ABSTRACT

EVAN HUNTER BRISSON. The Digital Wasteland: An Acoustic Enactment of T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*. (Under the direction of Professor Thomas David Lisk.)

Drawing inspiration from the creative technique of sampling, this audio project seeks both to enact and exemplify Eliot’s model of a ritual poetic, one which unites and incarnates, by imitating and accentuating the cultural and literary bricolage of *The Waste Land* through an amalgamation of readings and incidental sounds, which, like so many lines found in the poem, were culled from discrete sources, re-contextualized, repurposed, and rearranged. Sound samples and audio recordings used in this collage were collected from various online databases including FreeSound.org and LibriVox.org and mixed in Audacity and WavePad Sound Editor.

The narrative constituent of this project offers theoretical justification for the creative implementation, primarily drawing on the work of anthropological and literary scholars, sampling theorists, and Eliot himself. The poem is considered in terms of its musicality, anthropological significance, and in the context of the digital age, where the internet may serve as both a perpetuator of a fragmented, disorganized culture and a facilitator of Eliot’s ideas of community and collaboration.

Following creative explication, the acoustically enhanced reading, as a genre, is considered as a pedagogical implement and model for teachers and students, one that commands a "participatory" apprehension and appreciation of literature, especially poetic forms, as complementary to historical and literary approaches. Finally, opportunities for revising and remixing this project are considered as possible postmodern responses to Eliot’s decidedly modernist verse.