commas, but does not do the same to Madame Sosostris or Marie, the woman from Lithuania in "The Burial of the Dead"; he points out in the notes that line 257 is a reference to "The Tempest" (Eliot 24), evoking the belief the quotation marks could really have to do with quoting a source, but opts in a similar quoting situation for italics (lines 31 etc. and line 42); he lets the pub scene run without any quotation marks and puts the interrupting barkeeper in capital letters, but in lines 111-130 ostensibly lets the reader differentiate between two speaking parties by allowing one to come in commas and the other in indentations. If Eliot follows a system in his use of inverted commas, it seems to be to systematically confuse us.

On more than one occasion Eliot uses running opening quotation marks, which means that the marks are opened and re-opened in one or more consecutive lines, but only closed in the last line. The opening quotation marks therefore do not indicate a new speaker each time, but belong all to one and the same speaker. That is a not uncommon feature used in literature, usually applied in longer speech paragraphs or when a speech runs without interruption over several paragraphs, in order to re-

establish that still the same person is talking. In the case of Eliot's use of it, it is quite different:

From lines 69 to 76, the inverted commas are opened with every line and only closed in the last. Since the lines are rather long, the reader could not at first glance take in both the start and end of the lines. Thus, should the reader's eyes first fix on the left-hand side of the passage, they would only see opening quotation marks and could believe that the lines are a conversation, with each line belonging to another person. Only during reading, the text reveals itself to be a monologue, albeit by one person clearly addressing a second. Is that short misleading already enough to explain Eliot's overuse of commas, or might there be more to it? The answer might lie in the addressee, Stetson, and the content of those lines. Although all Eliot gives away in the notes on the passage are literary sources from which he is drawing, a war context might not be hard to identify here. *The Waste Land* was written in the interbellum years and even though Eliot did not serve in World War I, he was living in a country involved in it and must have felt its weight and terror, respectively the weight of the post-war years. It is not unlikely either that Eliot lost friends in the war or saw homecoming soldiers of his acquaintance suffer under their experiences. In the poem, Stetson is addressed as a comrade from Mylae, an ancient battle (Eliot, North 7), and asked about a corpse in his garden, before the closing line drawing from Baudelaire's "Au Lecteur", a text concerned with the evil in humans (<https://www.enotes.com/topics/reader-charles-baudelaire>). Ellmann detects reminiscences of the war in some of Eliot's earlier work, but not less in *The Waste Land*. What she detects is not so much descriptions of the war or of the desolateness after, but indeed allusions to the dead – and that in an uncanny way. She sees the poem "haunted by the repetition of the dead – in the form of mimicry, quotation and pastiche" (268 f.). While she does not go into detail about those last three

nouns, all three could be attributed to the Stetson passage: it quotes Baudelaire (without using quotation marks) and uses inverted commas for the speech. The overuse of the inverted commas makes a mimicry of both them and the absurdity of the conversation – one that is due to the address and abundance of questions meant to be a conversation, but will never become one. It will forever remain a pastiche of questions without answers, the past (going as far back as Mylae), and what might be (if the dog digs it up).

Also Froula detects war casualties in the poem and focuses on the Stetson passage. For her, there seems to be no question that the reader is in the position of the “fellow war veteran”, hence Stetson himself (276). Her not elaborating on the reason why the reader could not just as well be a bystander, evokes the theory that the quotation marks might have played an unconscious role there:

What might let the passage appear as such an odd one is that Stetson is not even allowed to return the greeting, much less answering the questions (at least not visibly to the reader) – a circumstance only heightened by the persistently re-opened quotation marks. Those are Eliot’s visual signal to remind the reader, time and again, that there is no time for answers – which on a book page comes down to ‘no space’ for answers – and possibly not even time for the interrogator to catch his breath between the questions. Froula might have unconsciously interpreted the situation as one in which the reader is not given time to answer, since the end of one long line only drags you to re-opening quotation marks that once again signal you that you are still not the one to speak.

There remains the question why Eliot would want to communicate such a signal? As so often, the answer might lie in the question itself: the one who cannot speak is Stetson, therefore the reason must lie with him. All we know about

Stetson is that he used to serve in the forces, and we have to consider what we know in order to form an opinion of what might be. If war therefore forms our understanding of Stetson and that same person cannot say even one word, we must conclude that war is the reason for his muteness. War-related reasons could now be found plenty: the muteness on paper equals absence – Stetson might not even be there, for all the reader knows. That means he might not be there because he died on the battlefield; or he might be there physically, but has, due to a war trauma, not recovered enough to be there with his full attention – in other words, he might be there physically, but since the war he is no longer the same person. Stetson could stand for more than just one person, but for many a soldier, and the interrogator thus for many a survivor that lost a friend.

There is another possibility, based on the assumption that Stetson is indeed there, but that Eliot does not want him to be able to answer. Could it be that Stetson is all this time actually trying to answer, but is just being continually interrupted? The repeated inverted commas could stand for the relentlessness of the interrogator. The commas being at some point more than enough, they could thus easily mirror the unnerving quality of a person that would not let you answer. Donoghue writes, “Stetson is the name of an interrogation” (116) and an unfair interrogation it is, where the subject is bombarded by questions, put more and more under pressure, and not allowed to answer – this again could be related to war.

But whichever allusion was actually on Eliot’s mind, the technique always lies in the re-opening quotation marks that send an over-emphasising signal to the reader with every line – a signal that reminds the reader that there might be many questions, but there will be no answers.

4.2. ON FULL STOPS AND FULL-ON COMMAS

When critics and readers speak of *The Waste Land* as fragmentary or are having a hard time pigeonholing it, one aspect that might be continuously contributing to that is Eliot's use of periods and commas; for, due to long lines in the poem and the meticulous application of commas and semicolons, a certain feeling of prose is often conveyed. Also, Eliot seems to have an inclination to put full stops in the midst of a line. Thus, the feeling of prose is communicated with one sentence ending and the next beginning in the same line – a feeling that is ultimately substituted by a swing toward verse, when a line breaks into the next without period or comma, and, spatially speaking, without having met its necessary end. Just as longer and shorter lines, and with them beats and rhythm, vary in *The Waste Land* and often come in bundles that are to be taken over by others ere long, so can also accumulations of commas and periods be made out.

Already in the first paragraph of the poem, commas can be observed to serve two effects – and two very different ones at that. On the one hand, there are the commas in lines 8-18, in which Marie tells of herself and past times; on the other, there are the commas in lines 1-6.

Marie's commas can be regarded as a crucial part of her manner of speech and of how Eliot wants to portray her. While they are always grammatically correct, they are nowhere absolutely indispensable. Five of the commas in those few lines are put before "and". Not only would they not have to be there in each case to justify the sentence grammatically, they could also easily be replaced by full stops, thus creating more, naturally shorter, sentences. Obviously, Eliot did not want that – he wanted Marie to ramble on and give her the opportunity to pile up memory

over memory. Also Bedient compares the way those lines are presented to “chatter” (16) and believes they are composed to let Marie become “tiresome” (20). Were her reminiscences many short lines with full stops rather than fewer lines with many commas, she would still say the same amount – her thoughts however would be likely to appear more thought-through and self-contained, while in the actual poem she is directly going from one half-sentence to the next. This could also be regarded as fitting the content of the lines: Marie tells of her life, of the past, but also of who she is (“I read, much of the night” (Eliot 5)), and the parts of the lines framed by commas could represent the various stages and aspects of life, in which everything hangs together and hardly any part is detached from other parts of one’s existence.

What the commas in the first six lines do to the reader, is of a different nature:

“April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.”
(Eliot 5)

Since this structure – the final word of the line dangling after the comma and contextually belonging to the following line – is in its repetition (three lines, one line with full stop, two lines, one line with full stop) one of a kind in the entire poem, Eliot achieves something with it even apart from all further analysis: instant uniqueness. The reader naturally cannot know at this point that the rest of *The Waste Land* will be very different – but luckily there is still much more to find in the peculiar arrangement of those first lines.

The structure with the final word after the comma can be read in different ways. Since the final word in each case belongs to the follow-up line as far as meaning goes, it could be regarded as a herald or advancement; but also as borrowed or severed from the line it actually belongs to. It is therefore, since everyone can see it differently, at once the active initiator of progress (the follow-up line already in coming) and the lonely preface that is never in its proper place. The same vast choice for the reader can be found with regard to stress and rhythm: if the lines are read as the arrangement suggests it, there is at least a short rhythmic pause between the end of one and the beginning of the next line. Since however that end and beginning belong together in context, said pause adds stress to the line ending. This stress is, due to the arranged circumstances of the comma and the line break, significantly greater than if for example “breeding” were pushed to the next line. Once the reader has grasped this peculiar arrangement, they could decide to adapt their reading rhythm to the meaning of the lines. The result would be, for example, reading: “April is the cruellest month”, and only then after a short rhythmic pause: “breeding Lilacs out of the dead land”. That would mean that Eliot had with his design forced his own readers to take a detour and disregard exactly that design – and that at the very beginning of the poem.

Apart from the reader’s rhythmical choices, there is still Eliot’s intent to discuss: why would he construct the beginning of the poem as he did? There must be a reason besides uniqueness and emphasis, and it reminds of the theory of representative metre or, as Finch terms it, “the theory of propriety”. According to that theory, “metrical passages [...] carry particular [...] meanings”, like a “custom-made expressive significance” (in Holder 117 f.). Looking closer at the April passage, we can detect movement and change: it is spring, the time of the year when nature re-

awakes; the land is dead and yet there is breeding; things mix and stir; and there are memories indicating other times, such as the winter of which the next three lines tell. All this might not exactly scream “circle of life”, but it gets close to that. Eliot creates a specific metre with his comma-final-word structure, and with regard to the purport of the lines, it can be said that exactly that peculiar structure reflects the theme of revolving life. One line cannot exist without the one before and the end of every line only makes sense with what follows it. The lines are co-dependant until the flow finally oozes away with the full stop in line 4, respectively 7. This may be reinforced by Jeffries’ reminder that “metre in twentieth-century poetry is the free choice of the poet” and that thus, when it is used, it “tend[s] to be symbolic”. Also how fluctuating rhythms, respectively the mix of the presence and absence of metre became common in the twentieth century (42), is for the first, yet as we know definitely not last time, realised when with line 8 the metre of the first lines is skipped, the lines become longer and the narrative mode takes over, with the afore described “rambling commas”. This marks a change that must not necessarily be regarded as abrupt or unplanned, or as an indication of fragmentariness. The first seven lines and what comes afterwards may indeed not stand in relation to each other; however, Eliot indirectly points that out to the reader exactly by changing the metre and line length. He thus makes the fragments – if they indeed be called so – at least discernible as fragments. It is understandable when critics are overwhelmed with what they call “inconsequence” or “discontinuity” in *The Waste Land* (Gardner, North 78) – yet the transition identifiable in those first lines might be an example of discontinuity presented in an indeed very consequent light.

In the end, all this, just as so much else about *The Waste Land*, will lie in the eye of the beholder, be they simple reader or learned critic – for what is a clear transition to Chinitz (326), is

no switch-signal at all for Bedient (16). Just as Eliot may have chopped his poem into fragments, he also divided the opinion on it, and that already with the very first paragraph.

5. CONCLUSION

It has been the aim of this thesis to examine the use of punctuation and typography in *The Waste Land*, as well as the poem's form and the shaping of it. It has been, on the constant basis of examples drawn from the text, examined how spacing, indentations, commas, periods, inverted commas, italics and capitalisation could be interpreted and treated as active and/or passive contributors not only to the shape of the text, but also its effect on the reader, the rhythm and in part even the textual meaning. The underlying hypothesis has therein always been that Eliot's use of the above-mentioned features was conscious and, to a great extent, deliberate.

By referring to a great number of examples and discussing them in detail, it has been shown that a deliberate employment of certain typographical, spatial and punctuational features – in varying styles and to varying degrees – is demonstrable and their respective effects on reader and meaning justifiable. The theories on possible meanings have to a certain degree taken into account content- and theme-based interpretations already in existence. Since former theories have touched upon the parameters of this thesis only marginally, if at all, extensive alignments and/or comparisons have not been achievable within the scope of this thesis. A more thorough integration of existing or new theories that seek to interpret *The Waste Land* on a wholly content-related basis, into herein ventured theories on design-related interpretation, could therefore be the goal of future studies. Possible results of such studies might prove to be of significant value to the literary world, given that *The Waste Land* is still regarded as an exemplary work of modernist poetry, but also still leaves the impression of an “unsolved mystery”.

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7. APPENDIX

7.1. ABSTRACT ENGLISH

The Waste Land by T. S. Eliot, published in 1922, is certainly one of the best-known poems in the English language. Even people who have never read it, often have at least heard of it. Though by many regarded as too melancholic, not a real poem (because of its form and/or length), or simply heavily confusing, the Waste Land may well be called an instant classic and a most important component of 20th century poetry. After all, Eliot was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948 – though not for The Waste Land alone, certainly also for The Waste Land as part of his work, which was on the whole considered an “outstanding, pioneer contribution to present-day poetry”. Eliot himself is still referred to as “one of the most daring innovators of twentieth-century poetry” on the homepage of the Nobel prize (http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1948/eliot-bio.html).

The focus of this master thesis will lie on the importance of typography, punctuation and rhythm (as achieved through typography and punctuation) in The Waste Land. Those aspects of the poem may be deemed greatly important since the author himself said prior to the first publication of his poem:

“I only hope the printers are not allowed to bitch the punctuation and the spacing, as that is very important for the sense”

(Eliot, Rainey 45).

When an author speaks about details of his own work as Eliot did, it is not hard for any critic to realise, special attention should be paid not merely to what is written, but to how it is written. As a consequence, it might be possible to detect further, until then unseen, meaning, once the How has been analyzed. During proofreading his text, Eliot even happened to overlook one or another spelling mistake, which shows how important punctuation and spacing were to him, since that was on which he was really focusing.

It is almost invigorating to find The Waste Land bursting with the importance of punctuation and form. The length of the lines set rhythms that coincide with the content of the lines; the absence of quotation marks where there is obviously a dialogue held and the abundance of quotation marks in other places where they seem almost confusing to the reader, give way to thoughts on conversation; and the various indentations of lines verge on experimental layout design. All these examples and many more,

emphasised by the fact that Eliot cared about typography and punctuation in his poem more than about possible spelling mistakes, speak of an importance in *The Waste Land* that goes beyond letters. Here we do not have to read between the lines – we have to read *the* lines.

7.2. ABSTRACT GERMAN

The Waste Land von T. S. Eliot, veröffentlicht im Jahre 1922, ist zweifellos eines der bekanntesten Gedichte englischer Sprache. Selbst viele, die es nie gelesen haben, haben bereits davon gehört. Obwohl oftmals als zu melancholisch bezeichnet, nicht als echtes Gedicht angesehen (aufgrund seiner Form und/oder Länge), oder als zu verwirrend, ist The Waste Land dennoch ein wahrer Klassiker und wichtiger Bestandteil der Lyrik des 20. Jahrhunderts. Es darf auch nicht vergessen werden, dass Eliot 1948 den Literaturnobelpreis erhielt – wenn auch nicht für The Waste Land alleine, so wohl auch für The Waste Land als Teil seines Gesamtwerkes, welches als “outstanding, pioneer contribution to present-day poetry” [hervorstechende Pionierleistung zur Gegenwartslyrik] bezeichnet wurde. Eliot selbst wird auf der Homepage des Nobelpreises immer noch beschrieben als “one of the most daring innovators of twentieth-century poetry” [einer der mutigsten Wegbereiter in der Poesie des 20. Jahrhunderts] (http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1948/eliot-bio.html).

Der Fokus dieser Masterarbeit wird auf der Wichtigkeit von Typographie, Interpunktion und Rhythmus (durch Typographie und Interpunktion) in The Waste Land liegen. Diesen Aspekten des Gedichtes kann große Bedeutung zugemessen werden, wenn die Worte des Autors vor der ersten Publikation herangezogen werden:

“I only hope the printers are not allowed to bitch the punctuation and the spacing, as that is very important for the sense” [Ich hoffe nur, den Druckern wird es nicht gestattet sein, die Interpunktion und Abstände zu vermässeln, da diese sehr wichtig für die Sinnhaftigkeit sind]

(Eliot, Rainey 45).

Wenn ein Autor über Details seiner Arbeit spricht, wie Eliot es tat, so sollte es für Kritiker nicht schwer erkennbar sein, dass nicht nur das, was geschrieben wurde, Aufmerksamkeit verdient, sondern auch, wie es geschrieben wurde. So könnte es möglich sein, weitere, bisher ungesehene, Bedeutungen zu erschließen, wenn erst einmal das Wie analysiert wurde. Während dem Lektorat seines Textes passierte es Eliot sogar, den einen oder anderen Rechtschreibfehler zu übersehen, was nur weiter darauf hindeutet, wie wichtig die Interpunktion und Abstände für ihn waren, auf welche er sich wirklich konzentrierte.

Die überschwemmende Wichtigkeit von Interpunktion und Form in *The Waste Land* ist beinahe erfrischend. Zeilenlängen initiieren Rhythmen, die mit dem Inhalt der Zeilen einhergehen; die Absenz von Anführungszeichen im offensichtlichen Falle eines Dialoges und das Massenaufreten von Anführungszeichen dort, wo sie auf den Leser eher verwirrend wirken, lassen uns Konversationen hinterfragen; und die verschiedenen Zeileneinzüge grenzen an experimentelles Layout-Design. All diese Beispiele und viele mehr, betont durch den Fakt, dass Eliot Typographie und Interpunktion mehr am Herzen lagen als mögliche Rechtschreibfehler, erzählen von einer Signifikanz in *The Waste Land*, die weit über Buchstaben hinausgeht. Hier genügt es nicht, zwischen den Zeilen zu lesen – es gilt, *die* Zeilen zu lesen.