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## CONTENT 4.2

# “THE WASTE LAND” RETRANSLATED: A HISPANO-AMERICAN WAY OF ASSIMILATION

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### **Abstract**

This article seeks to elucidate the process through which I shaped my Spanish language rendition (published last month) of Eliot’s celebrated century-old poem. A driving factor leading to the escalation of *The Waste Land*’s influence among the Ibero-American literary community rests in its multi-layered, plurilingual elaboration and the varied interpretations that have surfaced, many of which explore the author’s penchant for “explain[ing] the convergent form of a gravitational center through the divergent form of an axis of transversality” (Magaril 2014). An intuitive approach, stemming from current research for my PhD dissertation, accompanies this commentary as a method to assess the relevant correspondences and digressions that have been discovered in studies across countries like Spain, Argentina, Mexico and Peru.

Furthermore, based on recent critical work illustrating Eliot’s extensive reception as a modern literary pillar in Latin America (Boll 2012), we can reconstruct the complex network of styles and motifs present in what the poet has deemed “a heap of broken images” (*The Waste Land*, I, 22) considering a downtrodden post-World War society. Following an (inter)generational ladder that is composed of the translated corpus in Spanish will help us navigate the renewed contexts that this modern English poem has come to embody.

This being true not just across vast geographical areas, but in the sense of reappropriation in different places, of a melodious modulation that yearns to revert to aboriginal rhythms, akin to Eliot’s oft-discussed ‘mythical method’ that would later work to “purify the dialect of the tribe” (*Little Gidding*, II). My objective here is to gather these resonances whilst offering a high-fidelity version of the poem with respect to the rhythmic progression observed in each of the five sections, with the end notes included.

### **Résumé**

Cet article vise à élucider le processus par lequel j’ai façonné mon interprétation en espagnol (publiée le mois dernier) du célèbre poème centenaire d’Eliot. L’un des facteurs qui a conduit à l’escalade de l’influence de *The Waste Land* au sein de la communauté littéraire ibéro-américaine réside dans son

élaboration plurilingue à plusieurs niveaux et dans les diverses interprétations qui ont fait surface, dont beaucoup explorent le penchant de l'auteur à « expliquer la forme convergente d'un centre gravitationnel par la forme divergente d'un axe de transversalité » (Magaril 2014). Une approche intuitive, issue de recherches en cours pour ma thèse de doctorat, accompagne ce commentaire comme une méthode d'évaluer les correspondances et digressions pertinentes qui ont été découvertes dans des études menées dans des pays comme l'Espagne, l'Argentine, le Mexique et le Pérou.

En outre, sur la base de travaux critiques récents illustrant la vaste réception d'Eliot en tant que pilier de la littérature moderne en Amérique latine (Boll 2012), nous pouvons reconstruire le réseau complexe de styles et de motifs présents dans ce que le poète a qualifié de « tas d'images brisées » (*The Waste Land*, I, 22), en considérant une société dégradée de l'après-guerre. Nous suivrons l'échelle (inter)générationnelle composée du corpus traduit en espagnol, ce qui nous aidera à naviguer dans les contextes renouvelés que ce poème anglais moderne a fini par incarner.

Ceci n'est pas seulement vrai à travers de vastes zones géographiques, mais dans le sens d'une réappropriation dans différents lieux d'une modulation mélodieuse qui aspire à revenir à des rythmes de la « méthode mythique » souvent évoquée par Eliot, qui permettra plus tard de « purifier le dialecte de la tribu » (Little Gidding, II). Mon objectif ici est de rassembler ces résonances tout en proposant une version haute-fidélité du poème en ce qui concerne la progression rythmique observée dans chacune des cinq sections, avec les notes de fin de texte.

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The premise of the year 1922, known all too well as the *annus mirabilis* of the literary avant-gardes, has been aimed at measuring the various means in which T.S. Eliot's *chef d'œuvre* has aged over the last hundred years, for the first centenary of the publication of *The Waste Land*, across the Hispano-American World. The account of its impact might prove more convoluted today than ever before, given the newer translations of this 433-verse poem that started to surface on the aforementioned literary stage at an astounding rate and, more precisely, since the onset of the twenty-first century, on both sides of the Atlantic.[1]

It is pertinent to inquire about a disseminating principle with which *TWL* has spanned across the Americas, from a geo-political standpoint that could be transposed, in relation to western civilization's ancient and modern city centers:

“Jerusalem Athens Alexandria / Vienna London”. [2] (*TWL*, II. 375-76)

to their possible Meso & South American counterparts:

“Teotihuacán Medellín Cuzco / Santiago de Chile Buenos Aires” [3]

The approximation that follows takes into account some ideas from the lectures presented during the “T.S. Eliot in Translations” International Symposium, held on October 13 & 14, 2022 at Université Paris Cité. It will examine the aspects of *TWL*’s development with regard to its idiomatic variants, whilst partially embarking on post-colonial impressions and their later reception by the current reader’s panorama, toward recipients who confront the text as propitiously engaged individuals. With this in mind, reinstating the crux of the matter in *TWL*’s multi-focal and multi-lingual exchange qualities could allow for the projection of a renewed understanding of Eliot’s effort at the moment of his major 1922 release in the first issue of *The Criterion*.

### **Inhabiting the Tradition from Overseas**

History books have been comprehensive enough when describing the tremendous impact exerted by the Spanish settlers and colonizers on the indigenous populations of Meso-and-South America, ever since Christopher Columbus’ abrupt arrival in 1492. The assimilation carried out by the predominant oral systems, as evoked by the autochthonous tongues of the pre-Columbian era, into the written system of the imposed Spanish language —ruled by grammatical, lexical and syntactical structures set by the *Academia Real de la Lengua*—over to the posterior heights of literary composition, was an arduous and complicated endeavor, traced down the succeeding centuries, until it was adapted into the liberated forms of prose and poetry of the post-Romantic era. These at last came to a global crossroads in the first decades of the twentieth century. As one of the keenest Mexican critics from the following period puts it:

*The similarity in the evolution of Anglo-American and Hispano-American literatures originates from both of them being literatures written in transplanted languages. Between us and the American land, a vacuum of space opened that we had to populate with strange words. Even if we are indios or mestizos, our language is European. Our literatures’ history is the one of our relationships to the American space, though equally with the space where the words we speak were born and raised.*[4]

In the geographical context, *TWL*’s sizeable number of interpretations and successive critical reactions within the Hispano-American world have elicited a slew of transpositions, due in part to the environmental factors of the locations where the text was being transmuted, from its original version into proliferating varieties of *castellano*[5], ranging from the Northern renditions in Mexico, all the way down to its Southern representations, such as the ones crafted in the Argentine diction. Taking into consideration the increased variability in idiomatic expressions from one country to the next (even neighboring ones) is a task that requires an extensive linguistic apparatus in order to decipher each distinct turn of phrase or colloquial statement chosen by a particular wordsmith. Here are just a few of these well-known translations produced by the authors of the following nationalities:

- Puerto Rico:  
Ángel Flores, *Tierra Baldía*, Editorial Cervantes, 1930.
- Chile:  
J. C. Villavicencio and B. Fernández, *La tierra baldía*, Descontexto Editores, 2017.

- Argentina:  
Alberto Girri, *La Tierra Yerma*, Fraterna, 1988.  
Rolando Costa Picazo, *The Waste Land*, Academia Argentina de Letras, 2012.  
Walter Cassara, *La tierra baldía*, Huesos de Jibia, 2013.
- Dominican Republic:  
Fernando Vargas, *La tierra baldía*, UASD, 1989.
- México:  
Manuel Núñez Nava: *Tierra yerma*, UNAM, 1978.  
José Luis Rivas, *La tierra baldía*, Universidad Autónoma de México, 1990.
- Perú:  
Ricardo Silva-Santisteban, *La tierra agostada*, Lucerna Editores, 2015.
- Colombia:  
Harold Alvarado Tenorio, *La tierra baldía*, Arquitrave Editores, 2005.  
Jaime Tello, *La tierra estéril*, Visor, 2009.

Nicolás Magaril and Pablo Ingberg both discuss the conundrum translators have been facing since *TWL*'s appearance, and they propose an actual combination of the Castilian versions to create a decidedly universal text: "There being more than a dozen available translations, one could assemble, without betraying the poem's spirit, a kind of translation-patchwork by choosing the average of the best solutions, according to each person's mood"[6]. A curious example worth evaluating is the interpretation resulting from the word "carbuncular", which refers to the aspect of the young employee in "The Fire Sermon", and has been translated as disparately as: "carbunculoso" (hispanization of carbuncular), "granujiento" (pimple-ridden) though the young man's ailment is more than acne, "carbuncoso" (another hispanization), "forunculoso" (boil-ridden), "salpicado de carbuncos" (peppered with boils), "puruliento" (purulent), "lleno de caspa" (full of dandruff)[7]. In a manner, this purposeful diversity of versions highlights Eliot's own penchant for multi-referentiality within the body of his creation. As Nicoletta Ascuito delves into a principal undertone for the word just rendered so variedly:

By referring to a precious stone similar to a ruby, the adjective 'carbuncular', apart from potentially alluding to the young clerk's facial skin, suggests a light shining in the dark. Meanwhile, this rich luminosity is corrupted and undercut by its grotesquely pustular source. In running the two senses of 'carbuncular' against one another, Eliot is also following Shakespeare. Shakespeare was aware of the distinction between a ruby and a carbuncle, and of the latter's common designation for both a precious stone and a boil[8].

In this manner shown, the Italian critic suggests that Eliot's interaction with tradition is rooted in recalcitrant allusions to his literary masters by way of their interpretive power, despite the hidden associations that proliferate, later expounded upon through the endnotes Eliot added to the poem[9]. Similar examples spring up incessantly once further textual analyses pinpoint other possible sources, ancient and coetaneous, to the elaboration of the drafts. By way of perusing the facsimile edition published on *TWL*'s fiftieth anniversary, it is manageable to collate the initial drafts with those portions undergoing the erasures prompted by Ezra Pound in the final stages of preparation, subtending the

aura of the work-in-progress in constant quest for assemblage. This project, in turn, ontologically rearranges that “heap of broken images” (l. 22) for the adventurous reader, and branches out the exegetic possibilities.

As Magaril argues, these renditions in the Spanish tongue take such diverse considerations because their translators hail from miscellaneous backgrounds amongst a broad ethnographic set of the Latin American population, which in essence constitute these divergences by way of their enunciation techniques. Furthermore, lengthening the scope of meaning and lexical acuity of the verses each translator has to treat entails: “to make a *variorum* edition of all the Castilian translations of *TWL*, [which] would require a page of more than one meter wide, in order to lay them out next to each other”[10]. If not more than one kilometer wide, the paper utilized to corroborate this mounting interest in *TWL*’s reception maintains its foothold throughout contemporary world literature.

### **The *Spirit of the Age* projected over the avant-gardes**

To be able to fairly approach the expansiveness of Eliot’s self-fashioned *persona* in terms of its historical conditioning during this *annus mirabilis*, it’s essential to explore the back-and-forth motion of a literary network that found a simultaneous coming-of-age as well as resolution in bifocal fashion, given the highly dynamic intersections in all planes of civilizational progress, a motion in unison, making its way up and down the Americas, in counterbalance to the effervescent European avant-gardes which were propelled by futurism, imagism and dadaism from its stronger ranks.

*1922 also saw the gestation of aesthetic movements aiming to represent a newly modernising Latin America, reacting to improved technological infrastructure, rapid urbanization, and massive immigration. Political reforms were underway throughout the continent, inflected by a galvanizing university reform movement, radical politics of an international flavor, revisionary nationalisms in the context of centennial celebrations, and new attention to present-day indigenous and marginalized populations*[11].

In the organizational and structural sense, Eliot’s referral to the “mind of Europe,” brought up in his seminal essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919) could be established as an appropriate axis that develops in regard to a portrayal of *TWL*’s universal scope, moving across the extensive fields of literary history it covers by way of hint and quotation. The constant textual shifts effected by the number of wanderings within its composition—ranging from its initial Ancient Greek & Latin quotations, to the Laforguan innuendoes, passing on to its Cockney parlance in the last part of “A Game of Chess”—encapsulate a holistic vision that magnifies the cultural outreach of the verbal *ensemble* when seen in its entirety. This outtake, so to speak, achieves unraveling once its nested references are elucidated, albeit partially, in the end notes Eliot adds.

The impact this author’s output had on Latin American writers has long since become pervasive, slowly after the first appearance of *TWL* in both *The Criterion* and *The Dial*. The main challenge faced would be to convey how firmly Eliot’s creation has stood the test of time, despite its *de facto* association with the “1922 event”. Similarly, Eliot’s entry into the European canon could be better apprecia-

ted in retrospect, through the projection of a ladder of influence over his authorial successors, likewise playing the role of interpreters, from Spanish-speaking countries. The translator's main task has thus been to reestablish Eliot's sense of brokenness, hereby portrayed by the "Spirit of the Age," a post-Great War mood, and postulate a dynamic of *union* and *separation* between the North, Central, and South American lands. Are these territories really that far apart, or could they be considered a unified landmass despite differences in registers, declensions and their (ultimately) dialectical inclinations? And this harkens back to one of the final verses in the poem: "Shall I at least set my lands in order?" (l. 426) Magaril continues to reveal with theoretical consistency:

*At the margin of the symbolic derivations and the volumes of reality, history, geopolitics and literature implied in this specific triangulation (amongst the dozens of styles possible along the poem), the fact is that Eliot explains the convergent fashion of a center of gravity through the divergent shape of an axis of transversality. One could say that The Waste Land behaves as Saussure said language behaves, such similar to a "system that doesn't know more than its own order". Its elements are situated over a double axis of simultaneity and succession.[12]*

Based on this condition, let's directly examine the textual interphases assigned by the following translators from geographically and temporally distinct settings, exclusively united by the commonality of a Pan-American Spanish language.

**Comparison of 3 different translations[13] from "A Game of Chess" (ll. 77-96)**



The Chair she sat in, like a *burnished* throne,  
**Glowed** on the marble, where the glass  
**Held up** by standards wrought with fruited vines  
 From which a *golden* Cupidon **peeped out**  
 (Another hid his eyes behind his wing)  
**Doubled** the flames of sevenbranched candelabra  
 Reflecting light upon the table as  
 The glitter of her jewels **rose** to meet it,  
 From satin cases poured in rich profusion;  
 In vials of ivory and coloured glass  
 Unstoppered, **lurked** her *strange* synthetic perfumes,  
 Unguent, powdered, or liquid—**troubled**, confused  
 And drowned the sense in odours; **stirred** by the air  
 That freshened from the window, these **ascended**  
 In **fattening** the *prolonged* candle-flames,  
**Flung** their smoke into the laquearia,  
**Stirring** the pattern on the *coffered* ceiling,  
Huge sea-wood **fed** with copper  
 Burned green and orange, framed by the *coloured* stone,  
 In which *sad* light a *carved* dolphin swam.

- T.S. Eliot's original, England, 1922

La silla en que ella estaba sentada, como un *bruñido* trono,  
**Relucía** sobre el mármol, donde el espejo  
**Apojado** en soportes labrados con vides en fruto—  
 Entre los cuales un *dorado* cupido se **asomaba**  
 (Otro escondía sus ojos tras el ala)—  
**Reproducía** las llamas de los candelabros de siete brazos  
 Que reflejaban su luz sobre la mesa mientras  
 El destello de sus alhajas **se erguía** para encontrarla,  
**Vertidas** de estuches de satín en rica profusión;  
 En redomas de marfil y vidrio coloreado,  
 Destapados, sus *extraños* perfumes sintéticos **acechaban**:  
 Ungüentos, polvos, líquidos —**perturbando**, confundiendo  
 Y ahogando los sentidos en aromas; **llevados** por el aire  
 Que **refrescaba** desde la ventana, **ascendían**  
 A **engrosar** las *prolongadas* llamas de las velas,  
 A **arrojar** el humo al laqueado.  
**Agitando** el diseño del *artesonado* techo.  
*Enormes leños* **recogidos** en la playa, **alimentados** con cobre,  
 Ardían anaranjados y verdes, **enmarcados** por la piedra  
*coloreada*. En esa *triste* luz **nadaba** una talla de delfin.

- Manuel Núñez Nava, México, 1978

Como trono *bruñido* la silla donde se sentaba  
**refulgía** como mármol y en el espejo,  
**sostenido** en un marco de pámpanos con fruto,  
**espiaba** un Cupido *Dorado*  
 (y otro, bajo el ala, escondía los ojos)  
**doblando** las llamas de un candelabro de siete brazos,  
 reflejando luz sobre la mesa, mientras a su encuentro,  
**ascendía** el brillo de sus joyas,  
 desde estuches de satín **vertidos** en rica profusión.  
 En redomas de marfil y crystal de colores  
**acechaban** sus *raros* perfumes sintéticos,  
 ungüento, polvo o líquido **turbando**, confundiendo  
 y ahogando en aroma los sentidos,  
**llevados** por un aire que **refrescaba** desde la ventana,  
**crecían engrosando** las *prolongadas* llamas,  
**lanzando** humo a los artesonados,  
**removiendo** los arabescos del cielo del techo.  
*Vasto bosque de mar* de cobre ardía en verde y naranja  
**enmarcado** en piedras *de colores*  
 en cuya *triste* luz **nadaba** un delfin *tallado*.

- Harold Alvarado Tenorio, Colombia, 2005

Como un trono *cinzelado*, la silla que ocupaba  
**resplandecía** en el mármol, donde el espejo  
**forjado** con adornos de parras en flor  
 entre los cuales **espiaba** un *áureo* Cupido  
 (otro escondía los ojos detrás de un ala)  
**duplicaba** las llamas de un candelabro de siete brazos  
 reflejando la luz sobre la mesa mientras  
 el fulgor de sus joyas, **vertiéndose** en profusión  
**volaba** a su encuentro desde las cajitas de satén;  
 en frascos de marfil y vidrio de colores,  
**husmeaban** sus *extraños* perfumes sintéticos,  
 agitados en cremas, en polvo o líquidos, confundían  
 y ahogaban los sentidos; **temblando** en el aire  
*fresco* que llegaba desde la ventana, **ascendían**  
 y se **dilataban** en las *largas* llamas de las velas,  
**aventando** su incienso entre las molduras  
 y los motivos en el encofrado del techo.  
*Enormes leños de mar*, **atizados** de cobre, ardían  
 en verde y naranja, **encuadrados** por la piedra *radiante*  
 en cuya luz *melancólica* **flotaba** la silueta de un delfin.

- Walter Cassara, Argentina, 2013

## An assimilatory enterprise for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

*The Waste Land* hence becomes the blueprint for modernity's imprint through the extensive fields of knowledge it covers (anthropological, geographic, literary, etc.). Its construction, a historical crunch down of a plethora of world traditions, styles and customs is never constrained by preconceptions of scholastic grandeur, despite a handful of critics believing the appended notes to be an ill-conceived tactic to instill controversy and confusion. In the same vein, the author's *raison d'être* is intrinsic to a



purpose of international literary circulation and could nicely fit in with the process of Latin-America's renovation of the Lyric during the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which included the avant-garde waves of *creacionismo*, *ultraísmo* and *estridentismo*. This array of transmissions is expressly situated as coetaneous to *TWL*'s release, so as to offset the antiquated models of poetic transference. A similar paradigm shift took place in the last couple of decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in which Hispanic *modernismo*, championed by Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío, relegated the Parnassian and Symbolist schools, once back then in their apex of influence, to outdated literary currents.

The case with *TWL* is that it produced tremors which soon "tsunamied" across the Atlantic and reverberated along Eliot's formative territories of New England and Missouri, down to the progressively unified lands of Spanish-speaking America. Most of these regions had gained a degree of political autonomy, roughly one century after their "liberation" from Spanish conquest in 1820-21. Expressions of such varied extent were bound to establish a network of correspondences, through a re-acquisition of the foundations from their native tongues, thereby considered as a matrix for a larger mode of enunciation; namely, the admixture of colloquial and formal speeches, which reached an unprecedented landmark, as represented by Eliot's scriptural procedure.

In the verse "These fragments I have shored against my ruins" (l. 431), Hispanic America can be considered one of the most appropriate recipients containing a public that has taken up the challenge of deciphering the text through its intimations. Alongside the variations triggered by large territorial breakdowns and perceived cycles of civilizational downfall & prosperity, the different factors evaluated throughout this text have left Spanish-speaking readers with a sensation of overall destabilization in their states of consciousness. It is propitious to also take into account the background of military intervention and intermittent dictatorial regimes this group of countries has undergone over the course of the last century. In that respect, the idea of an encounter leaning toward happenstance could serve as a target for the core of this exploration. If a baseline comprehension is to be attained, the words of Gabrielle McIntire regarding Eliot's scope for his then-nascent literary review are most helpful:

*Eliot's [Criterion] does what it took decades of criticism for modernist scholars to grasp: it assumes that a transnational pastiche of writers was writing under shared aesthetic aspirations to reinvent previous beliefs about literary form, style, aesthetics, and content. Eliot was therefore insisting that modernist writing did not occur in a vacuum, but in a rich and ongoing international dialogue.*[14]

The international dialogue found its resolution through the continuous contribution by some of the most renowned authors of the era, over the next 17 years: almost the entirety of the interwar period. The quest alluded to at the onset of this investigation resonates and ties back the loose ends of a Pan-American network, comprised of interrelated disciplines, and coalescing beyond the aspect of a single momentous year (1922) to extend the artistic impact through the geographical regions that may have neglected its affective reach. *TWL* is aesthetically relevant if regarded as a universal literary artifact.

## A Peruvian Waste Land?[15]

The fullest expression of such geographical arrangement reaches its zenith when two unsuspectedly connected publications are placed side-by-side in the manner of a comparative reflection. Going back to another subtle perspective from the Mexican essayist:

*In 1919 López Velarde publishes Zozobra, the central collection of Spanish American post-modernismo, that is, of our anti-symbolist symbolism. Two years earlier, Eliot had published Prufrock and Other Observations. [...] Boston and Zacatecas: the conjunction of these two names makes us smile as if it were one of those incongruous associations that so pleased Laforgue. Two poets write, at almost the same time, in different languages, and without either being aware of the other's existence, two different, and equally original versions of some poems that some years earlier a third poet had written in another language.[16]*

I would extend Paz's commentary above to focus on Eliot's 1922 masterpiece correlating to César Vallejo's *Trilce*, which was also published in the same month of the same year. This time around though, it's the pairing of London and Lima, two metropolises enveloped by the same "brown fog of a winter dawn" (l. 61) and frequented by the same sort of bohemian characters, though from differing social statuses. The offsetting of established early twentieth century poetic norms caused by such works has been described by Benoît Tadié in an interview after the publication of his French version of the poem:

*With The Waste Land, Eliot takes a leap forward by transitioning to a long poem, manufactured in reality from a set of short poems, producing an effect, for that period, of extraordinary polyphony, of dissonance, of difference, of stylistic break, of tone, of persona, which make for a lot of people in 1922, despite Pound's active propaganda and a circle around him, it was something in the range of an ovni (UFO) that they had difficulty recognizing as belonging to poetry.[17]*

The above commentary succinctly echoes Ina Salazar's stance on *Trilce's* history:

*[Vallejo's] second poetry collection, which would later be considered a major focal point of the Hispano-American avant-garde, even though it had no reception whatsoever upon having just been published, was an unidentified verbal object (ovni) in the horizon of expectations from 1920s Lima, foreign still to the avant-garde gestures that were penetrating the Latin American milieu[18].*

Following is an attempt to bring together, through a translation process that goes in reverse to the direction so far observed in the previous sections: currently from Spanish toward English, allowing for the illustration of the close links held between two simultaneously released poetic creations, hinted at by contemporary critical discourse and strongly allied by a common philosophical attitude, show-

cased to a certain degree by other artists of the epoch who were experimenting freely by detaching themselves from the anachronistic practices of late Romanticism and the usage of Symbolist tropes.

### TRILCE XXXIII

Si lloviera esta noche, retiraría  
de aquí a mil años.  
Mejor a cien no más.



(If it were to rain tonight, I'd retreat  
from here for a thousand years.  
Better yet just for a hundred.

\*

Dame, aire manco, dame ir  
galoneándome de ceros a la izquierda



(Give me, armless air, give me go  
gallooning me with zeroes to the left)

### TRILCE XVI

O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag  
It's so elegant  
so intelligent  
"What shall I do now? What shall I do?"  
"I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street  
"With my hair down, so. What shall we do to-morrow?  
What shall we ever do?"  
  
The hot water at ten.  
And if it rains, a closed car at four.

(*TWL* II. 128-136, "A Game of Chess")

Perhaps Eliot is hinting at the translator's task when later evoking Tiresias's qualities: a personality demonstrating adaptability, longevity, insight, and detachment. This turns out to be a means of fragmentation carried out by way of Ezra Pound's collaboration, which he conducted while editing certain portions of the first *TWL* manuscript back in late 1921: the so-called Caesarean intervention. The sort of schizophrenic split, showcased in the spectral character of the lady's intermittent questioning: "What shall [I/we] [ever] do [now/tomorrow]?" (II. 131, 133-4), gets accumulated to a point of chronological saturation, where a reader could lose the guiding thread if it weren't for the emphatic replies (hot water, closed car if it rains, II. 135-6) accentuating the exact times (at ten, at four). Similarly, Vallejo conditions his return: a century rather than a millennium, given the appropriate weather patterns and extensive time intervals, which for some might sound like an eternity. Ensuing from the earlier passage, the next verses from the conversation at the pub nearing the end of the same section hold an uncanny rapport with the last stanza of *Trilce* LII:

*You are a proper fool, I said.*

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

*What you get married for if you don't want children?*

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

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

*And they asked me in to dinner to get the beauty of it hot- - -*

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

(TWL II. 162-69)

### TRILCE LII

Y llegas muriéndote de risa,  
y en el almuerzo musical,  
cancha reventada, harina con manteca,  
con manteca,  
le tomas el pelo al peón decúbito  
que hoy otra vez olvida dar los buenos días,  
esos sus días, buenos con b de *baldío*,  
que insisten en salirle al pobre  
por la culata de la **v**  
dentilabial que la vela en él.

And you arrive cracking up,  
and during the musical lunch,  
burst popcorn, flour with lard,  
with lard,  
you make a fool out of the decubital pawn  
who today again forgets to greet with a well-day,  
those days of his, well ones with w of *wasteland*  
which insist on being hoisted by the poor  
man's own dentilabial  
**v** that keeps vigil in him.

For purposes of maximizing the parallel identifications, *baldío* has been transposed as *wasteland*, retroactively appropriating the title of Eliot's oeuvre from its most common rendition in Spanish, in order to exemplify the eponymous transversality of both works. A more recent Mexican researcher identified those equivalences, with a remark elicited from the same Vallejo poem (LII), to base her argument on a philosophical basis that commenced with Henri Bergson's conceptualization of the *élan vital* to a subsequent shift to "Heidegger's idea of evincing a desolation of place and time, not of a being relegated toward nothingness, but of a being toward death[19]":

*Once again, we find clues which allow for the formation of certain communicating vessels between Trilce and The Waste Land, which does not imply that [both authors] had read each other, but does place those readings that preoccupied a generation in relation, bringing forth a criticism of the western tradition, which had left modern man excised by the introduction of reason as the only path to knowledge.[20]*

The main correspondence is situated in the treatment of the fragmented subject, directing speech in a colloquial manner, usually in homely scenes that include food sources and meals to be attended, as shown in the above passages. These connections became evident during the *Trilce* translation process, taken up in tandem last year whilst preparing for the centenary commemorations.[21] Moreover, the set of perceptions that gain focus within the textuality of both verbal constructions is further complemented by N. Ascuito's final observations:

*Both Eliot and Vallejo apply, but differently, an idea of time as 'simultaneous', following Henri Bergson's definition of simultanéité, with different applications. For Vallejo, simultaneity is key to his own private happiness [... His] time is personal, made up of his own everyday memories. For Eliot, the necessity of a time which is simultaneously past, present and future is only partly prompted by nostalgia for his childhood. His desire for a simultaneous time breaking the chronological order arises from a need to create a new kind of poetry, which is also a collection of simultaneities, gathered from the most disparate literary traditions and epochs.[22]*

The comparative advantage of placing concurrent publications side-by-side is that it allows us to create new bridges for the reader, who in turn proceeds to associate what could have seemed as two disparate techniques of creative literary alignment. A thought for the readers to come springs from the utility of remaining proactive with the text. Such an approach endeavors to hold its message as a revelation in view of its formulations about our current condition in the world.

The transatlantic network of interpreters mentioned earlier is simply one half of the team. A kind of programmatic structure, pondered at in the beginning, resurfaces with a greater force when stating the next civilizational ties: "Jerusalem/Teotihuacán", two of the main hubs for Judeo-Christian and Aztec cultural and religious development, respectively. "Athens/Medellín", two cities where a golden age of mankind was observed: for the former, a cradle of Western thought and politics, and the latter a region generally associated with the legendary *El Dorado*. "Alexandria/Cuzco", paired because they resonate with *Trilce XXVI*, for its provenance "from moribund alexandrias/from moribund cuzcos" re-configures the focal points of two ancient knowledge centers and asserts the hegemony of civilization's rise-and-fall as an ever-perfectible cycle. The last two pairings highlight the modern landscape of four major populations: "Vienna/Santiago de Chile" and "London/Buenos Aires", important nowadays since they geographically represent the creative effervescence triggered by the intertwining in music and literature.

Consequently, after having weighed in on these different translations and their techniques, the reader is able to participate in the illuminative process head on, so as to shed further light on their attributes, managing to experience "[that] awful daring of a moment's surrender/which an age of prudence can never retract" (ll. 403-4), which is, as severe as it sounds, a necessary step to communicate beyond the ephemerality of words and heed the rumbling voice of the thunder in the jungle.

## Notes

[1] Translations produced in Spain and Brazil's Lusophone region fall out of the scope of this analysis, even though a few great renditions of *TWL* (from here on abbreviated as such) have been produced in the last couple of decades: namely, Juan Malpartida's (Círculo de Lectores, 2002), Jose Luis Palomares' (Cátedra, 2005) and Andreu Jaume's (Lumen, 2015).



[2] T.S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed., Harcourt, Brace & World, 1971.

[3] Geographically speaking, this set of 5 cities would correspond to the ones stated in Eliot's vision of Part V: "What the Thunder Said". Moreover, this configuration should make sense by the article's end.

[4] Octavio Paz, "El ocaso de la vanguardia", *Los hijos del limo*, Seix Barral, 3rd edition 1990, p. 199. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

[5] This variety of Spanish was the most widely spoken in Latin America, for many of the settlers and *conquistadores* during the 16<sup>th</sup>-to- early 19<sup>th</sup> century kingdoms hailed from the Castilla y León region. Castilian, therefore, is used interchangeably in every-day speech when referring to the Spanish language by the general population there.

[6] Nicolás Magaril, "La tierra baldía traducida", *Hablar de Poesía*, nº 29, July 2014.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] Nicoletta Ascuito, "T. S. Eliot's 'Young Man Carbuncular': Precious Gemstone or Infected Sore?" *Notes and Queries*, Oxford University Press, vol. 64, nº 4, December 2017, p. 642.

[9] Jennifer Kilgore-Caradec highlights this point when commenting Monique Lojkne-Morelec's French translation of *TWL* in her paper "Hidden translation and Intersectionality". The above translator focuses on the possible references to the word *carbuncular*, where it could likely point to the character of Blazes Boylan in Joyce's *Ulysses*: "'Blazes' could be attributed to the spark in the eyes and 'Boylan' to his bubbling fieriness, but also, in the Eliotian imaginary to furuncles, 'boils'" (Note 46 to the translation).

[10] Pablo Ingberg, "La tierra baldía fecunda en castellano", *El Trujamán: Revista Diaria de traducción*, Oct. 2015. [https://cvc.cervantes.es/trujaman/anteriores/octubre\\_15/27102015.htm](https://cvc.cervantes.es/trujaman/anteriores/octubre_15/27102015.htm). Coincidentally, his Centennial translation was just published in November, in a bilingual edition with prologue and extensive notes (Cuenco de Plata, 2022).

[11] Michelle Clayton, "Hispanic Watershed: 1922 in Latin America", *1922: Literature, Culture, Politics*. Jean Michel Rabaté (editor), Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 169.

[12] Nicolás Magaril, "La tierra baldía traducida", *Hablar de Poesía*, nº 29, July 2014.

[13] As can be seen above, the words in italics denote the adjectives, the ones in bold point out the verbs, and the underlined ones indicate the nouns. The above passage comprises the beginning of "A Game of Chess", chosen here because it is one of the sections in *TWL* that most profusely illustrates a diversity in sensorial input that evokes a greater capacity of representation when transferred to another language. The richness of texture in both visual and odoriferous signs lends itself to an intimate



rendering on a syntactical level. When looking at the first verb “glowed” (l. 78), their infinitives in Spanish “relucir/refulgir/resplandecer” connote a similar action but at different intensities, while the next one “doubled” (l. 82) receives a much more distant appreciation by the corresponding “reproducir/doblar/duplicar”. Focusing on the nouns, there is a parenthetical approach with “glitter” and “jewels” (l. 84) being translated as “destello/brillo/fulgor” and “alhajas/joyas”, respectively. “Smoke” (l. 92) was rendered into either “humo” or “inciense”, implying a switch to a concentration in fragrance. Perhaps the most significant noun of the excerpt is captured by “pattern” (l. 93), which was translated as “diseño/arabescos/motivos”. Retranslating these back to English, we get “design/arabesques/motifs”, exemplifying the malleability of semantic representation held in account when introducing the next key adjective “coffered” only finds direct agency in Núñez’s version through “artesonado”, whilst the other two transformed the word into nouns: “cielo/encofrado.”

[14] Gabrielle McIntire, “Uncanny *Seemings* and Serendipitous Publications: T.S. Eliot’s *the Criterion*, and *The Waste Land* and James Joyce’s *Ulysses*”, 1922: *Literature, Culture, Politics*, Jean Michel Rabaté (editor), Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 223.

[15] This section is part of a larger work-in-progress: a doctoral dissertation delving into the work of two writers through comparative textual analyses of their poetry collections as they were chronologically published. The *Trilce* edition used here is the one with abundant critical commentary compiled by Julio Ortega initially published in 1991, by Cátedra, Madrid, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. 2021.

[16] Octavio Paz, “Literatura y Literalidad” (1970). Cf. Tom Boll, *Octavio Paz and T. S. Eliot. Modern Poetry and the Translation of Influence*, MHRA & Routledge, 2012, p. 43.

[17] Chloé Thomas and Benoît Tadié, “Retraduire *The Waste Land* : entretien avec Benoît Tadié,” *Transatlantica* [On line], 1, 2021 (my emphasis).

[18] Ina Salazar, “Los cuerpos de la posguerra en la poesía de César Vallejo,” *Catalonia*, vol. 19, 2016, p. 19. The play on words here has to do with the fact that *verbal* is equated with *volador* (flying).

[19] Diana R. Sánchez, “1922: Acercamiento a los contextos y alrededores de *Trilce*”, *Valenciana*, n° 10, 2012, p. 198

[20] *Ibid*, p. 200-01

[21] (anonymisé pour le peer-reviewing)

[22] Nicoletta Ascuito, “Bergsonian Memory and Simultaneity in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot and César Vallejo”, *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, vol. 52, n° 1, 2016, p. 55

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