

2012

The poet in transformation: Dantean aesthetics in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*

Jamie Berlin

Follow this and additional works at: <http://commons.emich.edu/theses>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Berlin, Jamie, "The poet in transformation: Dantean aesthetics in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*" (2012). *Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations*. 425.

<http://commons.emich.edu/theses/425>

This Open Access Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses, and Doctoral Dissertations, and Graduate Capstone Projects at DigitalCommons@EMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@EMU. For more information, please contact lib-ir@emich.edu.

The Poet in Transformation: Dantean Aesthetics in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*

by

Jamie Berlin

Thesis

Submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature

Eastern Michigan University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

English Literature

Thesis Committee:

Elisabeth Däumer, Ph.D, Chair

Christine Neufeld, Ph.D

July 1, 2012

Ypsilanti, Michigan

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated in deep gratitude and love to my parents, Lauren Matacio and William Berlingieri. I would like to thank the poets under meditation here, T. S. Eliot and Dante Alighieri, and the scholars whose work has contributed to my understanding. I would also like to thank David Choberka, “between the stars, how far...”

Acknowledgements

I would like to give credit to the teachers whose courses formed my introduction to classical, medieval, and modern literature. First, I express great appreciation to Dr. Cynthia Sowers, Ph.D., of the University of Michigan, for her scintillating undergraduate courses *The Art of Rome*, *Medieval Sources of Modern Culture*, and *Classic Modernism*. In these courses, respectively, she presented Virgil's *Aeneid*, provided a framework for medieval sensibility, and suggested the spiritual dimensions of modernism. I am immensely grateful to Dr. Alison Cornish, Ph.D., of the University of Michigan, for introducing me to Dante in her 400-level seminar on the *Divine Comedy*. During her course, I was engaged by two themes relevant to this thesis: 1) Dante's understanding of love as a continuum connecting sacred and profane desires, and 2) his declaration of the morality of art. From my graduate studies at Eastern Michigan University, I heartily thank Dr. Christine Neufeld, Ph.D., for her enthusiastic critique, guiding imagery on writing, and committed engagement with my work. Finally, I express deep appreciation and gratitude to my thesis reader and committee chair, Dr. Elisabeth Däumer, Ph.D., of Eastern Michigan University, who introduced me to T. S. Eliot in her graduate course on Modern American Poetry, for her gentle encouragement to pursue what unsettled me about *The Waste Land*, and for her unflagging support and engagement with this thesis.

Abstract

Dante was a seminal influence in T. S. Eliot's poetry. Many scholars have acknowledged Eliot's professed debt to Dante and have examined Eliot's explicit imitations of Dante; however, few have pinpointed Dantean influences in non-explicit references to Dante, and few have credited the influence of a Dantean progress narrative across Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*. This thesis broadly analyzes the principles of Dante's aesthetic in the poem while analyzing the Sibyl, the Hanged Man, and the Prajapati parable for their relevance to Eliot's aesthetic theory. When Dantean aesthetics and close readings of *The Waste Land* are compared with Eliot's contemporary essays on art, a fuller view of the aspects of Dante's fundamental influence emerges. In particular, the prominence of Dante in the sub-text of Eliot's *The Waste Land* reveals the nature of their shared aesthetic—that art is a moral work by virtue of a spiritual transformation endured by the artist, which involves both a sacrifice of self and a substantiation of self. A deeper examination of Dante's influence on T. S. Eliot yields a vaster understanding of Eliot's aesthetics while helping to elucidate one of the central mysteries in Eliot's theory of art, the role of “personality.”

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
List of Figures.....	vi
Introduction: <i>Dantean Aesthetics in The Waste Land</i>	1
Chapter One: <i>Approaching Source: the Sibyl of Cumae</i>	19
Chapter Two: <i>The Hanged Man as Artist's Model</i>	33
Chapter Three: <i>Dante's Aesthetics from Inferno, Cantos 11 & 13</i>	58
Chapter Four & Conclusion: <i>DA: Discipline and Creative Fitness</i>	74
Bibliography	94

List of Figures

<u>Figure</u>		<u>Page</u>
1	The Rider Tarot Deck, III THREE OF WANDS.....	34
2	The Rider Tarot Deck, XII THE HANGED MAN.....	35
3	The Rider Tarot Deck, XVI THE TOWER.....	85

Introduction: *Dantean Aesthetics in The Waste Land*

Dantean themes are at work on a deeply significant and formative level in the aesthetics of *The Waste Land*. Let me introduce a few of the ghostly allusions to Dante. The opening reference to the cruelty of April “mixing / Memory and desire” (lines 2-3), for example, recalls the lament of Francesca, caught with her lover Paolo in Hell’s whirlwind of lust in *Inferno*, Canto V. The allusion is relevant to Eliot’s aesthetic in the way that it suggests a relationship between the Hell of desire experienced by Dante’s lovers and the poet’s Hell of desire, which imprisons creativity. In Dante’s text, the pilgrim addresses Francesca, asking her to revisit the *doloroso passo* or “painful/sorrowful passage” (which is also the “fateful moment” of which their current predicament is the result) when the lovers succumbed to their desires, and a connection to the art of poetry is suggested in Francesca’s reference to Virgil. Francesca begins: *Nessun maggior dolore che ricordarsi del tempo felice ne la miseria; e ciò sa ‘l tuo dottore* (*Inferno* 5:121-123), or “There is no greater pain than to remember a happy time in misery, and this your teacher knows” (my translation). While the *doloroso passo* also echoes the dangerous pass from Canto 1 which the poet has just nearly escaped, *il suo dottore* refers to Virgil, implicating the vocation of poet; and, because he is writer of the destroyed love between Dido and Aeneas, the passage also suggests the poet’s familiarity with the *maggior dolor* of memory and desire with which Aeneas leaves Carthage and the poet’s familiarity with the *doloroso passo* of love, in general, as a preliminary passage that encourages the transformation of the poet along the trajectory of the adventure narrative.

It would seem that in praising Dante’s decision to populate Hell with historical and fictional characters, Eliot had been struck by the unreality of Hell: “[Dante’s choice] reminds us .

. . . man is damned or blessed in the creatures of his imagination as well as in men who have actually lived . . . Hell, though a state, is a state which can only be thought of and perhaps only experienced, by the projection of sensory images” (“Inferno” 216). The passage suggests that Eliot was considering the possibility that Hell is a state of the imagination created by thought, by the “projection of sensory images.” This unreal, infernal state recalls the torment of memory and desire laid bare in the opening lines of *The Waste Land*, where “April is the cruellest month, breeding / Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing / Memory and desire, stirring / Dull roots with spring rain” (lines 1-4). The subject is April; the verbs are the first actions of spring. We are near a moment of conception (“breeding”) of a new season of creativity; however, the tone gathered from “cruellest,” “breeding,” and “stirring” reflects dread, a dread that can occur in the fullness of moment between when a new creation is perceived and when it begins to be. In his dissertation, Eliot characterized the ideas in this moment as “[i]deas of anticipation;” all is potential; nothing is yet created. “Ideas of anticipation, accordingly, occupy a place between ideas of memory and ideas of imagination” (“Knowledge” 53). *The Waste Land* departs in the moment and place of this awareness. And this awareness becomes agony to the artist if not acted upon. The suspension of this feeling and the Hell it indicates describe the state of the poet’s creative consciousness at the beginning of *The Waste Land*. The allusion to the *maggior dolor* of “mixing memory and desire” anchors the thematic thread of creativity in this feeling, as a departure point for the artist’s narrative of development. The implication is that being caught among the fantasies of memory and desire keeps the poet’s creativity suspended, and it is not less torturous than the experience of the lovers in *Inferno*, Canto V. The allusion places the

narrative of *The Waste Land* and its discourse on creativity in conversation with the Dantean pilgrim's dolorous pass and the role given to love in the artist's transformation narrative.

Despite the quagmires of memory and desire, love has a prominent role in the aesthetics of Eliot and Dante, both in provoking the artist's will to create through the sublimation of overabundant erotic desire, and in being the stuff that sustains a brotherhood of mentorship among poets living and dead. Transformation of self, in terms of the "continual surrender of [*sic*] self" and "continual self-sacrifice" of the artist was a central part of Eliot's aesthetics ("Tradition" 47), and it seems he was referring to a sublimation of creative energy. Eliot had understood Dante's *Vita Nuova* as a testament to that kind of transformation; in 1929 he called the work "a very sound psychological treatise on something related to ... 'sublimation'" ("Vita Nuova" 61). In the same essay, he states that the clue to understanding the *Vita Nuova* is to "find meaning in final causes rather than origins" ("Vita Nuova" 59). Described as "a love story" of "an ardent but spiritualized, sublimated love" (Appelbaum 10), the *Vita Nuova* is a hybrid genre of dream narrative and poet's journal. It describes the background of Dante's meeting and relation to Beatrice, whose presence has such a strong effect on the speaker, that when she appears, *lo spirito di vita, lo quale dimora nella secretissima camera de lo cuore, comincio a tremarsi forte...e tremando disse queste parole: 'Ecce deus fortiori di me, qui veniens dominabitur michi'* ("the vital spirit, which resides in the most secret chamber of the heart, began to tremble so strongly, ...and tremblingly, it spoke these words: 'Behold, a god stronger than I, who is coming and will dominate me' ") (2-3). The poet memorably describes how Love appears to him—unruly (5), domineering (5), and tyrannical (3)—and induces Beatrice to consume his blazing heart: "Love suddenly appeared to me, / the memory of whose aspect

terrifies me. / Love seemed merry to me as he held / my heart in his hand, and in his arms he had / my lady, asleep, enveloped in a cloth. / Then he awakened her, and of that burning heart / in fear, she humbly partook; afterward I saw him depart in tears” (trans. Appelbaum 7). The passionate suffering of the love story is treated with equal attention as “the lover’s poetic apprenticeship as if the two themes were two sides of the same reality” (Mazzotta 71). Part of the poet’s reality is the reality of death and transformation, which the “natural spirit” in his liver foretells in Latin, saying, *Heu miser, qui a frequenter impeditus erode inceps*, “Woe is me; for I shall be frequently hindered henceforth!” (2-3). As the narrator of *Vita Nuova* relates it, his experience of love involves great suffering: he contemplates his feelings for Beatrice, he foresees her death, comes near death himself, then experiences her death, and subsequently resolves to stop writing about her until he can render her as subtly and radiant as the lady that appears to his “pilgrim spirit” (97). In the concluding paragraph, the speaker-poet vows to transmute the magnitude of his heart’s desire into a creation that measures his gratitude (97). The final sonnet, *Beyond the Sphere with the Broadest Orbit*, describes the ascending path of a “pilgrim’s spirit” being drawn upward by the sigh of his heart:

Beyond the sphere with the broadest orbit

the sigh passes that issues from my heart:

a new intelligence, which Love

tearfully bestows on it, draws it ever upward.

When it has arrived where it desires,

it sees a lady, who is receiving honors,

and who is so radiant that by her glow

that pilgrim spirit is able to behold her.

He sees her to be such that, when he reports it to me,

I fail to understand, so subtly he speaks

to my grieving heart, which bids him speak. (lines 1-11)

The sonnet faintly sketches the plot of the *Divine Comedy*, here proposed as a conversation between a pilgrim spirit and a grieving heart about a radiant other-worldly vision. The “wondrous vision” inspires the poet to discipline his talent: “I saw things that made me resolve to speak no further of that blessed lady until I could discuss her in a worthier manner. [...] I hope to say of her that which has never yet been said of any woman” (97). The passage reveals that, as Eliot would say, the “final cause” of Dante’s love for Beatrice is to be realized in the creation of the *Divine Comedy*. In the cases of both Eliot and Dante’s speaker-poet, the loss of love catapults the artist into his mature work. The sacrifice love provokes is also a rebirth; it springs the pull of a “new intelligence” that “draw[s] the poet ever upward,” as described by Dante. When love as creative emotion becomes disciplined, the creative desire and its energy can be sublimated into the creative process and into the creative work, and *The Waste Land* urges the artist to this point. In *The Waste Land*, as in *Vita Nuova*, the “final cause” is the craft of poetry and the vocation of artist. Beyond the hyacinth girl (Blistein 90), the artist chooses sublimation and the possibility of a vaster creative engagement when he chooses to overlook romance and look instead “into the heart of light, the silence” (line 41).

Eliot’s vision “into the heart of light, the silence” evokes an experience shared by Dante’s pilgrim-poet (41), when he walks with the poets of the *bella scola* (“beautiful school”) (*Inf.*

Canto IV, line 94), a passage in which Dante places himself in kinship with a group of famous poets of antiquity. In the aesthetic paradigms of both Dante and Eliot, an artist's commitment to the vocation of art can mean the entrance into a fraternity of intellects that spans generations, so that love has a prominent role in both poets' notion of the artistic tradition. Dante illustrates this ethos in *Purgatorio*, Canto 21, where Statius is shown to love Virgil to a defect, and he mistakes the shade from Hell for *cosa salda*, "something solid" (line 136); this passage Eliot uses as the epigraph to *Ara Vos Prec* (1920). In "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Eliot calls this fraternity "tradition." The view the speaker glimpses beyond the hyacinth girl shares a resemblance to the pilgrim's description of walking and talking with the great writers of antiquity in Limbo (*Inf.* Canto IV, lines 103-5). After being beckoned by Homer, Horace, Ovid, Lucan, and Virgil, the speaker joins them; and the voices of Dante the poet and the pilgrim blend when he says, "I was the sixth among such intellects. / So did we move along and toward the light, / talking of things about which silence here / is just as seemly as our speech was there" (*Inf.* Canto IV, lines 103-5). Hay has observed that Eliot's concept of "tradition" is "the twin of Dante's Virgil-figure," who "introduces Dante to the virtuous pagan poets" (53). In this scene, Dante has suggested both the fraternity between poets and his own acceptance into the poetic tradition, but he also suggests that poetry contains a particular quality: while silence suits its subjects best in the real world, in Limbo—a more neutral anteroom to the entrance to the Unreal city—the unspeakable is "seemly" voiced as the poets journey "along and toward the light." The quality of intellectual union experienced by Dante's poet is ecstatic communion. Similarly, as Brooker suggests, Eliot's line "heart of light, the silence" uses language of mysticism to describe "moments of ineffable transcendence" ("Modernism" 75). Eliot's poet chooses the ecstatic

enlightenment beyond the girl and goes forth to develop his relation to that abstract aspect of creativity glimpsed in “the heart of light, the silence.”

While Bullaro has found *The Waste Land* to be the “least Dantean of Eliot’s major poems” based on form and style (34), others have observed a profound relationship through symbolism and theme: “Eliot’s indebtedness to Dante ranges from the quotation and the adaptation of single lines or passages to the deeper influence in concrete presentation and symbolism” (Praz 361). McDougal calls Dante’s influence “easily discernible. . .from *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* to *Four Quartets*,” yet notes its deepening and adaptation as Eliot’s understanding and experience of Dante grew, concluding that Dante, particularly through the personage of the purgatorial troubadour Arnaut Daniel, “provided him with a means of resolving the central issues—both poetic and personal—that confronted him” (57, 79). Along these lines, I shall argue in this thesis, Dante’s influence is present in *The Waste Land* on the basic level of the theme of the spiritual transformation of the artist, an experience which quickens the artist’s mature talent. In their works the *Divine Comedy* and *The Waste Land*, Dante and Eliot present the path of the vocation of the artist as one of personal transformation, which they narrate from the perspective of an adventurer or “pilgrim spirit.” While Eliot’s may be more of an abstracted, ironic portrayal of this narrative, in the hands of both poets, the classical adventure of the hero reveals itself as a narrative of the artist’s transformation.

A Shared Aesthetic

Roughly 625 years separate the life spans of the medieval Italian poet Dante Alighieri (b. 1265 - d. 1321) and the modern American poet T. S. Eliot (b. 1888 – d. 1965). However, their

aesthetics share a fundamental aspect: that the artist is co-involved with a metaphysical force, and that art is potentially a revelation of universal intelligence which is of moral significance. Eliot and Dante both viewed art as the inspired product of an encounter with an invisible, yet living and persistent, creative source. Both writers understood the entire history of art production from the beginning of representational history to the present as a revelation of some nature of that source. Accordingly, both poets' work reflects the view that the context of one work is the whole of art and of time and, therefore, that the story of art as a whole means something vastly more significant than one work alone. Both Eliot and Dante propose that art is essentially, in the sense of inherently, meaningful, differentiated according to the particular conditions of its development, including the perception and judgment of the artist. However, neither Eliot nor Dante locates the artist's achievement in the triumph of a personal design. Nor does their shared value—what Eliot calls “universality”—lead them to a reductive or deterministic obliteration of individuality. Rather, it is the artist's individual, willful role that makes it possible for an artwork to be a moral work. For both poets, a moral artwork is possible due to the artist's successful alignment of individual will with the will of a greater creative source and the artist's ability to discipline his or her creative talent. The process of disciplining creativity is not easy, and both poets express the difficulty of the artist's path, emphasizing suffering and contradiction as important conditions in which talent is disciplined. Both poets represent artistic transformation as a process of spiritual development and self-discipline for the individual, which has potentially significant effects for humanity as a whole.

In “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919), “Reflections on Contemporary Poetry” (1917), and “Ulysses, Order and Myth” (1923), Eliot writes about the importance of self-

sacrifice and personal transformation for the modern artist who would contribute to tradition. The poetic representation of this transformation, as I shall show, is narrated in *The Waste Land* (1922). Eliot's representation of the artist's transformation in *The Waste Land* involves a kind of obscured pilgrim narrative that functions as an allegorical structure and attests to Dante's deep influence. From the disturbing Sibyl epigraph to the peaceful closing chorus of "Shantih," personages and events appear that model for the artist negative and positive relationships to a greater creative source. Echoing Dante's central metaphor in *Purgatorio* and the narrative motif of Virgil's *Aeneid*, Eliot likens the artist's journey to a nautical adventure that includes the following key narrative events: a preliminary glimpse of the creative source, the artist's acceptance of his or her relationship to the source, and the artist's discipline of his or her ability to create. In the *Divine Comedy* and *The Waste Land*, tortured figures point the speaker-poets toward acceptance of the difficult nature of the labor required to develop and reveal their talent. Within the aesthetic paradigm shared by Eliot and Dante, art of the highest value is the fruit of a transformative encounter with the creative source, and this fruit contains seeds. The intellectual bounty that is that heritage has been called "tradition" by Eliot.

Tradition as Fraternity

While Eliot never claimed to be a Dante scholar, he was not tacit about his admiration for Dante or about the medieval Italian poet's influence on his work. Italian scholars have been careful to point out that "Eliot has some unique ideas about Dante" (Bullaro 30); however, this gentle depreciation underlines the personal nature of Eliot's experience reading Dante. Eliot's admiration for and study of Dante was shared by his early influential friend and poet, Ezra

Pound, whom he met in 1914. Both had encountered Dante prior to meeting one another, and their admiration for the medieval poet is evident in the early work of each. In 1910, Pound had written and published *The Spirit of Romance*, a book extolling Dante and his contemporaries (Praz 349-59). Eliot's "Notebook poems," published in 1996 as *Inventions of the March Hare*, were written across the decade prior to publication of *The Waste Land*, and contain clearly-derived Dantean images (Antonielli 64). On more than one occasion, Eliot used quotes by Dante to preface his work, whether introducing poetry or prose. His 1919 volume of poems collected under the name *Ara Vos Prec* derives both its title from a passage spoken by Dante's Arnaut Daniel and its inscription from a passage spoken by Dante's Statius. *Prufrock*, which reappeared in this volume, is prefaced by a passage from Dante's Guido da Montefeltro; but it is known from manuscripts that Eliot was also thinking of Arnaut Daniel during this time, and that the particular influence of Daniel would linger with Eliot throughout his career (McDougal 59-60). His first essay on Dante was published in 1920, but his engagement with Dante's work had begun a decade prior. Eliot had read Dante's *Divine Comedy* in facing page translation as an undergraduate at Harvard University (McDougal ix); and as early as 1911, Eliot could be found carrying a copy of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in his pocket, a practice he resumed while composing *The Waste Land* (Gordon 85, 188). At the end of his 1929 essay on the *Inferno*, Eliot quantifies the magnitude of his appreciation for Dante as a lifelong engagement: "The majority of poems one outgrows and outlives, as one outgrows the majority of human passions: Dante's is one of those which one can only just hope to grow up to at the end of life" ("Inferno" 216). In Eliot's lectures on metaphysical poetry given at Trinity College in Cambridge in 1926, and then at Johns Hopkins University in 1933, later published as *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry* (1993),

Dante and his contemporaries provide paragons of the genre of metaphysical poetry, and Dante is the measuring stick for Eliot's critique of other metaphysical poets. Dante's influence in *Ash Wednesday* and *Four Quartets* is well-acknowledged (Bullaro, Praz).

In a talk Eliot gave to the Italian Institute in London in 1950, he confesses Dante's influence to be "the most persistent and deepest" over any other poet ("What Dante Means to Me" 125). In the lecture, he relates how he "steeped" himself in Dante's poetry during intimate moments of solitude: "When I thought I had the meaning of a passage that particularly delighted me, I committed it to memory; so that, for some years, I was able to recite a large part of one canto or another to myself, lying in bed, on a railway journey" (125). Eliot's anecdote demonstrates the affinity he felt for Dante, and his connection to Dante exemplifies the mentoring relationship that he says "develops a writer" in "Reflections on Contemporary Poetry":

If we stand toward a writer in this other relation of which I speak we do not imitate him, and though we are quite as likely to be accused of it, we are quite unperturbed by the charge. This relation is a feeling of profound kinship, or rather of a peculiar personal intimacy, with another, probably dead author. It may overcome us suddenly, on first or after long acquaintance; it is certainly a crisis; and when a young writer is seized with his first passion of this sort he may be changed, metamorphosed almost, within a few weeks even, from a bundle of second-hand sentiments into a person. The imperative intimacy arouses for the first time a real and unshakeable confidence. That you possess this secret knowledge, this intimacy, with the dead man, that after a few or many years or

centuries you should have appeared with this indubitable claim to distinction; who can penetrate at once the thick and dusty circumlocutions about his reputation, can call yourself alone his friend—it is something more than *encouragement* to you [...] it will be ineffaceable.” (“Reflections” 103)

This quote is often thought to evoke the influence of Jules Laforgue (b. 1860 - d. 1887) (Gordon 42), but the “thick and dusty circumlocutions” and the “few or many years or centuries,” seem designed to include Dante as well. The first claim restates the point made in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” that tradition is more than “blind or timid adherence” to the success of past generations (Eliot 43). Rather, Eliot perceives tradition as an encounter with another creative spirit that reveals kinship, a bond of brotherhood and love. According to Eliot in “Reflections on Contemporary Poetry,” what occurs in the process is a personal transformation; the experience is a “crisis,” a “passion,” a “metamorphosis almost” that transforms an artist into personhood (103). Personhood here is constituted as an “ineffaceable” conviction and an “unshakeable confidence” that earns one the right to “call yourself alone his friend” (“Reflections” 103). The crisis relationship offered by the dead poet-brother-mentor-guide presents a glimpse of the fellowship of tradition, and its vehicle is nothing less than love: “We may not be great lovers; but if we had a genuine affair with a real poet of any degree we have acquired a monitor to avert us when we are not in love” (“Reflections” 103).

Eliot's Dante: "The Most Universal Poet"

Eliot admired Dante for his ability to create universally accessible poetry that unites the concrete and the abstract. In essays Eliot published in 1929 on Dante's *Divine Comedy* and the *Vita Nova*, he praises Dante for succeeding at "universality," calling him "the most universal poet in the modern languages" ("Inferno" 206). He considers Dante's poetry "universal" in a handful of ways. In the essay devoted to the *Inferno*, Eliot names the quality, "poetic lucidity," that he says helps in making Dante's work universal. He distinguishes poetic lucidity from intellectual lucidity: "The thought may be obscure, but the word is lucent, or rather translucent" ("Inferno" 207). He also points to allegory as part of what makes Dante's work more accessible across languages and cultures and, therefore, more universal. Allegory can be defined as "an extended metaphor" or "an abstraction in the guise of a concrete image" (Deutsch 88). Eliot contends that since "Speech varies, but our eyes are all the same" ("Inferno" 210), allegory helps with understanding because it renders abstract ideas into "clear visual images" (209). Eliot imagines Dante's practice of allegory reflects a mental habit he calls a "*visual imagination*" (209). In Eliot's view, a fine-tuned visual imagination is a kind of seeing by which poets share the visionary abilities of mystics and saints: "when raised to the point of genius, [it] can make a great poet as well as a great mystic or saint" ("Inferno" 209-10). The experience is a "more significant, interesting kind of dreaming" than modern dreams, and its disappearance is the result of a historical-cultural difference between the scope of a "more united" medieval imagination and a "disintegrating" modern one (Eliot "Inferno" 209-10). Eliot viewed the modern imagination as disintegrating in part because divided by modern national languages ("Inferno" 206). Although Dante wrote in Italian, he wrote "when Europe was still more or less one," says

Eliot (209). For Eliot, Dante's use of allegory reflects the close ties of his culture to a "psychological habit" of "seeing visions" (209). For Eliot, a cultural whole is one in touch with both its concrete and abstract aspects, and this is why he praises Dante so highly; he believes Dante's poetic lucidity, use of allegory, and visual imagination allow him, more than any other poet, to provide poetry that combines these aspects successfully.

In his essay on the *Inferno*, Eliot attributes Dante's universal poetic partly to his use of Italian. Dante's Italian is closely descended from Latin, which Eliot recognized as a fitting language for poetic meaning. To Eliot, Latin seemed to be imbued with special signification ability, partly because as a common intellectual language of Medieval Europe, it housed meaning from usage by people of different cultural perspectives; consequently, it carried a due richness and an inherently higher capacity for universal signification. Later in "On Poetry and Poets" (1957), Eliot would say, referring to Virgil, that Latin was a language in a "unique position [...] to conform to its destiny" (67-68). Eliot considered Latin a universal language with a destiny outside of national divisions. Affiliation with Latin benefits Dante's poetry because Latin includes abstract thought since its users were "trained in philosophy and all abstract subjects" (Eliot "Inferno" 206). Eliot finds abstract thought generally lacking in modern languages, which "tend to separate abstract thought (mathematics is now the only universal language)" (206).

As an early philosophical frame for Eliot's aesthetics, the paradigm of reality Eliot explored in his dissertation, *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley* (completed in 1916), provides a helpful context for understanding his aesthetics. Bradley's idealism provides an early philosophical frame for Eliot's aesthetics, and is "directly relevant to his poetry" (Brooker "Bradley's Doctrine" 147). Eliot's intentions for the dissertation are to

make a general explanation of Bradley's theory as expressed in Bradley's essay "Floating Ideas and the Imaginary," which first appeared in the international journal *Mind* (October 1906), and to clarify Bradley's position, which he finds "constantly neglected or misinterpreted" ("Knowledge" 32). His intent to assert the theory's importance to "such systems as would do without this theory" (32) suggests how closely Eliot held the ramifications of Bradley's philosophy within his own thinking and how broadly he conceived that it could be applied. At this time, aesthetics, in terms of a clear motivation for the vocation of art, was of chief interest to Eliot; when Eliot said "Dante's sense has further depths" ("Inferno" 215), he may have meant that Dante's work achieves "truth" in the Bradleian sense, as a "union in all perception of thought and sense" (Bradley qtd. Eliot "Knowledge" 33). He would say in "The Clark Lectures" that Dante and his contemporaries "all had this power, in various degrees, of fusing sense with thought" (Eliot 58). This definition of "truth," which Eliot applied to his philosophy of poetry as the objective of the "objective correlative" technique ("Hamlet" 92), comes from Bradley's book *Appearance and Reality* (1893). Eliot introduces this idea, quoting Bradley, at the outset of the second dissertation chapter:

The theory, in its general terms, is stated in *Appearance*, Chapter XXIV. 'There is a view which takes, or attempts to take, sense-perception as the one known reality. And there is a view which endeavors, on the other side, to consider appearance in time as something indifferent.... We have seen that the separation of the real into idea and existence is a division admissible only within the world of appearance. . . . In order to be fact at all, each presentation must exhibit ideality. . . . But the union in all perception of thought with sense, the co-presence

everywhere in all appearances of fact with ideality - this is the one foundation of truth.’ (Bradley qtd. Eliot 33)

The commonalities between Eliot’s understanding of Bradley and his appreciation of Dante make his understanding of Bradley a fundamental part of my discussion of the Dantean influence. In the first chapter of Eliot’s dissertation on Bradley, “On Our Knowledge of Immediate Experience,” he points to the role of experience in reality: “the only independent reality is immediate experience or feeling” (“Knowledge” 30). In the context of describing the primary role of perception in reality, Eliot denotes the important role of the individual “percipient” (“Knowledge” 33, 139, 203). In the second chapter, “On the Distinction of ‘Real’ and ‘Ideal’,” Eliot dismantles the notion that the real and the ideal are opposites, suggesting instead that they are involved in a dynamic exchange:

The real and the ideal (including the unreal) are not two separate groups of objects. Nor, as we shall see, can they be distinguished as object and ‘process’ or ‘act’. Neither the absolute real nor the absolute ideal can as such enter into discourse; it is only when two entities ‘take of each other’, so to speak, that either of them can be real or ideal. Reality is simply that which is intended and the ideal is that which intends; and ultimately –for we have no reason to stop—the intending is the totality of intending, and the intended is the whole of reality. This whole of reality, of course, will as discussed present both real and ideal aspects. . . . (“Knowledge” 36)

This passage introduces a third important concept—“the ideal;” the ideal is “that which intends;” “the totality of intending.” According to this reasoning, “the ideal” is also the source for the

whole of reality, if reality is made of real and unreal aspects (objectifications of ideal intentions) and ideal aspects. For Eliot, the intention of reality is a directing of creative potentiality, whereby “the real comes to join itself, by presenting ideal aspects which are also real, to the self-realising idea” (41). Eliot appears to be thinking of the artist when he praises those with disciplined emotions who are able to objectify their feelings, yet feel deeply: “But we know that those highly organized beings who are able to objectify their passions, and as passive spectators to contemplate their joys and torments, are also those who suffer and enjoy the most keenly” (Eliot “Knowledge” 23). He has already established “feeling” as something that is not personal; it does not even belong to time: “feeling...has no history. It is, as such, outside of time altogether inasmuch as there is no further point of view from which it can be inspected” (Eliot “Knowledge” 22); thus, if feeling is the content of intention, intention the emanation of the ideal, then experiencing feeling deeply, managing it, and objectifying it are the tasks of the artist. Through statements like this, the reader comes to realize that the philosophic paradigm of reality proposed in Eliot’s dissertation is an early version of the paradigm of the artist’s relation to tradition that he presents in “Tradition and the Individual Talent.” In “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” passions and feelings are used interchangeably to refer to the material of poetry: “passions...are its material” and “great poetry may be made ...out of feelings solely” (Eliot 48-9). The percipient is a prototype of the artist that Eliot articulates in “Tradition and the Individual Talent.” Recall that Eliot’s notion of tradition is a matter of attuned perception: “the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence” (“Tradition” 44). The central faculty of the “historical sense” is perception, the primary action of the percipient in the dissertation. In relation to “the ideal,” the artist’s perspective is the focal

point for unarticulated meaning streaming from an abstract source. In this context, Eliot's notion of a "visual imagination" that is shared by poets and saints would seem to be a faculty that permits the poet to perceive the ideal. According to Eliot, as the poet renders perceived experience into sensible knowledge, it is best communicated when the communication preserves some of the "immediate experience." This is the basis for the "objective correlative" that Eliot introduces in "Hamlet and His Problems" and is defined as a method for evoking emotion in art by employing a real set of objects or events that "terminate in sensory experience" (92).

This aesthetic—of the importance of the engagement with the abstract ideal—is shared by Dante technically through his use of visual imagination, but also thematically through elements of the pilgrim narrative. It is the engagement with the abstract that begins the artist's journey; in the case of both Eliot and Dante, the artist must surpass superficial creativity (symbolized in the fantasies that accompany desires of romance and procreation), accept his or her creative talent, and, in commitment to his vocation, begin the journey of discipline and the artist's life. The artist disciplines his or her ability to be a vehicle for intimations from the abstract which is the creative source. It is imperative that the artist accept and discipline his or her talent in order to share it and bring to maturity a moral work that will potentially contribute to the enlightenment and progress of humanity.

Chapter One: *Approaching Source: the Sibyl of Cumae*

A glance through Eliot's notes to *The Waste Land* reveals the variety of spiritual traditions Eliot drew upon in presenting the poem's philosophical vision, and they include references to Classical, Occult, Vedic, and Christian texts. Through the lens of Dante's allegory of the artist as spiritual pilgrim in the *Divine Comedy*, these disparate references congeal in their common relevance to the artist's experience in successive moments of vocational development. In this context, figures like the Sibyl of Cumae, who appears in the title page epigraph, bring facets of their respective traditions into relief to illustrate Eliot's narrative of the artist's transformation in *The Waste Land*.

In fact, the theme of the artist's transformation begins in the reference to the Sibyl of Cumae and her desire to die. Eliot borrowed the passage from the *Satyricon* by Petronius Arbiter, a Roman courtier of Nero who lived ca. 27–66 BC. Referred to as “profusely vulgar,” the satiric novella represents by most accounts a “merciless caricature” of the wasteful spending of the period's newly wealthy (Durant 296-9). Eliot uses Trimalchio's eyewitness description of the Sibyl, part of a speech he makes during a banquet at the end of Book 7 (Bacon 262). The epigraph is typeset in the poem in both Latin and Greek: *Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent: Σύβυλλα τί θέλεις; respondebat ille: ἀποθανεῖν θέλω* (North 3). Translated, it means, “For I once saw with my own eyes, the Cumaen Sibyl hanging in a jar, and when the boys asked her, ‘Sibyl, what do you want?’ she answered, ‘I want to die’ ” (n. 1 North 3).

The image of the ruined Sibyl and her desire to die offers a curious beginning to a curious poem. While Bacon and Schmeling and Rebmann have examined its provenance, the bilingual piece is typically seen to be “difficult”—an incident of pedantry, an indication of irony, or an introduction to the poem's theme of death. Smith and Kenner have attended to the figure's role in classical

mythology, and Hay and Reeves have traced echoes of Virgil's *Aeneid* in *The Waste Land*. This chapter discusses the connection between the Sibyl as a proxy for the poet in the context of *The Waste Land* as a Dantean progress narrative. This chapter revisits the Sibyl's classical mythos, consulting Cicero and Virgil's *Aeneid*. When juxtaposed with Eliot's aesthetics and his proscriptions for the "traditional" artist in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," the Sibyl emerges from the reference's original Petronian irony as a didactic portent, whose function provides both a preview of Eliot's notion of art and a negative example of the artist's transformation.

In Virgil's *Aeneid*, the visit to the Sibyl provides a portal by which the adventurer crosses a threshold. Aeneas is on a journey; after he forgoes the passion he experiences in Carthage with Queen Dido, he must press on to new ports and establish the beginnings of a new culture. Aeneas' encounter with Sibyl, a divine messenger, his task of plucking the golden bough, and his visit to the underworld are the initiatory steps of the hero's transformation. Although Eliot's epigraph references Petronius, not Virgil, the site in the adventure narrative is the same: the Sibyl is the portal for the hero's transformative journey.

According to both Cicero and modern historians, Sibyls were integral to the practice of Roman culture and religion, and they retain their identity as iconic symbols of classical spiritual authority. An inheritance from the Greeks, the Sibyls were influential figures of prophecy who delivered oracles in the service of the Greek deity and patron of poetry, Apollo. Sibylline prophecies were viewed as legitimate in the eyes of Roman politicians, the public, and the rich. It was common practice for the Roman Senate to consult Sibylline prophecies for direction when confronting difficult political issues (Durant 64, 94). In Cotta's dialogue with Balbus, Cicero says that religion was the foundation of the Roman state and that Roman piety, actual or perceived, is a contributing

factor to Rome's success (194-5). Cotta outlines the basic components of Roman religion: divination, ritual, and Sibylline prophecies "derived from signs and portents by the soothsayers and the interpreters of the Sibyl" (194-5). The Sibyl's influence was formidable enough to be appropriated for political uses: "In major crises, the government professed to learn the pleasure of Heaven by consulting the Sibylline Books—the recorded oracles of the Sibyl, or Priestess of Apollo, at Cumae. Through such means, and occasional deputations to the oracle at Delphi, the aristocracy could influence the people in any direction to almost any end" (Durant 64). That the Sibylline influence could be co-opted by those wishing to gain political favor underscores its legitimization among the Roman population at large.

Eliot's invocation of the Sibyl at the onset of *The Waste Land* suggests he welcomed the opportunity to ground the poem in the Sibyl's classical associations. It is known from the 1921 draft of the poem received by John Quinn, that the Sibyl was evoked later in the poem in an early verb choice—the choice of "spelt" in the line: "These fragments I have spelt into my ruins"; the verb was revised to "shored against" before publication (V. Eliot "Facsimile" 81), but as Brooker has observed, that choice suggests that the Sibyl and her method were part of the *The Waste Land* before the decision to adopt the excerpt from Petronius ("Modernism" 202). We know from the same manuscript that Eliot chose the Sibylline passage over the following one from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: "Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision—he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath—"The horror, the horror!" (V. Eliot "Facsimile" 3). In general tone, the two epigraphs share an acute awareness of "the horror, the horror" in response to a "moment of complete knowledge." However, whereas Conrad's piece is an

exclamation or statement of the awareness, the Sibyl reference shows rather than tells; the more *imagistic* of the two, it lets the image speak. Yet the Sibyl reference is also more universal and has broader associations that Eliot may have considered that made it preferable. These associations become clearer when the Sibyl reference is considered within the context of *The Waste Land* as a text employing the allegorical framework of a Dantean pilgrim-poet narrative to discuss the artist's development. Conrad's piece lacks traditional Sibylline associations, not the least of which are the figure's association with Apollo and the heroic adventure narrative genre.

Among the best-known of the Sibyls in the adventure narrative genre is the "dread" one at Cumae, whom Aeneas visits en route to *Italia* (*Aeneid* Book VI). When Aeneas' ship lands, in contrast to his scattering shipmates who pursue needs of the flesh, he ascends the mountain seeking wisdom: *at pius Aeneas arces quibus altus Apollo / praesidet horrendaeque procul secreta Sibyllae, / antrum immane, petit, magnam cui mentum animunque / Delius inspirit uates aperitque futura.* ("Aeneas, / In duty bound, went inland to the heights / Where overshadowing Apollo dwells / And nearby, in a place apart—a dark / Enormous cave—the Sibyl feared by men. / In her the Delian god of prophecy / Inspires uncanny powers of mind and soul, / Disclosing things to come" (Book VI: 9-13). Sought by Aeneas for guidance, the Sibyl warns of the difficulties ahead and provides spiritual insight, setting Aeneas on a path through the underworld. The Sibyl's role in Virgil's version of the hero-adventurer poem is to initiate Aeneas to his greater purpose of founding Rome, but also, at Aeneas request, to guide him to pluck the golden bough and to descend to the underworld where he hears a Stoic revelation of the original creative mystery.

The creative revelation told to Aeneas by his dead father Anchises implies special relevance for Eliot's artist. Anchises provides a vision of the moment in which all material are infused with

potentiality by a primordial spirit and organized by a vast primordial mind: *Principio caelum ac terras camposque liquentis / lucentemque globum lunae Titaniaque astra / spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus / mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet* (Vergili *Aeneidos*, Liber VI. 724-727), (“First, then, the sky and lands and sheets of water, / The bright moon’s globe, the Titan sun and stars, / Are fed within by Spirit, and a Mind / Infused through all the members of the world / Makes one great living body of the mass” [Virgil, trans. Fitzgerald, *Aeneid*, Book VI. 973-977]). Anchises’ description tells how from a primordial unity of earth and sky, by a flowing field of light, Spirit is distributed in the whole completely and infused in all degrees of material, whereby Mind, a great intelligence, agitates *molem et magno*, the matter and the form, in a mixed body. The kernel of this philosophy is the notion that there is a universal and originary spirit and creative intelligence indwelling in all form and matter. The philosophy is a classical version of a monadic cosmological paradigm, in which an individual intelligence functions as a locus and conduit for a universally permeating creative intellect.

Virgil’s Stoic paradigm has special relevance for artists, who are individual creative agents of Mind. This importance can be understood by examining senses of the Latin word *artus*. As a noun, *artus* denotes a part or organ of a body, something functioning independently, yet in service of a larger system. As an adjective, it modifies a noun to indicate it has been fabricated with a kind of graceful economy seen in nature. The passage is translated variously to accommodate the ambivalence of this word. Fitzgerald’s English translation of the *Aeneid* (1990), quoted above, uses “member” and adds the verb “Makes” to retain some of the nominal and adjectival senses of *artus*. English synonyms for the adjective, like “tight,” “thrifty,” and “narrow,” show its connections to the notion of art as a function of economy.

The paradigm of creativity in the Stoic cosmology shares strikingly similar values with Eliot's and Dante's aesthetic paradigms, most notably in the relationship of the artist to the universe, and to a natural, organic, original, emanating, diverse, intelligent creative spirit, within which the individual artist participates in a larger system as an organic part. The role played by the artist, as suggested in the dissertation, is to receive intimations from an abstract source and then objectify them into the material reality of appearances. Forms of the same concept of the nature of art exist in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," where Eliot refers to an invisible force that drives the development of art, "the main current": "The poet must be very conscious of the main current, which does not at all flow invariably through the most distinguished reputations" (46). Implying the intelligence of this current, he refers to the same concept as the "mind of Europe," saying, "the mind of Europe...is a mind which changes... [and] this change is a development that abandons nothing *en route*, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen" (Eliot "Tradition" 46). According to Eliot, art develops not out of "improvements," but changes that he terms "complications in economics and machinery" ("Tradition" 46). The Sibyl's relationship to the concept of the "mind of Europe" has also been proposed by Kenner (159). Dante's aesthetics of the relationship of the artist to nature and divine intellect are established in the *Inferno*, Canto 11, which I discuss in Chapter 3. Dante presents his aesthetics of creative diversity via Beatrice's explanation to the pilgrim of why the moon has spots in *Paradiso*, Canto 2. In the course of her response, she explains, *Virtu diverse esser convegnon frutti di principi formali* (*Purg.* 2.70-71) ("[D]ifferent powers must be fruits of different formal principles" [trans. Mandelbaum]). In the lines following Beatrice explains how diversity is part of the order of intelligent unity of the universe

(*Purg.* 2.127-138). This notion is later tied with justice in *Paradiso*, Canto VI, by Justinian, author of *Corpus Iuris*, the influential Roman law book well-known by medieval scholars (Kelly 1-2). Justinian suggests that diversity provides balance, also understood as justice: *Diversi voci fanno dolci note; / così diversi scanni in nostra vita / rendono dolce armonia tra queste rote.* (“Differing voices join to sound sweet music; / so do the different orders in our life / render sweet harmony among these spheres” (*Par.* VI, 124-126).

The dissemination of knowledge of the creative tradition, in the aesthetics of Eliot and Dante, as well as the culture of Rome, occurs along fraternal lines. Dante’s aesthetic of tradition as fraternity, as I discuss in the Introduction and Chapter 4 is demonstrated in the encounter of Statius and Virgil in *Purgatorio*, Canto 21. Roman piety included piety toward ancestors, and by referencing the Sibyl at the outset of *The Waste Land*, Eliot is able to reference his notion of tradition as fraternity. Eliot describes vaguely how to become a part of the communal heritage of traditional artists, through a perceptive faculty called “the historical sense” (43-4). The artist with the historical sense will recognize that s/he must engage with the same creative source or “main current” that inspired the “Magdalenian draughtsmen” and Homer (“Tradition” 46). In Roman art, the recovery and exchange of cultural heritage is represented in Pompeian caricatures that illustrate variations on Aeneas’ retrieval of his father and the hearth gods from burning Troy. The Virgilian scene of retrieval of spiritual valuables that is Aeneas’ descent to the underworld is a reiteration of the moment captured by the caricatures; yet in the case of the Stoic cosmology, the spiritual “booty” is an abstract idea delivered by Aeneas’ father, not a statuette.

So far, I have argued that the reference to the Sibyl allows Eliot to refer to his concepts of tradition and the nature of art. But the Sibyl’s divine position, her occupation, and the queer

circumstances of her predicament offer further ways to interpret the poem in relation to Eliot's aesthetics. The Sibyl had been a poetess and contributor to the Sibylline books. She was a servant of Apollo, Greek god of poetry, and dwelt in a sacred cave. Noting the significance of these details, Smith has suggested Eliot's reference to the Sibyl of Cumae points to her role as a servant of Apollo as described by Virgil (69). Smith has also associated the epigraph with Cretan rites of spiritual initiation, calling the Sibyl a "symbol of spiritual trial" (69). Cretan rites of spiritual initiation included a dark descent, a death match, and the successful navigation of a labyrinth back into daylight (69). Smith's reading contextualizes the epigraph chiefly with Virgil, emphasizing the Sibyl's role in signaling transformation; he connects her presence in *The Waste Land* to the quest of the hero myth: "An 'archetypal' pattern of descent and ascent is symbolized in the *Aeneid* not only by the episode of the Sibyl, but by the entire quest ... The ocean-voyage pattern of the hero-myth thus accompanies and dominates the narrower detail of his visit to hell" (69).

Due to her occupation, as a writer of obscure verses and a prophetess, the Sibyl evokes a figure of Eliot's interest, the poet as prophet. Recall that Eliot had associated poets, mystics, and saints together in his 1929 essay on Dante, and it was the activated visual imagination they share that he admired ("Inferno" 209-10). A prophet can see the unseen and illuminate the obscure. Through memory and desire, the obscurity of the past and the future provide the imaginary inspirations out of which creations in the present can be evoked and created by the artist. As referred to in the Introduction, in the terms of Eliot's dissertation, experience is produced from the individual's perception of abstract intimations from a source outside of the world of appearances, the ideal. The intelligence streaming from the ideal comes into existence through perception and then into the verbal and visual languages of culture through its objectification into art. In this paradigm, Eliot's

artist plays a role similar to the prophet or saint, in the degree to which he engages with an abstract source of creativity. Many scholars have drawn attention to the Sibyl as a pre-cursor for other prophetic figures in *The Waste Land*, including the dame of Tarot, Madame Sosostris, and the mythical sage hermaphrodite, Tiresias. Also, in the Tarot section, the manuscript copy refers to the writer as witness in the self-appellation, "I John" (V. Eliot "Facsimile" 9), as in the style of the book of Revelation. Smith has associated the mythical figures of *The Waste Land*, the Sibyl, Madame Sosostris, and Tiresias, with the transformation narrative by proposing that they play the role from the Grail myth of "sage woman" and embody "facets of the one personality struggling to attain salvation" (70).

Also to consider in the context of Eliot's aesthetics are the strange circumstances surrounding the story of the Sibyl's transformation and her resulting predicament. As recounted by Bulfinch, when Apollo asked that the Sibyl grant him her love, she asked that in exchange, he extend her life. So rebuffed, Apollo applied a literal interpretation of her request. The request had been imprudently phrased with a metaphor: she had asked to live as many years as there were grains in a handful of sand, but she had forgotten to ask for a youthful body. Her life continued for 1000 years, but she became progressively shrunken (Bulfinch 367). In terms of Eliot's aesthetic, the most relevant themes are the desire for death and disfigurement, the inversion of personal will, and the personal sacrifice. Smith has observed that the Sibyl's predicament represents the "death-in-life" theme of *The Waste Land* (69), and Brooks has related the Sibyl passage to the poem's theme that "life devoid of meaning is death; [and] sacrifice, even the sacrificial death, may be life-giving" ("Critique" 138). I agree with Brooks, who hears in the Sibyl's wish to die the same voice from Eliot's poem "The

Journey of the Magi,” that speaks of a death that is “bitter agony” but welcome (“Critique” 138, “Analysis” 108).

Although a negative example, the Sibyl illuminates the difficulties of being an artist and the roles that desire, disfigurement, and transformation play in the work of the artist. The first is acceptance of personal material and alignment with the decree of a greater creative source. The Sibyl oversteps her limitations in her request to Apollo, and her lack of alignment with his will solicits the discipline of his curse. Her predicament highlights the difficult nature of the artist’s work and its co-involvement with universal creativity. Too much faith in her personal scheme has led directly to the unfortunate disfiguring predicament that confines her to a jar. Hers is a parable of a hubristic servant of the divine whose punishment redefines her ability to create and constitutes a warning to others. Furthermore, the Sibyl’s lack of attention to literal truth and sensibility reveals a lack of personal judgment, and particularly for poets, the episode constitutes a warning not to neglect the power in literal sensibility, the transparency of truth, or the importance of humility when entreating a metaphysical source. Moreover, as already alluded to through the Stoic cosmology, the Sibyl’s predicament suggests the symbiosis between spirit and material and represents the body as a potent vessel. As a representation of the role of desire in the nature of art, the Sibyl sketch represents desire as a perpetual force that drives art and connects it with the desire for death that is, at the same time, a desire for re-birth, for new life. The Sibyl remains an awe-inspiring metaphysical source in spite of her hubris, but her deformed state is a curious and constant indicator of the given form she did not respect.

Various approaches have been taken by scholars in reading Eliot’s use of the Sibyl reference. Schmeling and Rebmann have suggested that one of the primary influences on Eliot in choosing it

was an obscenity trial summons in New York that was brought by the Society for the Suppression of Vice against the publication of a limited-edition idiomatic translation of Petronius' *Satyricon* during the summer of 1922 (405). According to the authors, Eliot settled on the epigraph (rather than the one by Conrad) soon after the trial summons were served to Boni and Liveright, who were also to be Eliot's future publisher (405). Schmeling and Rebmann maintain that analogies of thematic significance remain only "somewhat elucidative" (Eliot's phrase), and contend Eliot's priority was to mock the SSV. Schmeling and Rebmann demonstrate that a Petronian aesthetic that "affirms the place of sensuality and vitality of life ... as basically healthy" was in keeping with Eliot's aesthetic—with his realism and his acceptance of indecorous material (408).

Although convincing and perhaps accurate, the argument does not appreciate Eliot's range of poetic values. Understanding the reference to the Sibyl on symbolic terms should enrich an understanding of the poem overall. As previously noted, where poetry was concerned, Eliot was extremely conscientious of a difference in poetry between "particular" and "universal" significance. Protesting the trial brought by the SSV would have been a particular reason to select the Sibylline epigraph, but not a universal one; and the epigraph seems intended to signify more since Eliot was deeply interested in metaphysics and in the history of religion and he would have most likely found the universal, esoteric themes evoked by the Sibyl more valuable than the opportunity to protest. In fact, Eliot may have considered precisely the symmetry between trivial circumstance and symbolic meaning a decisively significant coincidence.

A letter to his brother, Henry, dated November 5, 1916, in which he refers to "the deeper reality behind ordinary superstition," suggests that the interplay between the esoteric and the mundane fascinated Eliot (V. Eliot "Letters" 158). The letter tells of his decision to pursue writing,

which he sums up with the observation, “I am becoming more and more superstitious about luck and fortune—or rather, I call it the deeper reality behind ordinary superstition” (V. Eliot “Letters” 157-158). His discussion of this reality is couched in an announcement of his vocational choice. The rumination exposes the role Eliot saw for personal desire, in the midst of supra-personal, or “universal” desire. The letter reflects the view that personal desires, such as Eliot’s desire to write professionally, are part of the natural course of things and can be understood as opportunities: “if one makes up one’s mind what one wants, then sooner or later an occasion will come when it is possible to seize it, for I think everybody gets the kind of life he wants, and that if he doesn’t know, or doesn’t want strongly enough, he will never get anything satisfactory” (V. Eliot “Letters” 157-158). He counsels his brother Henry that if he really knew what he wanted, then, “when an opening did appear, if it were only a pinhole, you would be prepared to perceive it” (V. Eliot “Letters” 157-158). The letter shows Eliot’s attention to the problem of the relationship between desire and will; he is ultimately optimistic, but the tension between personal will and universal design that is reiterated in his aesthetic theory is implicit here, too.

As Schmeling and Rebmann concede, the epigraph *is* “Eliot’s most important use of Petronius. Compressed in the one citation are all of his beliefs about the role of literature and man’s reaction to it” (408). As observed by Bacigalupo, “Eliot is always concerned with the content of poetic statement” (182). The Petronian selection fits so well because it signifies, on symbolic and superficial levels, satisfying universal and particular aims. As acknowledged by Schmeling and Rebmann, it not only “affirms ... the bawdy and indecorous” (408), mocks “the intellectual pretensions of the undereducated rich” (408), and reflects Eliot’s “unflinching commitment to see things as they really are,” including decadence and ruin (403), but the epigraph simultaneously

invokes key themes that are fundamental to understanding Eliot's aesthetic, namely, that 1) vain desire is both the fatalistic and creative momentum for art, and that 2) the artist is a human vessel for the universal Mind. The artist, like the Sibyl, is humbled before the creative source; the creative source is a powerful force which intends transformation for the individual and a revelation of universal intelligence. Because of the artist's connection with creative source, the artist's visions and creations may serve as a crucial connection with the creative source for humanity. The Petronian passage becomes the better fit over Conrad's because it has the ability to invoke so much of the poem's aesthetic and still, as Schmeling and Rebmann show, be contemporarily relevant.

In the context of a consideration of the influence of Dantean themes on *The Waste Land*, the Sibyl points readers to Virgil's account in the *Aeneid* and also to the role of the visit to the seer in the adventure narrative archetype as surely as it points to Petronius' ironic portrait. Along with the other Dantean strains in "The Burial of the Dead," Petronius' description becomes a portrait of the aberrant artist, a portent as revolting as the sign written across the gate of Dante's Hell: "Abandon every hope, who enter here" (*Inf.* Canto 3.9). As ominous as the warning Dante places at Hell's gate, the Sibylline reference delivers an imagistic blow. Both a *pictograph* and an *ideogram*, the Sibyl unapologetically demonstrates the pathetic eternally desiring nature of art and the difficulty of the creative process for the artist, at a moment in the poem when the reader can have no idea what is meant by it, except to feel disturbed. Treating the Sibyl as masthead of this poem allows us to read the Sibyl epigraph for its significance to the subsequent journey: as a glimpse of the contradictions involved in understanding the nature of art and practicing the vocation of artist. While the Sibyl reference amounts to a warning to the developing artist who would follow the same path as Eliot's speaker-poet—the path of the artist's transformation and acceptance of vocation—the reference is

also an unapologetic rendering of the fatalistic element of the nature of the artist's transformation and of the perpetual desire that drives art. The added layering of Virgil's *Aeneid* evokes the adventure narrative and the notion of the artist as spiritual vessel for a kind of sempiternal creative energy that is horridly real but must be recognized, accepted, and then disciplined by the developing artist who would contribute to tradition. The Sibyl exemplifies Eliot's aesthetic, in a way that foregrounds the more proliferative yet fatalistic aspects of a disembodied eternal source of and offers a portrait of a continuous living poetic organism desire in the bottled sage, who works as a conduit for divine creative source and is nevertheless pathetic, "dread." In this light, the Sibyl plays a crucial role in *The Waste Land*, taking up her classical position at the gateway of adventure and initiating the poem with a model of the artist that illustrates a mistaken economics of "personality."

Chapter Two: *The Hanged Man as Artist's Model*

Eliot's rendering of the adventure narrative as first suggested by the Sibyl at the masthead of *The Waste Land* becomes recognizable again at the end of "The Burial of the Dead," the poem's first section, with the protagonist's visit to the psychedelic seer, Madame Sosostriis, which is the beginning of a journey which will culminate in his mountain ascent to hear "What the Thunder Said." In the passage, the seer narrates a Tarot card reading (Creekmore 908). This reading, as I shall show, plays an important part in the narrative of the artist's development. The Hanged Man in particular (Fig. 2), embodies specific aspects of the interplay between personality and tradition in Eliot's early aesthetic theory. I read the passage in the context of Eliot's "programme for the métier of poetry" ("Tradition" 46), his view of the Tarot from *The Waste Land* and letters, and his notion of self-acceptance as elaborated in the essay "Ulysses, Order, and Myth" on James Joyce. These texts outline the aspects of Eliot's aesthetic which are present in the symbolism of the Hanged Man and which help to identify the figure's designation at a pivotal point in Eliot's Dantean journey of the artist's transformation.

In 1910, the same year that Eliot began his academic year in Paris (V. Eliot "Letters" 15), A. E. Waite introduced his version of the Hanged Man's symbolism to modern English speakers (Creekmore 908). A set of divination cards, illustrated by Pamela Coleman-Smith under Waite's direction, had been published in London by W. Rider in 1909 and were followed in 1910 with a guide, *The Key to the Tarot*. In 1911, a pictorial edition, *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot*, was issued, containing 78 black and white images (Moakley 472). The book includes an annotated bibliography listing 29 books on the Tarot with notes by Waite. In 1918, in the United States, the manual was released as *The Illustrated Key to the Tarot* by L.W. de Laurence (Moakley 472).

Moakley and Currie both demonstrate that Eliot was likely exposed to these materials—the Waite-Smith *Rider Tarot Deck*, the manual, or both. In prior decks, illustrations of the number, or “pip-cards,” contained only objects in number, as do traditional playing cards (Moakley 473); Waite and Smith innovated the representation by placing the objects in relation to human figures and against narratively suggestive and symbolically rich backgrounds. Eliot’s identification of the pip-card “Three of Wands” (Fig. 1) as “The Man with Three Staves” in his notes to *The Waste Land* (North 22) provides strong evidence that he was thinking of the Waite-Smith Tarot (Moakley 473). Moakley notes further evidence in the word “Staves”: “‘Staves’ is an unusual name for the suit of wands, yet both Waite and Eliot use it in referring to this particular card” (473).



Figure 1. *The Rider Tarot Deck*, III THREE OF WANDS,

illustrated by Pamela Coleman Smith, London: 1909.

If Eliot had seen Waite's materials, he would have been aware of "The Hanged Man," a "Trumps Major" card, number XII of the *Rider Tarot Deck*, which depicts an angelic waif suspended upside-down on a budding gallows tree (Fig. 2):

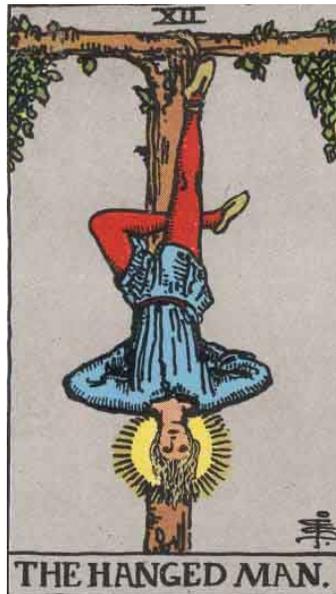


Figure 2. *The Rider Tarot Deck*, XII THE HANGED MAN,

illustrated by Pamela Coleman Smith, London: 1909.

The figure hangs serenely from one foot, like an acrobat, with his hands held invisibly behind his back. The youth's body hangs gracefully, as if hanging were an art and not a fatal decree. His facial expression is humble. From his head to his foot, his body forms an alignment with the gallows. As he looks straight ahead, his lips are drawn together and his head backlit by yellow light. While gallows would evoke death, Waite stresses the positive dynamic of the card: "It should be noted (1) that the tree of sacrifice is living wood, with leaves thereon; (2) that the face expresses deep entrancement, not suffering; [and] (3) that the figure, as a whole, suggests life in suspension, but life and not death" (118). In explaining the next card, XIII, "Death," he

reiterates that the Hanged Man concerns a different death, “to be understood mystically” (Waite 118). Waite characterizes the Hanged Man as follows: “I will say very simply...that it expresses the relation, in one of its aspects, between the Divine and the Universe. He who can understand that the story of his higher nature is embedded in this symbolism will receive intimations concerning a great awakening that is possible” (Waite 119). Waite suggests that understanding the symbolism of the figure is related to the knowledge that “after the sacred mystery of Death, there is a glorious mystery of Resurrection” (119).

As is well-acknowledged, the dynamics of death in creation and the role of personal sacrifice form a part of the central core of Eliot’s aesthetics; this chapter proposes that the Hanged Man helps to elucidate that the death Eliot calls for is the death of “personality.” In “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” Eliot describes the relationship of the artist to tradition in terms of a series of negotiations between what is “personal” to the artist and what is “universal.” According to Eliot, poetry is not “the expression of personality,” rather, it is “an escape from personality” (52-3). The artist’s development involves setting aside personal will: “What happens is a continual surrender of [the artist] as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality” (47). Eliot explains that for an artist, surrender of “personality” means being a “finely perfected medium” for feelings (48) and “surrendering himself wholly to the work” (53). Reiterating the displacement of personal will, he explains: “[T]he poet has not a ‘personality’ to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality” (50). Moreover, lack of “personality” is a hallmark of maturity: “not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most

vigorously” (43). Furthermore, the problem of the extinction of personality and the use of the personal as a vehicle for art is part of what makes contributing to “tradition” a labor of “great difficulties and responsibility” (45).

In Eliot’s early published letters, the Tarot is mentioned cursorily, but Tarot and occult gatherings get little attention. To his father, in a letter dated April 18, 1917, Eliot mentions a “cracked” female student who keeps writing him, offering to “cast” his horoscope, which he says he declined (V. Eliot “Letters” 176). And Eliot refers in a letter to Sydney Schiff dated Nov. 30, 1920, to a meeting of the ladies group “The Lycaem Club,” where, according to Aldus Huxley’s memoir, he “met the woman who was to introduce him to the Tarot pack,” (note, V. Eliot “Letters” 422). Perhaps the most formidable stumbling block to scholars’ discussion of Tarot in *The Waste Land* has been Eliot’s endnote to the poem, which mollifies his familiarity with the cards:

I am not familiar with the exact constitution of the Tarot pack of cards from which I have obviously departed to suit my own convenience [...] The Hanged Man, a member of the traditional pack, fits my purpose...because he is associated in my mind with the hanged god of Fraser, and because I associate him with the hooded figure in the passage of the disciples to Emmaus in Part IV...The Man with Three Staves, (an authentic member of the Tarot pack), I associate quite arbitrarily with the Fisher King himself. (North 22)

Notably, Eliot does not state that he is completely unfamiliar with the Tarot, but that he does not know its “exact constitution.” As the deck contains 78 cards, an individual with more than a mild interest could have considerable knowledge yet not know the Tarot pack’s “exact

constitution.” And despite Eliot’s claim, he had apparently gained enough familiarity to capture his poetic imagination; in his notes to *The Waste Land*, he iterates that several cards reappear at a later point in the poem (North 22).

However, Eliot carefully selected how to define his relationship to the occult. Although his poetic mind may have been fascinated by the occult portals into which he gazed, his correspondence suggests that Eliot’s desire to be taken seriously by his peers and family was lion. In my view, his conscientiousness of reputation is reflected in correspondence and essays, where he appears to have consistently sought to avoid unusual attention and define himself as a serious man of letters while concurrently begging excuse for not being as well read as he should be in his own estimation. It seems that within society, in the company of his peers and family, Eliot was wary of being regarded as “too esoteric.” Reflections in a letter dated February 27, 1918, to his brother, after his father’s death, reveal this preoccupation: “I always tried to give as powerful an impression as I could of my position here but it was a prominence essentially too esoteric to be of much use in that way” (V. Eliot “Letters” 273). Eliot is discussing his wish that his father “could have had more satisfaction out of his children” (V. Eliot “Letters” 273). In a letter dated September 16, 1921, Eliot confesses to Richard Aldington the “imperfection” of his scholarship: “I have quite my share of universal ignorance and superficiality—I only lay claim to a certain cunning in avoiding direct bluff and dealing chiefly with what I *do* know, only hinting at my pretended knowledge of what I don’t know. I have, I confess, always been rather afraid of shocking you by revealing the imperfection of my scholarship in every language, art, and science” (V. Eliot “Letters” 469).

In contemporary essays Eliot places his concerns as a commentator on the literary side, as opposed to the mystic. For example, he judiciously rounds out his comments in “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” claiming that the remarks therein offer “practical conclusions” for the “responsible person,” and he explicitly distances himself from the occult, here referred to as “mysticism”: “This essay proposes to halt at the frontier of metaphysics or mysticism, and confine itself to such practical conclusions as can be applied by the responsible person interested in poetry” (“Tradition” 53). Later, in 1926, when he would reiterate his notions of metaphysical poetry in “The Clark Lectures,” he restates the parameters of his intentions with the lectures, remaining equivocal on the topic while distancing himself from the occult and indicating himself as a critic of “literary interest”: “I have no concern to attack any critic who finds in any poet an occult philosophy; but its connection with the poetry seems of no literary interest” (Eliot 49). Challenging this notion, I suggest that the occult connections embedded in Eliot’s poetry *are* of literary interest because they offer new dimensions by which to consider the full implications of his aesthetic, and because they operate in thematic concert with his work’s Dantean ethos.

While Eliot’s apologies indicate his committed intention to develop his reputation as a serious man of letters, they also confirm his awareness of his position at the boundary of literature and mysticism. The case suggests that Eliot was extremely conscient of the boundaries of “literary interest” and of potential critique by his society. However, I would argue, this concerned him less so, if at all, within his poetry itself, where, as an artist, he reserved the right to express both the concrete reality and the abstract one. Eliot stresses this important prerogative in his essay on Dante’s *Inferno*, where he attributes to Dante’s poetry additional universality due to medieval Italian’s closeness to Latin, a language which contrasts with modern languages in

that it does *not* “separate abstract thought” (206). Eliot’s interest in the occult was possibly akin to his interest in Indian theology; to use a word Ezra Pound applied to the subject, perhaps he feared becoming too “obnubilated” and estranged from his familiar society (Pound qtd. Dwivedi³) and felt compelled to publicly define his relationship to it, especially under the judgment of the public eye. Letting expert claims about mysticism rest with mystics, it would seem that Eliot chose to stand at that border and create a poem that engages a dialog with aspects of mysticism from various cultural sources that reflected his conviction of their direct relevance to his thesis on art and in part his notion that art, and specifically poetry, must house abstract, as well as concrete, intelligence.

In part due to Eliot’s attempts to distance himself from the Tarot and mysticism in general, scholars have debated what degree of significance to lend the Tarot symbolism and the Hanged Man figure within *The Waste Land*. Scholars frequently interpret the Tarot episode as an example of the “heap of broken images” referred to in the poem (line 22), while others say that the “Tarot cards...defeat interpretations” (Brooker “Modernism” 60). Leavitt discriminates between the passage’s “authentic” Tarot symbols like the Hanged Man and the made-up ones like the “one-eyed merchant” (Leavitt 37). While Brooks admits that the mystical tradition of Tarot is presented in decay, he claims it retains a significant thematic truth that is latent in the poem: “The various characters are still inscribed on the cards, and [Madame Sosostris] is reading in reality, though she does not know it, the fortune of the protagonist” (“Analysis” 111). Creekmore applies the narrative framework of a traditional Tarot reading structure, the Ancient Celtic Cross, that was “previously unpublished,” based on its inclusion in the literature published by Waite in 1910, and she argues that a complete reading continues in a fragmented form over

the course of the poem (909). Along with other scholars, she sees allusions to other Tarot cards in the poem, including “Death” and “The Tower” (Creekmore 910; Gibbons 564).

Scholars interested in the Tarot symbolism in *The Waste Land* demonstrate its strong resonance with Eliotic themes, and many have argued for the significance of the Tarot mythology to the meaning of the poem as a whole. Surette looks at Jessie Weston as a source that conflates the Grail romance and the Tarot suits, positing Weston as a source for Eliot’s inclusion of the Tarot (226). Brooks sees the Tarot passage as an example of Eliot’s signature method in *The Waste Land*, showcasing the poem’s levels of ironic complexity (“Analysis” 132). Gibbons argues that “the Tarot cards appear to play a much more important part in the meaning and organization of *The Waste Land* than is generally allowed” (564). Creekmore elucidates the relationship between the Tarot’s perspective of death as a transformational tool and Eliot’s focus on death in his aesthetics of creativity, asserting that like the Sibyl of Cumae, the desire of the speaker-poet leads him to “escape through death to rebirth,” and that the Tarot reading unfolds in direct answer to the Sibyl’s desire for death (911). Brooks, Smith, and others note that the Hanged Man is linked to the poem’s focus on the role of death in creativity, suggesting he is a figure that represents a variation of this theme in company with the Christ and the Hanged god of Fraser (Brooks “Analysis” 108). Gibbons speculates the Hanged Man “may well have led Eliot to a central motif in *The Waste Land*: the fusion of Christ and certain pagan vegetation-deities into one sacrificial figure” (Gibbons 564), while Brooker associates “the dying gods of fertility rituals” with the Hanged Man through the Frazerian perspective (179). Scholars have sometimes dismissed the Hanged Man’s significance because of the card’s stated absence, while to others, his absence bespeaks his eminent significance for the protagonist (Leavitt 97). According to the

Ancient Celtic Cross framework, the Hanged Man occurs in the sixth position in the layout, indicating “the influence that is coming into action and will operate in the near future” (Creekmore 916).

For the purposes of my argument, one need not claim that Eliot was an expert on Tarot but acknowledge his interest in it to the extent that its wisdom and symbolism dovetailed with his own theory of creativity. What Eliot did know about the Tarot was used strategically in *The Waste Land* to give a universal resonance to his aesthetic theory that he had expounded on concretely in “Tradition” and other contemporary essays. That he employed the Tarot symbolism “quite arbitrarily” does nothing to deactivate its potency within the poem; choices like these reveal his poetic will. One such choice, the Hanged Man, in addition to being one in a series of hanged gods, represents the pivotal experiences of transformation for the artist, including personal sacrifice, self-acceptance, and the first gestures of creative self-discipline. Furthermore, while my reading of the Hanged Man in *The Waste Land* links its thematic significance to Eliot’s aesthetics as expressed in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” and “Ulysses, Order and Myth,” this exploration of the Hanged Man also allows us to perceive the extent to which Eliot had internalized a Dantean narrative of the artist’s transformation.

The Hanged Man demonstrates the crucial redirection of will necessary in the process of transformation, which for Eliot involved the artist’s acceptance of position in terms of both personal material and the vocation of artist; and this requires the alignment of personal will with a greater will, personal emotion with a greater emotion. Eliot wrote in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” that the process of the artist’s development involves setting aside personal will: “What happens is a continual surrender of [the artist] as he is at the moment of something

which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality” (47). In “Reflections on Contemporary Poetry,” he refers to poetry as a respite from personal emotion, although as already noted, he considered personal emotions part of the material of poetry, but those same emotions need not be expressed in their “personality” but rather transmuted into something more universal: “Poetry is an escape from emotion, it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality” (“Reflections” 103). The Hanged Man, as an individual who in chosen submission to his predicament subverts his personal will, shows a position of emulation for Eliot’s artist who must sacrifice personal will or “personality” in order to make a valuable contribution to tradition.

The figure of the Hanged Man illustrates a fundamental aspect of the artistic process that Eliot shared with Dante: that becoming an artist involves a transformation of self which is both a sacrifice and an augmentation of “personality.” Embarking on the journey of “the story of his higher nature” (Waite 119) is the adventure of the speaker-poet in *The Waste Land* as he progresses from the “Unreal City” to the sandy road in the mountains. The Hanged Man represents “wisdom, circumspection, discernment, trials, sacrifice, intuition, divination, [and] prophecy” (Waite 285). Like Dante’s traveler, receiving intimations of his higher nature is part of the process of the poet’s transformation. This kind of transformation and how it is represented in the Waitean Hanged Man’s symbolism and embedded in Eliot’s narrative of development at work in *The Waste Land* becomes the focus here.

In the Tarot passage, Madame Sosostris’ cryptic language invites interpretation. Sosostris declares to the guest that his card is “the drowned Phoenician Sailor,” but the poem’s line breaks cast doubt on the fixed nature of this pronouncement:

Madame Sosostriis, famous clairvoyante,
 Had a bad cold, nevertheless
 Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,
 With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,
 Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor,
 (Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)
 Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,
 The lady of situations.
 Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,
 And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,
 Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,
 Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find
 The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.
 I see crowds of people, walking around in a ring.
 Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone,
 Tell her I bring the horoscope myself:
 One must be so careful these days. (lines 43-59)

The words “Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor” sit on one line and are ordered in a question, making the statement syntactically ambivalent and suggestive (line 47). The “one-eyed merchant” is not a veritable Tarot card; his mention remains mysterious (n. 8 North 7). While interpretations vary (Gibbons 563), it is logical to associate the eyeless merchant with the “drowned Phoenician Sailor” (line 47), whose eyes are pearls (48). Many scholars accept a

bleeding together of the Phoenician Sailor and one-eyed merchant, and Eliot's own notes say they "melt together" (Brooks "Analysis" 125); both personages, within the context of the allegorical narrative of the artist as adventurer, would seem to represent the protagonist.

Furthermore, the enjambment of the line, "Which I'm forbidden to see. I do not find," which is immediately answered by "The Hanged Man," suggests that the Hanged Man figure, in addition to being curiously absent, is linked with future representations of the protagonist. It's arguable that Sosostris can't "find" or "see" this card because it's on the back of her client, the dead merchant/sailor, and that the naming of the absent card by the seer leaves it to the protagonist, or even the reader, to "find" or "see" the card. Leavitt acknowledges Madame Sosostris' role as an indicator who reveals the poet's task: "Madame Sosostris points to the empty space, and [...] highlights the necessity of interpreting it" (97). Leavitt also suggests that "the motif of a load carried on the back," not featured on any card, carries a significant figurative meaning in the context of a variety of mystic traditions; she relates it to the suffering from past actions, from the Hindu term *karma*, and within the European occult, to the notion of "an evolutionary process by which the soul becomes closer to the divine mind" (96). Gibbons points to a connection between the load motif and the staves in the *Mahabharata*, as translated by Muller in 1878; the text reveals that "the bearing of three staves is a token of Hindu asceticism" (563). These meanings are relevant to Eliot's conception of the modern artist's relation to tradition. Furthermore, if the Hanged Man can be found on the client's "back," this implicitly sets up the demand for a back-to-front reversal of the protagonist's status, a reversal from being pronounced the "drowned Phoenician Sailor," or "one-eyed merchant," to becoming an artist; a reversal from being one who occupies himself with "profit and loss" (314), to being one whose hand is "expert with sail

and oar” (419), a “reversal” from being an object of beauty, “handsome and tall” (121), to being a producer of beauty, to whose “controlling hands,” hearts “would have responded / Gaily,” even obediently (420-1); and this reversal is already implicit in the Waite-Smith depiction of the inverted Hanged Man whose position reveals his alignment: his body is aligned with the form of the living gallows tree (see Fig. 2). What is reversed is the notion that the individual is the author of his own creativity; Eliot would say the individual is the vehicle. One of the key parts of this understanding, this reversal, is both the artist’s acceptance of the death of personality and the acceptance of personal material in general.

Although, as a budding literary critic, Eliot may have sought distance from the occult, he was also a budding poet; and Eliot’s use of the Hanged Man in *The Waste Land* resonates strongly as a model for the developing artist who demonstrates the position Eliot saw for the artist as he negotiates his relationship to tradition. The Hanged Man unmistakably elucidates the relationship Eliot’s artist has to “personality” and how the personal is involved in creative work. In June 1920, responding to the editor of the *Athenaeum*, Eliot highlights the role of personal sacrifice in his aesthetic: “The creation of a work of art is like some other forms of creation, a painful and unpleasant business; it is a sacrifice of the man to the work, it is a kind of death” (V. Eliot “Letters” 387). In “Reflections on Contemporary Poetry,” he refers to poetry as a respite from personal emotion, although as already noted, personal emotions are part of the material of poetry; yet those same emotions need not be expressed in their “personality” but rather transmuted into something more significant: “Poetry is an escape from emotion, it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality” (Eliot 103). The Hanged Man, as an individual who in choosing submission to his predicament subverts his personal will, shows a

position of emulation for Eliot's artist who must sacrifice personal will or "personality" in order to make a valuable contribution to tradition. In the same essay we learn that "personality" and "personal emotion" become transformed with the artist's contact with tradition, in the relation of kinship between living and dead artists, a relational experience whose end product is personhood (Eliot "Reflections" 103).

The use of the Hanged Man reiterates the importance of the artist's acceptance of his or her unique position, a position Eliot understood to be comprised of one's own proto-creative material, which is a theme we get a better grasp on by revisiting his discussion of James Joyce. In the essay "Ulysses, Order & Myth" (1923), what Eliot appreciates in Joyce's talent reveals this aspect of his aesthetic theory. How Eliot reads Joyce helps elucidate how Eliot considered the relationship between individual talent and tradition. Eliot esteemed Joyce for having gotten the balance right, calling Joyce's *Ulysses* "the most important expression this present age has found" (175). Relevant to this discussion is the label he assigns to Joyce as "classic," and the quality that defines it: a stoic economy which requires that the artist accept personal material. In "Ulysses, Order & Myth," Eliot takes Richard Aldington to task for criticizing Joyce as undisciplined because Eliot believes both he and Aldington agree on a literary value called "classicism." After admitting the label itself causes confusion when applied across literature and culture, he vaguely defines "classicism" as "good, according to the possibilities of its place and time" (176). As Eliot explains, "one can be classical in tendency by doing the best one can with the material at hand" (177). Eliot's apparently vague definition of classicism as "good, according to the to the possibilities of its place and time," and "doing the best one can with the material at hand," are clearly stoic, in light of our consultation of the *Aeneid*. In the same essay,

he goes on to make prominent the role of acceptance in this process. Likewise, the Hanged Man, who hanging can only create art by making his suffering look graceful, learns the economy of necessity as he hangs. His acceptance of his predicament is implicit in his willful display of grace and acceptance, and this is the foundation for his transformation, the first creative act of his rebirth. In the essay on Joyce, Eliot writes that self-acceptance represents part of the responsibility and the “material” of the artist’s individual creativity, isolating self-acceptance as a key difference between the responsibility of the creative artist and the literary critic: “in creation you are responsible for what you can do with the material which you simply must accept. And in this material I include the emotions and feelings of the writer himself, which for that writer, are simply material which he must accept...” (177). The acceptance of personal material is the foundation of the artist’s individuality, and it is on the basis of this, how well Joyce uses his “living material” in his artwork, that Eliot proposes to evaluate Joyce’s talent.

Eliot connected the experience of self-acceptance with the modern artist’s ability to create contemporarily relevant artwork and participate in the literary tradition. In the essay on Joyce, he explains the “mythical method” as “manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity” (177). Echoing his notion of the “historical sense” in “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” Eliot calls the mythical method “a step toward making the modern world possible for art” (178). He explains that using myth is part of tending the tradition: “It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance” to the cultural output of history (177). Eliot compares this effort to science while justifying it in mystical terms, claiming the method “has the importance of a scientific discovery” and is “a method for which the horoscope is auspicious” (178). In context of the developmental foundations of Eliot’s

aesthetic, these explanations suggest that Eliot conceives of art as an essential and significant body of knowledge, constituted by the objectified perceptions of human individuals in relation to the ideal. Beyond the revelation of one individual, the total output reflects the tides and dynamics of that greater force which is the continuous, yet variable source of art throughout time, so that art is always changing, or rather accumulating, due to additions of individual perspectives and the influences of the particular conditions of their status and incarnation. The Joyce essay ends with how the artist must prepare to contribute to such important work: “only those who have won their discipline in secret and without aid...” will be able to assist in this effort. Thus, Eliot reiterates the role of personal discipline for the artist in using the mythical method (177-8), and it centers around the phrase he repeats nearly verbatim, twice—the importance of accepting the personal particular: “material which you must simply accept” (177-8).

The Tarot passage highlights two further aspects of Eliot’s aesthetic which are present in the image of the Sibyl, relevant to a comparison with Dantean aesthetics, and place emphasis on the process of the artist’s alignment of individual will; these aspects are the limit of the seer’s vision, and the necessary action on the poet’s part to reveal or “find” the Hanged Man. Notably, the visit to Madame Sosostriis neither discredits nor adulates occult knowledge; rather, the scene keeps occult wisdom obscure, leaving it to evoke a hidden space which contains a potentially transformed version of the present. As in the case of the Sibyl, the Tarot consultation with Madame Sosostriis presents a portrait of an occult source which features a figure of dubious health and integrity that is simultaneously pathetic and wise. Her reputation is clear; she is known as the wisest in Europe, but her portrait is less than flattering: being infected, she is of

dubious health, and her ill condition reiterates her bodily vulnerability. Madame Sosostriis aligns spiritual attunement with infirmity, like Herman Hesse's sick prophet perhaps, whose illness allows that he become an attuned sensory organ for an entire culture (North 62). Far from being an alluring enchantress, she's fretful and cautious: "One must be so careful these days" (line 59). The passage suggests there are parameters for the perspectives of those who like poets, clairvoyants, and prophets, specialize in "visual imagination," the kind of vision that Eliot connected with poetic craft in his writings on Dante ("Inferno" 209). Beyond her banal paranoia, however, perhaps what Madame Sosostriis significantly represents is a kind of limited vision. As the card reading progresses, it becomes evident some quality of her "vision" is lacking; she doesn't "see" the blank card, nor "find" the missing Hanged Man. Her inability, along with the Hanged Man's presence via his name, speaks to the nature of the artist's transformation as being both an act of individual will and an individual journey that the poet experiences "with great labor" (Eliot "Tradition" 44), and "in secret and without aid" (Eliot "Ulysses" 178). At the same time, the artist who contributes to traditional art is both limited and individuated by his or her own perspective, as "no poet has his whole meaning alone" (Eliot "Tradition" 44). Sosostriis demonstrates the limit of individual perspective, another side of self-acceptance.

Although Madame Sosostriis is renowned for her intellect, that Eliot brands her cards "wicked" sets her wisdom in opposition to other kinds of knowledge. But is this a simple case of "good" v. "wicked"? Eliot's interpretation of Baudelaire would suggest that Eliot's views were more complex than conventional notions of morality ("Baudelaire" 342-4). With this in mind, perhaps it is most fitting to understand "wicked" as meaning "wild" and "unrestrained," "unobedient" even. For Sosostriis' wisdom is "wicked" in many ways. In the 1910s and early '20s,

in New York, Boston, and London, practitioners of Tarot were considered “disorderly persons” and were regularly brought to trial and fined, and their stories were published in newspapers (Diemert 176-8). Moreover, in terms of its relevance to aesthetics, wild and unrestrained wisdom is another way to refer to Eliot’s notion of the ideal source of art. In his exploration of Bradley’s idealism, Eliot characterizes the source of reality as knowledge streaming from an ideal source, the “immediate experience” of which passes through the individual percipient and, in order to be expressed, is “objectified” into reality, for example, through art (“Knowledge” 36-7). Eliot’s perspective on Bradley reflects his own intuitions about his developing aesthetic philosophy. In the context of this aesthetic, which grows out of his dissertation and is suited to the Dantean paradigm, it is most useful to understand “wicked” as “terrible” or “unrestrained,” in the sense of “unruly,” “undefined,” or “abstract.” As in Dante where the pilgrim hears the confounding cries, intimations of the unknown are useful only when disciplined, but labyrinthine when merely experienced and stalled in thought. The wisdom glimpsed from Madame Sosostris cards is “wicked” because undisciplined. In my view, the juxtaposition of “wicked” wisdom affirms that Eliot, like Dante, would consent that there is wisdom to be gained from all sources of knowledge, whether “wicked” or obedient, abstract or concrete—provided they lead the artist on an “illuminating” quest that brings creative discipline. Madame Sosostris’ wisdom signifies liberally at the level of the abstract, and in Eliot’s paradigm in which “Reality is simply that which is intended and the ideal is that which intends,” even for an autochthon, “immediate experience” of the ideal is the substantial level of creativity (“Knowledge” 36). In the context of the narrative of the artist’s development, Sosostris loosens a question that requires the willful, creative response of the poet. Receiving her abstract knowledge, merely hearing the name,

allows the poet to translate its significance into reality within the poem in a way, according to the method of the objective correlative (“Hamlet” 92), that retains some of this abstract quality, allowing the reader, too, to engage in a sensible understanding. In the paradigm of reality expressed in Eliot’s dissertation, the poet plays the role of the percipient, the one through whom the absolute real and the absolute ideal can “take of each other” (“Knowledge” 36), the one whose function is to use his/her personal perspective (a product of his/her personal material) to transmit a sensible version of his or her received intimations of the abstract into reality via an art object that contains sensible intelligence.

In my view, the speaker poet’s inability to “find” the Hanged Man because “forbidden” redefines the seer’s perspective as limited and reiterates that the task belongs to the speaker-poet himself. The agency of the speaker poet is further suggested by an interesting appearance of a “blank card.” The complete, originally published *Rider Tarot Deck* contained blank cards which were included for the purpose that the individual in possession of the deck would draw additional images: “when the artist has arrived at a certain stage of perfection...supernal intelligences themselves furnish the 22 esoteric keys, or impress their symbolic nature on 22 blank cards prepared by the student” (Anonymous qtd. Currie 727). In the context of Eliot’s aesthetics and the role of the individual percipient/artist, this scenario parallels Eliot’s notion of tradition as an effort that is not only engaged with the past in the present, but that creates present reality through new translations of prophetic vision. The inclusion of the blank card is an acknowledgement of the prophetic nature of the cards and, as a metaphor for art in general, suggests the potential for new cards, new visions to be revealed beyond the scope of the current seer, and which require a new artist to impart them to humanity. The inclusion of the blank card and its significance recall

Eliot's aesthetics as expressed in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," where he describes art as a joint cultural effort whose meaning as a whole has greater significance than the vision of any one artist or art product:

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of æsthetic, not merely historical, criticism. The necessity that he shall conform, that he shall cohere, is not one-sided; what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. ("Tradition" 44-5)

The character of Madame Sosostriis contains an additional aspect of Eliot's notion of art, namely that its intelligence courses through varied reputations: "The poet must be very conscious of the main current, which does not at all flow invariably through the most distinguished reputations" (46). Madame Sosostriis' speech contains both great and insignificant information; her speech is constituted by the epitome of esoteric and mundane knowledge, the extremes of the Absolute and the trivial. This suggests that she is an unwitting instrument, or that she has a

limited perspective of her wisdom's font and its significance. The seer's vision remains limited to her point of view, and since she cannot see "this card" nor "find" the Hanged Man, it comes down to the action of the client/speaker-poet himself to "find" this card. Arguably, this happens in the poem, in the following manner: the sailor/merchant card, the proclaimed "Significator" card ("Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor," [line 47]), is "laid down," "discarded," or "played out," in the narration of Phlebas' death in Part IV, "Death by Water." The card of the Hanged Man "plays out" in the poem through the narration of the speaker-poet's acceptance of his vocation and his procedure to interpret the abstract message of "DA." This reading emphasizes that in the context of the narrative of the artist's development, the artist's transformation requires, beyond inspiration, a willful action—here, a reversal, a transcription of the poet's death that terminates in the act of self-acceptance—which is also a testament to the poet's rebirth and initiates the first step on the artist's path. That the speaker-poet must turn over and reveal what is on his back, revealing himself as one who accepts this position in accordance with the decree of a higher source, illustrates Eliot's notion that the artist, like the Hanged Man, makes what appears to be a death of what one knows as "life" only a death of personality and a rebirth under new rule. This quality makes the Hanged Man, who accepts his predicament with grace, a fitting model for Eliot's artist who would contribute to tradition.

A final characteristic of the artist's transformation represented in the Hanged Man which appertains to Eliot's aesthetic is the economy by which his art takes place and its resonance with the stoic notion of art present in Virgil's *Aeneid*, from which art can be understood as an organic, intelligent product occurring out of particular, limited conditions. The stoic artfulness exhibited by the Hanged Man resonates with the descriptions of the classical artist Eliot iterates in

“Ulysses, Order & Myth.” In my view, the role of the Hanged Man within the aesthetics of transformation in *The Waste Land* is to incite the artist to accept his vocation—to incite the sailor-merchant to drown and the Hanged Man to be reborn to his purpose and its path. Eliot considered the problem as he accepted his own vocation, even expressing his ruminations colloquially to his brother, Henry, in a letter dated Nov. 5, 1916, where his remarks reflect his awareness of the role of personal desire in leading the individual to “satisfactory” work, which in the context of contemplating his next career move, means being able to have a “satisfactory” position working as a poet (V. Eliot “Letters” 157-158). In the *Rider Tarot Deck*, part of the power of the Hanged Man image rests within the contradiction represented by his difficult position which he overcomes with graceful countenance; his posture, submissive to his predicament but willfully beautiful, represents a clear exertion of artful will, precisely at a moment when he has nothing; and it is this willful alignment with a greater decree which allows him to experience transformation and creative re-birth. The icon illustrates the epitome of stoic economy that Eliot espoused in “Ulysses, Order and Myth,” while demonstrating the sacrifice of self and willful submission of the artist that he described in “Tradition and the individual Talent.”

In his note, Eliot said that the Hanged Man reminded him of the Fisher King. Waite’s Hanged Man is an especially fitting figure to represent this symbolism because the personal material the artist must accept—although deathly like the green boughs the Hanged Man hangs from—is life-giving, creative, and generative material. The Hanged Man as model artist represents well the difficulty for the artist, which turns around the struggle of personal will as the individual negotiates a mind crowded with phantasmagoria—shades from memory and desire.

To Eliot, for artists with the “historical sense,” or with a sense of their proper place in history and in the tradition of art, part of the “great difficult[y] and responsibilit[y]” comes from enduring this process of clarification between personal material and impersonal art emotion. Rather than expressing personal material as the content and subject of the work, Eliot believed the poet’s mind must use this emotional energy to give a more durable form to a universally accessible work. As Eliot’s career advanced, he continued to be preoccupied with the relationship of personality and valuable art, and this became the focus of his 1933 lecture, “Personality and Demonic Possession,” in which he criticizes Thomas Hardy, George Elliot, and D.H. Lawrence for “the intrusion of the *diabolic* into modern literature” (par 7), by which he means “the aggrandisement and exploitation of *personality*” (par 4). To Eliot, this is a problem because it departs from his understanding of art as a way to sublimate personal emotion into a universally accessible emotion that attests to and offers a glimpse of the spiritual transformation of the artist. As Eliot explains, “The personality which fascinates us in the work of philosophy or art, tends naturally to be the *unregenerate* personality, partly self-deceived and partly irresponsible, and because of its freedom, terribly *limited* by prejudice and self-conceit, capable of much good or great mischief according to the natural goodness or impurity of the man” (par 13). To not feel Eliot’s tone in this essay as chastising is to understand that the “*unregenerate* personality” is the personality before transformation, before the death and re-birth of the self as narrated in *The Waste Land*. In this essay, Eliot is posing sincere questions of character, an area of concern in which personal discipline and individuality cyclically surface to be re-defined, in accordance with Eliot’s view of the proper place for personal material in the vocation of art and in the artist’s relationship to tradition. Eliot’s critique that writers whose work has too much “personality” is

“diabolical” and “self-conceited” demonstrates that Eliot continued to believe that one of the primary qualities that gives art value is the artist’s ability to distinguish between reality and unreality, being and personality, and universal and personal emotion, or, as he expresses it in this particular essay, “the permanent and the temporary, the essential and the accidental” (par 12).

In this chapter I have argued that in *The Waste Land* at a critical moment in the narrative of the transformation of the artist, Eliot connects the speaker poet with the Hanged Man through an omission in Madame Sosostris’ vision and a series of ambiguous lines which leave the impression that the speaker-poet figuratively “wears” the Hanged Man “on his back.” Based on the superimposed structure of a Dantean pilgrim-poet narrative and on the esoteric meaning of the Hanged Man within the larger context of Eliot’s aesthetic, the card’s omission suggests, rather than its unimportance, that the naming of the Hanged Man signals the crucial task for the artist of enacting the acceptance of vocation and alignment with greater authority that the card symbolizes within the poem. From this perspective, the Hanged Man represents a key didactic portent for the artist that illustrates reunification with a greater rule than mere uniqueness in art. The Hanged Man exhibits both the process of transformation and the notion of Stoic economy because his transformation rests on his ability to transform his predicament; hanging, he has nothing, and it is through his acceptance of nothing but this position, committing fully to his death and rebirth, that he may exhibit the grace which attracts the admiration of the viewer.

Chapter Three: Dante's Aesthetics from Inferno, Cantos 11 & 13

In the previous chapter, I have argued that the Hanged Man models Eliot's notion of the artist's submission to a greater creative source, an encounter that transforms personality in a way that is simultaneously a self-sacrifice and an augmentation, and I have suggested that this position strongly reflects the influence of Dante's aesthetic in the *Divine Comedy* where, as a poet, part of Dante's project is to confront the question of the artist's connection to the creative source, who is referred to variously as *Alto Fattore*, ("Highest Maker") and *Primo Amore*, ("First Love"). In Canto 11, the suicide is described as an inverted source, a version of fraud that distorts the chain of love naturally occurring in nature and disrupts the exponential abundance proceeding from moral acts. In Canto 13, to show more explicitly the importance for the artist of accepting the difficulty that comes with being "faithful" to one's talent according to a greater rule, Dante provides the negative example of Pier della Vigna, a skilled rhetorician whose punishment for fraud inflicts the pain and difficulty that his failure to adhere to true words while abusing his lord's confidences had allowed him temporarily to avoid. Similar to the Hanged Man, Pier della Vigna is confined to a tree. In contrast to Pier della Vigna, the Hanged Man represents a positive figure of transformation who embodies the Dantean ethos of alignment with a greater creative will also reflected in Eliot's favorite line from the *Paradiso*, Canto 3, which he quotes in his essay on the *Paradiso: E'n la sua voluntade è nostra pace*, "In His will is our peace" (line 85). Manganiello explores the influence of this maxim on Eliot's later representations of the relation between church and state (137), but in context of aesthetics, this maxim, and the hanging men featured by both Dante and Eliot represent the importance of

accepting vocational difficulty, the death and rebirth of personal will, and the importance of aligning one's creative will with a greater creative will.

Cantos 11 and 13 of Dante's *Inferno* treat the sins of self-violence and fraud, and contain a treatise on the nature of art. Presented in the context of violence against self, the vignette of the suicide contributes to the idea of the importance of source-connected art. Beginning with Canto 11, Virgil guides the pilgrim through the zone of *malizie*, a general term referring to acts of violence. Within Dante's downward spiraling Hell, the seventh ring contains three circles of violence that group violators together according to whether the violence was perpetrated against self, another, or God. Fraud gets discussed in terms of a violence against God and the idea of false representation through a lack of expression, or non-expression, in Dante's description of the self-violating individual. From the aesthetic perspective, the self-violating figure provides a negative model for the artist, who evidences his/her talent through a transformative process of self-discipline. The pilgrim's journey in the *Divine Comedy* narrates this transformation, as the main character progresses from the shipwreck and the dark wood, out of Hell, and through Purgatory to the edge of Paradise. Canto 12 treats the circle of violence designated for those who violate others, while Canto 13 looks at violence against self, as both physical violence and as the wasting of talent, through the example of the suicide of Pier della Vigna, a rhetorician turned corrupt government minister. In the personage of Pier della Vigna, violence against self comes into focus through della Vigna's misalignment with truth and faith in many areas: 1) in his abuse of his position of "confidence" for his employer, 2) in his manipulation of words, and 3) in his suicide, which reveals a fundamental disconnection from creative source. The figure of Pier

della Vigna provides a negative illustration of an artist—a writer disconnected from source and from the moral project of art.

As Virgil and the pilgrim travel toward the city of Dis in Canto 11, the severity of the sins they view progresses from incontinent acts to acts of more severe malice. Thinking of “malice,” or *malizie*, in relation to its opposite “delice” or *delizie*, the classical goal in poetic production, helps to decode the episode’s importance for poets. As they descend, Virgil explains. Virgil’s speech on *malize* and then his closing speech on the nature of art include a clear message for artists, emphasizing the importance of accepting one’s vocation, in the knowledge that their individual work is part of a greater creative effort. Virgil’s description of self-violence constitutes a didactic warning to poets and artists who would avoid and lament the nature of their work; because, in neglecting their work, they not only violate themselves, but the completeness of the revelation of the creative source—art as a whole. Dante’s word choice in describing the suicide recuperates the pilgrim’s own point of departure, and is affirmed in the Canto’s closing speech on art; together these aspects frame the pilgrim’s encounter with Pier della Vigna, a former teacher of Dante who can be found in the circle of suicides.

Before Virgil and the pilgrim meet Pier della Vigna, Virgil communicates that fraud is the gravest of the violent sins because it spreads injustice exponentially and, therefore, its sadness is contagious—it “makes everybody sad” (*altrui contrista*): *D’ogne malizia, ch’io in cielo acquista, / ingiuria e’ l’fine, ed ogne fin cotale / o con forza o con frode altrui contrista*, or (“Every evil deed despised in Heaven has as its end injustice”). Dante conceives of divine justice here as essentially balance: the term *ingiuria* emphasizes injustice as an imbalance in judgment rather than an achievement of a specific outcome:

*La frode, ond'ogne coscienza è morsa,
 [...] Questo modo di retro par ch'incida
 pur lo vinco d'amor che fa natura;
 [...] Per l'altro modo quell'amor s'oblia
 che fa natura, e quel ch'è poi aggiunto,
 di che la fede spezial si cria; (Inf. Canto 13.52, 55-6, 61-3)*

The English translation says:

Now fraud, that eats away at every conscience,
 [...] This latter way seems only to cut off
 the bond of love that nature forges;
 [...] But in the former way of fraud, not only
 the love that nature forges is forgotten,
 but added love that builds a special trust (trans. Mandelbaum *Inf. Canto 13.52,*
55-6, 61-3)

According to Virgil, fraud is so much more harmful to humanity because it consumes the intelligence it encounters, and fraud practiced against God constitutes a cutting off of natural love. In addition, the world loses everything that would be added by the “bond of love” that would be incurred through any work created through ‘natural love’. The “special trust” represents the transformative return from a faithful act in the seeds of its progeny.

One sensible quality of the circles of violence, the stench, which Virgil calls a *tristo fiato*, literally, “sad breath,” provides a suggestive background element as Virgil and Dante enter the seventh ring in Hell (Canto 11) and descend into the abysmal zone. The implication of the setting is that to not develop one’s talent is tantamount to creating an exponential waste. Like a bad smell, the nastiness is not confinable, and permeates the air and the sensing faculties of everyone who approaches the rot. Virgil comments that the odor starts off bad, but, that they will acclimate, effectively comparing a life of self-violence with becoming accustomed to a putrid smell. The smell viscerally represents the offensive nature of a wasted life and wasted talent. The stench also reiterates the difference Dante saw between true art and fraud: true art produces a developed functional product which advances humanity. Dante makes the point in such a way that he sets up a contrast within the context of the pilgrim narrative sequence which reinforces the aesthetic theme of the good of knowledge that can be gained from sensible experience. In Canto 13, as the pilgrim seeks to identify the abstract, but audible rumors he hears, this topic is further pursued. As the micro events of the pilgrim narrative suggest, thoughts or even abstract intimations, without an active response, can create confusion; when acted upon, they can develop into an intellectual quest.

In the character Virgil’s explanation of the crimes belonging to each circle in Canto 13, he decries the waste of human intellectual faculty in the circle of self-violence. He calls a self-violator a person who *buscazza e fonde la sua facultade*, “gambles away and empties his faculty,” (*Inf.* Canto 11.44, my trans.). The Mandelbaum translation defines the self-violator as “...whoever would deny himself your world, / gambling away, wasting his patrimony, / and weeping where he should instead be happy” (*Inf.* Canto 11.43-5). “Wasting his patrimony”

translates the loss of heritage squandered, but to my ear, misses some of Dante's poetic inherence that allows the passage to simultaneously show the potentially successful path alongside the damned one. First, as in English, *facultade* denotes ability, but connotes intellectual, creative faculties. *Facultade* more precisely evokes the individual's ability, not only to understand and desire, but for intelligent creativity. Through the phrase *fonde sua facultade*, Dante allows the reader to glimpse the transformation possible in the poetic evocation of both the depletion of source *fonde* ("bottom") and its liberated flow, *fonte* ("fountain"). In the Italian, through Dante's poetic turn of phrase, Virgil's speech on malice offers an allusion to the creative transformation which is available to the artist, while refused in the case of intellectual self-violence.

As noted by the guide, the loss from self-violation is not restricted to the individual, for the whole world is also denied all the possible fruits of one un-potentialized laborer; and the poet is implicated in this. Poetically inhering in Dante's language *buscazza e fonde la sua facultade*, is a reiteration of the metaphor of the human intelligence as both vessel and fountain for divine intelligence. The transformed alternative to the suicide's empty vessel would be the artist's talent that cascades like a fountain.

Divine Intellect and Its Art

In Canto 11, as they prepare to enter the first ring, the pilgrim asks Virgil for clarification as to how fraud is so offensive to God. Virgil replies:

*'Filosofia,' mi disse, 'a chi la 'ntende,
nota, non pure in una sola parte,*

*come natura lo suo corso prende
 dal divino 'ntelletto e da sua arte;
 e se tu ben la tua Fisica note,
 tu troverai, non dopo molte carte,
 che l'arte vostra quella, quanto pote,
 segue, come 'l maestro fa 'l discente;
 sì che vostr' arte a Dio quasi è nepote.*

*Da queste due, se tu ti rechi a mente
 lo Genesì dal principio, conviene
 prender sua vita e avanzar la gente; (97-108).*

('Philosophy, for one who understands,
 points out, and not in just one place,' he said,
 'how nature follows—as she takes her course—
 the Divine Intellect and Divine Art;
 and if you read your *Physics* carefully,
 not many pages from the start, you'll see
 that when it can, your art would follow nature,
 just as a pupil imitates his master;
 so that your art is almost God's grandchild.
 From these two, art and nature, it is fitting,

if you recall how *Genesis* begins,

for men to make their way, to gain their living;) (97-108).

Dante uses classical literature (Aristotle's *Physics*) and combines it with scriptural readings and his own perspective, unfolding his theme across a broad historic and cultural context. The character Virgil's reasoning can be traced through the Stoics and Aristotle, which is combined with Genesis, to prove that nature takes its course from divine intellect and from its art. Citing Genesis, he reminds the pilgrim how, through divine intellect and art, God directed the first humans *convene prender sua vita e avanzar la gente*. Mandelbaum translates this line as, "it is fitting, [...] for men to make their way, to gain their living." But a more literal English translation might say, "it convenes to take one's life and advance the people," opening the reading and emphasizing the exercise of individual will required to accept the vocation of art.

In Canto 11's discussion of self-violence, Dante offers a moral context for intellectual development, and his poetic use of language, as well as the explanations in Virgil's didactic speech, both affirm the importance for the artist of being connected to the source and following its course. Virgil's discussion of fraud and his explanation of art according to *Filosofia* suggest to the pilgrim and reader that in self-violence, the individual does not only defraud the self, but also falsely represents the First Mover. In as much as self-violence presents a fraudulent picture of individual talent, it also creates a fraudulent representation of the nature of the creative source of the intelligence of humanity. In his speech on the nature of art, Virgil suggests the lineage of art from God as first creator: *che l'arte vostra quella, quanto pote, segue, come 'l maestro fa 'l discente; sì che vostr'arte a Dio quasi è nepote* ("that your art, as much as it can, follows, as to the master the descendent, so that your art, to God almost is nephew") (*Inf.* Canto 11.105).

Pier della Vigna

The pilgrim's encounter with Pier della Vigna in Canto 13 of Dante's *Inferno* illustrates the primary moral aspect of work. For Dante the moral aspect is related to the activation of the human will via engagement with that which is unrevealed, but of the sensible world, in other words, that which requires faith. The main discourse of the Canto is the folly of un-productivity and the waste of suicide; from this, the positive message emerges that a productive will is an active will. In Canto 13, Dante's careful semantic characterization of the micro-events in the pilgrim narrative, his strategic use of verb tense, and his subtle employment of a motif of images that invoke labor and creative process collaborate to expound on the notion that art is the product of an activated will, connected to a creative source by faith. Only by transforming a stagnant will into an activated, productive one, can the individual reveal his or her talent.

Upon entering the forest of suicides, the pilgrim is confused by mysterious cries: *Io senti ad'ogne parte trarre guai, / e non vedea persona che 'l facesse; / perch'io tutto smarrito, m'arrestai* / ("I heard from everywhere the sound of cries, and I didn't see anyone who could be doing it; so that I, completely lost, stopped myself") (*Inf.* Canto 13.22-4, my trans.). The semantics of the pilgrim's confusion and Dante's instrumental use of the subjunctive put heightened emphasis on the paralyzing quality of thought, or any inductive work not connected to intellectual action. The word *sentire* communicates that the pilgrim receives the stimuli. The text begins, *io sentia*, a verb whose meaning includes awareness of all types of sensations, not just aural, meaning, "I sensed." The pilgrim reports in the past imperfect that he didn't see anyone (*non vedea*). The sense of the passage reinforces the pilgrim's admission, via the reflexive verb *smarrito, m'arrestai*, (*lit.* "lost/disconnected, I arrested /impeded myself"). The

way in which Virgil recommends the pilgrim respond is significant to understanding Dante's conception of the artist's responsibility with regard to approaching the source and disciplining self-expression. Dante's careful discrimination of senses suggests one of the theses of the *Divine Comedy*, that reason is not the only way to salvation or enlightenment; the senses have their intelligence. Mandelbaum's translation transfers the inability to the pilgrim's sight, saying, "I could not see"; however, Dante uses the Italian past imperfect of "to see," *vedea*, and the subjunctive of "to do" *facesse*, which means that the origin of the sound carries the sense of dubiousness. The difference is slight, but key. The pilgrim's confusion is not due to his sight, but because the pilgrim "senses" rumors for which he cannot see the action producing it. Spitzer has observed: "it is this conflict between the visual and the auditory that accounts for Dante's initial confusion" (84). The pilgrim's awareness of the discord between visible reality and perceived sounds causes *smarrimento*, a kind of confusion semantically understood as "disconnection."

The micro events of the pilgrim set up the theme of faith. The entanglement of belief and thought is again laid out in the next tercet, a passage in which Dante exaggerates for a labyrinthine effect: *Cred'io ch'ei credette ch'io credesse / che tante voci uscissir, tra quei bronchi, / da gente che per noi si nascondesse*. ("I think that he was thinking that I thought / so many voices moaned among those trunks / from people who had been concealed from us.") (*Inf.* Canto 13.25-7). The cadence (*Cred'io ch'ei credette ch'io credesse*), employs the imperfect subjunctive to express the root verb *cred-*, "to think or believe", in the final term, *credesse*, and the Italian imperfect subjunctive introduces the stimuli perceived by the pilgrim: "*credesse che tante voci uscissir, ... da gente che per noi si nascondesse*," (the pilgrim "would think that so

many voices would come out,” “from people that would hide from us”). Subsequent use of the subjunctive puts significant activities in doubt: *uscissir*, (“voices would exit”) puts the utterance of the voices in doubt; while *nascondesse* casts doubt on whether the people would hide themselves; both these activities are later revealed to be importantly doubted, as speaking and revealing oneself are precisely the negated characteristics which the negated poet/ “intellectual suicide” must reverse. On a phonetic basis, the passage amounts to a literal cacophony, a string of “k” sounds that easily leave the reader tongue-tied and coughing. The point is clear that the pilgrim only confuses himself into paralysis by piling up assumptions because the reality of the subjunctive is a virtual labyrinth. The moral seems to be: pay too much attention to confusing conceptions and self-paralysis results.

Virgil advises the pilgrim to stay active in the present, applying active will now, in order to avoid the fraudulent violence that is the crime against self. Virgil's advice in response to the pilgrim's confusion confirms this reading: *Pero, disse 'l maestro: 'Se tu tronchi / qualche fraschetta d'una d'este piante, / li pensier ch'ai si faran tutti monchi.* (“Therefore, my master said: ‘If you would tear / a little twig from any of these plants, the thoughts you have will also be cut off”) (*Inf.* Canto 13.28-30). The rhyme *tronchi-monchi* brings emphasis to the notion that actions make the confusing thoughts clear. In the canto's first reference to hands, Dante extends his at Virgil's encouragement: *Allor porsi la mano un poco avante*, (“Then I stretched out my hand a little way”) (*Inf.* Canto 13.31). The tree wails in pain just as the pilgrim rips off the branch, and thus, as Virgil has predicted, the pilgrim's confusion over the sounds clears in the revelation.

Pier della Vigna bleeds and speaks (*Inf.* Canto 13.43-4). This aspect carries the influence of prior poets: there is the bleeding shrub at the talking grave of Polydorous which Aeneas visits and Ovid's instances of people morphing into plants, like "Daphne *becoming* a tree," for example (Spitzer 80). Blending the Virgilian and the Ovidian, in Dante's punishment, "body and soul have been divorced by the act of self-murder" (Spitzer 78-9). Della Vigna's testimony exposes that his individual offenses concern lack of faith in his work and life credo. Della Vigna confesses he was de-seated from his role as governmental secretary to Federigo for his public fraud, using the metaphor of keys and a lock to describe how he tinkered with "truth" and lost his lord's confidence:

*Io son colui che tenni ambo le chiavi
del cor di Federigo, e che le volsi,
serrando e disserando, sì soavi,
che dal secreto suo quasi ogn' uom tolsi;
fede portai al glorioso officio,
tanto ch' i' ne perde' li sonni e ' polsi.* (58-63)

("I am the one that who guarded both the keys
of Frederick's heart and turned them,
locking and unlocking with such dexterity
that none but I could share his confidence;
and I was faithful to my splendid office,
so faithful that I lost both sleep and strength. (58-63)

Of course della Vigna's aberrant practice turns everyone hotly against him; he tries to escape the disgrace by suicide. Della Vigna's crime plus his suicide conclude to greater offense. Although he claims, lines later, never to have broken faith with his lord, this is obviously not the case. In his lies and his suicide, he betrays both the faith of his earthly lord, and his Signore ("heavenly Lord"). Della Vigna's is an illustration of a fraudulent life because his life and his work are lacking allegiance to truth, allegiance that requires faith in finding the right true words. Della Vigna's is the story of a soul who pleased everyone on the surface—a tiring and loveless act of keeping up appearances, while underneath he was only faithful to "his splendid office." Instead of attending to "the incredible thing" with faith, he makes his faith the mask of faithfulness. The lying wears him out, taking his bodily vitality, and because he misrepresents the natural course of truth, he invokes hatred from his society and is condemned. Not only disgraced by his public, his graver sin is the habit of disconnecting reality from truth at the cost of his well-being. His fatal schism/misalignment results in a culminating loss of faith which prompts suicide, disgracing him before his creator and cutting off forever his potential to evidence a revelation of the divine intelligence.

Using the example of his former rhetoric teacher, Dante takes up the issue of the difficulty of honest creative work in two ways. First, by the peppering of this canto with hands repeatedly, the poet conjures the realm of labor, and second, through the explicit nature of the pain of della Vigna's punishment. The shade can now speak only truth, but when he speaks, he bleeds both blood and words; he must bleed and release pain with speech. With the pilgrim disoriented by abstractions and Virgil promoting action, Dante plants a series of allusions to hands in the canto, firmly inserting the discussion of painful utterances into the context of hard

work. After the pilgrim sticks out his hand to break the branch, the shade protests the painful snap violently, saying: *ben dovrebb' essere la tua man più pia*, (“it would have been well, [had you used] your more piteous hand” (*Inf.* Canto 13.38, my trans.)). The expression features the imperfect subjunctive, meaning della Vigna would have preferred the pilgrim’s *man pia*, or “piteous hand,” which stands in direct but unspoken contrast to the *man d’opera*, “working hand,” a term also used to refer to hard labor. Moreover, in poetry, a poem is a work, an *opera*. These are some of the echoes at work in the canto which suggest that labor and suffering are the work, not of the sympathetic *man pia* (the piteous hand), but its opposite, the *man d’opera*. The *man d’opera* evokes a labor process in which the laborer actively applies his will to complete a difficult work, whether intellectual or physical; and by which, according to a stoical definition, the successful work may be called art. In this way, through what Eliot recognized as Dante’s “visual imagination,” Dante uses the hand as a symbol for labor, promoting even poetry as a moral labor and a noble, time-redeeming alternative to being lost in confusion.

The narrative exchanges between Virgil and the pilgrim in Canto 13 pick up the discourse on labor as the way to activate a potentially productive will and as the proposed alternative to a life disconnected from faith. In fact as already noted, Virgil first guides the pilgrim away from wasting intellect on confusing assumptions, urging him to action; in the next scene, he again urges the pilgrim to use time for action. In the silence after the trunk’s pathetic story, an opportunity arises for questions or a response from Virgil and the pilgrim. Virgil urges him: *Non perder l’ora; ma parla, e chiedi a lui, se più ti piace*, (“Don’t lose the time [*lit.* “the hour” or “the now”]; but speak, and ask him, if more interests you”) (*Inf.* Canto 13.80-1, my trans.)). The

trajectory of Virgil's advice is to prompt the pilgrim to activate his wonder by ejecting it into a question, and therefore, embark on an intellectual quest.

In the case of della Vigna, the poetic trope of the key and its misuse suggests what is at stake in this passage in terms of the individual talent, described as "the heart's secret" by the Ecclesiastes writer: "I have seen the travail that God hath given to the sons of man to be humbled by it. The whole He hath made beautiful in its season; also, that knowledge He hath put in their heart without which man findeth not out the work that God hath done from the beginning even unto the end" (Eccl. 3: 9-11). This notion is also present in Dante's *Divine Comedy* through the trope of transforming the heart's lake into a fountain; both tropes point to the idea that the key that unlocks the heart's secret turns on a kind of faith—a faith maintained, despite negative forces, in the struggle of the difficulty of living an artist's life. For Dante and Eliot, as with the Ecclesiastes writer, accepting and submitting to faith in a design greater than the individual's has a special link with the blooming of individual talent. Through Virgil's speech on fraud, Dante maintains that it is through creative acts inspired by love that special returns ("trust") are made: *Per l'altro modo quel'amore s'oblia che fa natura, e quell ch'è poi aggiunto, di che la fede spezial si cria*, ("But in the former way of fraud, not only the love that nature forges is forgotten, but added love that builds a special trust") (*Inf.* Canto 11.61-63, Mandelbaum trans.). In the close of that speech, Dante makes it clear that it is by these abundant returns that love itself and the nature of the creative intellect and spirit are revealed, and in turn, that the human race and the revelation of all creation advanced.

Pier della Vigna's transgression is set in the context of Dante's examination of violence against self and most impressively characterized in the figure of the intellectual suicide, in which

a warning to the pilgrim-poet and all artists is negatively implicated. The punishment fits well within the context, foregrounding the pain of natural expression. It is because della Vigna did not suffer for integrity and fidelity with his words in life that he must bleed for each true word in Hell. In other words, truthful human expression may require pain. The moral soul chooses to accept to suffer through the difficulty, that s/he may experience the sublimity and expansion of success. Della Vigna's softness for the *man pia*, his unwillingness to believe anything unthinkable, especially the present truth of Virgil, are commissions of fraud as misrepresentation of his true nature and its portion as inspired by divine intellect, by which according to the theory, he sullies the representation of the nature of the divine intellect as well. Because he could not will himself to suffer the trial of fidelity to one true key and this pressure of integrity, he must suffer their opposites in Hell. According to Dante's logic, in Hell, della Vigna will always desire yet never achieve what he faithlessly squandered in life, including his flesh; he is confined to a tree while his flesh hangs from the branches; he is another kind of hanging man.

Chapter Four & Conclusion: DA: Discipline and Creative Fitness

Dante has a strong presence in the final section of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, "What the Thunder Said." While commentators often consider *The Waste Land* a poem without resolution, its Dantean references place the section in a purgatorial context and continue the narrative of the transformation of the poet. The quester's resurrection from "living" to "dying" at the section's start echoes the thunderous rebirth of Statius in Dante's *Purgatorio*. As the thunder speaks, Eliot interweaves the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* parable with a quote from the imprisoned Count Ugolino of Dante's *Inferno*. In both of these cases, Dante's presence highlights aspects of Eliot's aesthetics, pointing in particular to the role of personal will in the development of the artist's relationship to tradition. In the vein of readings by Moynihan and Drew, I shall argue that Dante's presence contributes to a positive understanding of Eliot's aesthetics and to the notion that the speaker-poet of *The Waste Land* progresses over the course of the poem. Progress is legible in the speaker-poet's account of his accomplishment and the new, individual poetic voice that emerges. The new voice interprets the translations of "DA" that lead the reader through a re-visitation of the artist's self-sacrifice and self-liberation and testify to the artist's transformed relationship to April's cruel prison of "memory and desire."

The opening stanza of "What the Thunder Said" sums up where the speaker-poet has been and primes the reader with the themes that will unfold in the remainder of the poem:

After the torchlight red on sweaty faces

After the frosty silence in the gardens

After the agony in stony places

The shouting and the crying

Prison and palace and reverberation

Of thunder of spring over distant mountains

He who was living is now dead

We who were living are now dying

With a little patience (lines 322-30)

The first three lines that begin with “After,” give the sense of having progressed, yet not only in time (322-4); “the torchlight red on sweaty faces,” suggests progression from an infernal environment. The content of previous sections which the speaker-poet has traversed corroborates this—from the burning at Carthage in “The Fire Sermon” (307-11), to the death of Phlebas in “Death by Water” (312). Death remains present in “frosty silence,” yet the garden promises new life. A transition occurs in “the shouting and the crying,” which belongs to both to an infernal past and a more purgatorial present (325). “Prison and palace and reverberation” pronounce the transformation, introducing the poet’s new self-conception (326). “Prison and palace and reverberation” is the poem’s most concise encapsulation of the theme of the artist’s development in the poem, represented as a negotiation of the individual’s conception of self in relation to the source of the creative tradition. “Prison and palace and reverberation,” represents the transformation of the artist’s understanding of the self as being all three: the prison of the body is also a palace “and reverberation.” “Prison” and “palace” are places, while “reverberation” is not; it is an invisible activity—the persistence of reflected sound waves that occurs in an empty place. Eliot has said that the artist must sacrifice personality to become the “perfected medium,” for art (“Tradition” 48). And in this sense, the artist is a vessel, and an empty vessel can conduct and produce more reverberation than one with stuff inside.

Reverberation of what, from where, and why is answered directly: “reverberation / Of thunder of spring over distant mountains” (326-7). In my view, the preview provided by the opening passage of “What the Thunder Said” charts the transformation of the speaker-poet’s understanding of self. The progression from restricted to palatial to reverberating self is for the artist a progression from conception of self as a prison for the creative spirit, to self as a palace for the creative spirit, and finally self as a vessel from where the creative spirit can reverberate the “thunder of spring.” The new life is heralded.

The influence of Dante can be seen in the speaker-poet’s progression from an infernal landscape to a more purgatorial one, where the speaker-poet is actively engaging the new life. Eliot incants: “Prison and palace and reverberation / Of thunder of spring over distant mountains / He who was living is now dead / We who were living are now dying” (327-330). Death as a positive awakening of new life is iterated here. The dying takes patience because, like purgation, it must be endured. The protagonist has progressed from an infernal landscape that culminates in a transformation that is a death, but also a rebirth—the return of “spring.” The death the protagonist is patiently attending has been and will continue to be the death of personality. Eliot’s dry mountain with sandy road resembles Dante’s Mount Purgatory, where there is also no water: “no rain, no hail, no snow, no dew” (*Purg.* 21.46). As in *Purgatorio*, no moisture exists in the landscape of “What the Thunder Said”: “Here is no water only rock / Rock and no water and the sandy road winding above among the mountains” (331-4). In Dante’s Purgatory, the only water source is tears shed by the penitents who are constantly weeping. These penitents do not wish to stop, like those on Eliot’s mountain: “Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think,”

/"Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit" (336, 340); they are purgating, and each moment brings them closer to release.

The images of the first three lines—"the torchlight red on sweaty faces," "the frosty silence in the gardens," and "the agony in stony places," followed by "He who was living is now dead" (322-4)—recall events leading up to the crucifixion of Christ (North 16). Whether the pronoun "He" refers to Christ, Everyman, or the protagonist, in parallel, "We" are included (329). Eliot has remarked that the section uses "the journey to Emmaus" as part of its theme (North 25). However, in my view, neither the historic life of the Christ, nor the conventional understanding of the Christ is the focus here. References to Christ relate to the development of the artist. Eliot's use of Christ in the context of the narrative of the artist's development in the final section of *The Waste Land* suggests that he employs Christ in a poetic mode similar to Dante, as a symbolic figure for the poet who aligns his creativity with the creative source.

Eliot could have drawn the example of using Christ as a didactic model for the artist from Dante's *Purgatorio*, Cantos 20 and 21, where the pilgrim and Virgil encounter Statius in the terrace of prodigality. Statius will become the pilgrim's guide after Virgil departs. Statius, a Roman poet writing during the first century CE, wrote an epic tale, the *Thebiad*, modeled after Virgil's *Aeneid*. Statius went on to write verse considered *otium*. Since Statius was a poet, Dante uses the encounter to illustrate aesthetic lessons for the developing artist. In Dante's interpretation, Statius was converted to the essence of Christianity through Virgil (perhaps through a "prodigality" of belief) and so has been purgating for 500 years (*Purg.* 21:68).

Since there is no moisture in Dante's Purgatory, a thundering sound in the dry mountains evokes the curiosity of the pilgrim. The pilgrim hears a loud tremor in Canto 20: *io senti', come*

cosa che cada, tremar lo monte; (“...I could feel the mountain tremble like a falling thing”) (*Purg.* 21.127-8). In Italian, the verb *sentire* means both “to hear or listen,” and “to feel.” The pilgrim and Virgil are pressed to enquire about the sound’s source, and they learn later in Canto 21 that the thundering heralds the rebirth of Statius’ soul and his release from the purgation process. As Statius explains: “it only trembles here / when some soul feels it’s cleansed, so that it rises/ Or stirs to climb on high;” (*Purg.* 21.58-60). So, in addition to a superficial and thematic echo, there is a symbolic, poetic one; in both the ending of Eliot’s *The Waste Land* and in Dante’s *Purgatorio*, thundering functions as a sensible accompaniment to personal transformation.

In the course of Virgil and the pilgrim’s first encounter with Statius, Dante compares the Roman poet to Christ at least twice. Back in Canto 20, the mountain tremor that Virgil and the pilgrim hear is immediately met with a cry of *Gloria in excelsis...Deo* (line 136), to which the duo listen, *come pastor che prima udir quel canto*, (“like the shepherds that first heard that song,”) a clear reference to Christ’s birth (140). Dante also employs the motif of the road to Emmaus. Statius sneaks up on Virgil and the pilgrim after his soul’s resurrection, and Dante compares his stealth to the resurrected Christ who appeared to two disciples as they travelled to Emmaus: *Ed ecco, sì come ne scrive Luca / che Cristo apparve a’ due ch’erano in via, / giù surto fuor de la sepulchral buca, / ci apparve un ombra dietro a noi venìa*, (“And here—even as Luke records for us / that Christ, new-risen from his burial cave, / appeared to two along his way—a shade appeared; and he advanced behind our backs” (*Purg.* Canto 21.7-10). Dante has already suggested in the *Inferno* that the artist’s work is in a relationship with the work of God the creator: *vostr’ arte a Dio quasi e’ nepote* (“your art is almost God’s grandchild”) (*Inf.*

11.105). That Dante compares Statius to Christ in these situations, particularly to represent the liberation of Statius' soul, suggests that he means to employ Christ as a vaster symbol for the artist's transformation while emphasizing the aspect of the artist's relationship to a greater, creative source. In my view, as Dante has done, Eliot also employs Christ to represent the aspects of sacrifice and transformation which are experienced by the artist. As I have argued in a previous chapter in relation to the Hanged Man, the circumstances surrounding Christ's mystery, namely, his dual human and divine/universal natures and his commitment to meet his particular appointment with his creator, resonate with the *métier* of the artist as characterized by Eliot in "Tradition and the Individual Talent." Christ offers a model for the transformation of the artist because Christ meets his appointment with a greater creative source and Christ aligns his human will with a greater creative will.

Before the thunder speaks and Eliot interweaves the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, the poet reiterates what constitutes the "Unreal city" in a series of images that seem to revisit what the artist is leaving behind—what he will distinguish himself from and progress beyond.

A woman drew her long black hair out tight
 And fiddled whisper music on those strings
 And bats with baby faces in the violet light
 Whistled, and beat their wings
 And crawled head downward down a blackened wall
 And upside down in air were towers
 Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours
 And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells. (lines 377-84)

The “Unreal city” is the center of *unreal* culture as pertains to the vocation of poetry. These images draw the reader’s attention one more time to the unreal—in this case providing images of exhausted vessels singing. The image of a woman fiddling “whisper music on those strings” recalls Poe’s Arabic muse of poetry invoked in the poem “Israfel” and seems to be a personification of romantic poetry, whose effluvial nature Eliot disliked. The “bats with baby faces” are those who dwell in the bell tower, evoking another poem from Poe—*The Bells*. The “bats with baby faces” are immature poets whose work is a product of “the reminiscent bells, that keep the hours”; they don’t conceive of their work as being other than “of the time” in which they live. They provide a contrast to the poet with the “historical sense” because their work does not contain a “consciousness of the past.” Collocated in the next line with this group are “voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells”; again, these are poets, artists who have not aligned their will with the creative source, thus their vessels—the cistern and the well—are empty and exhausted. As Dante has done in *Inferno*, Canto 11, Eliot characterizes artists who are not connected with the creative source as “singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells” (383-4). As I demonstrated earlier, Dante uses this same metaphor in his characterization of the suicide as someone who “gambles away and empties his faculty” (*buscazza e fonde la sua facultade*) (*Inf. Canto 11.44*, my trans.). Dante uses this metaphor in the *Divine Comedy* to indicate that the artist can be a vessel whereby the viewer/reader might encounter the “water of grace.” The “baby faces” of the bats in this passage indicate their immaturity, and contrast them to the speaker-poet who, in the lines following the thunder’s speech, will distinguish himself from them by reporting his accomplishments.

The second half of “What the Thunder Said” begins with the thunder’s speech (line 400). At this point Eliot incorporates the Vedic “DA” parable, the section’s central allusion. In my view, it both illustrates the influence of Dantean aesthetics and supports the notion that the pilgrim has progressed. The “DA” parable can be found in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, which forms part of the sacred literature of Hinduism (n. 2 North 62). Eliot’s exposure to and study of Indic scriptures was concentrated between 1911-3 (Moody 20). At Harvard, Eliot had enrolled in courses on topics such as Sanskrit and Yoga in each of his three years in his graduate program (Miller 169). Of the six Temple Classics volumes of literature which were in Eliot’s possession during that period, the young scholar signed his name in only two: Dante’s *Purgatorio* and *The Bhagavad Gita* (Walout). I agree with Moody’s characterization of Eliot’s engagement with Eastern thought “as a way of reproaching and rediscovering the basis of a Christian vision” (19).

As the “DA” parable goes: “Prajapati had three kinds of offspring: gods, men, and demons (*asuras*)” (North 62). Each group asks their host for instruction: “To them, he uttered the syllable *da* [and asked]: ‘Have you understood?’”(North 63). Each group asks for instruction in the same way, receives the same answer, and affirms that they have understood. Each group has been told *da* but, it becomes clear when they report what they heard that each group has understood a different direction. The gods hear the command *damyata* (“control yourselves”); the men, *datta* (“give”); and the devils *dayadhvam* (“have compassion”). According to the legend, the wisdom of the command still exists in the thunder’s cry: “That very thing is repeated [even today] by the heavenly voice, in the form of thunder, as ‘Da,’ ‘Da,’ ‘Da,’” (North 63).

B. P. N. Sinha notes that in *The Waste Land*, Eliot changes the order from “control,” “give,” “have compassion” to “give,” “have compassion,” “control” (Brooker “Modernism” 188).

In each of Eliot’s “DA” passages, the abstract utterance is translated into a Sanskrit word, according to the parable, which is then followed by a brief verse. Here is the first:

Then spoke the thunder

DA

Datta: what have we given?

My friend, blood shaking my heart

The awful daring of a moment’s surrender

Which an age of prudence can never retract

By this, and this only, we have existed (lines 399-405)

The paradigmatic framework provided by the “DA” parable and the reflective verses following are significant both to the discussion of the artist’s progression in the poem and the influence of Dantean aesthetics. In the poem’s notes, Eliot remarks that his use of eastern and western spiritual traditions together is “not an accident” (n. 306). In these reflections, the poet is revisiting scenes of significance to the development of the artist, in accordance with Eliot’s aesthetics. The section not only speaks about the poet’s transformation, but provides evidence: a new poetic voice speaks in the reflective response, which has both personal and universal qualities. Its emergence gives voice to the transformation of the speaker-poet. In the first “DA” passage, for example, the speaker-poet recounts a moment of “surrender” that can never be retracted, but which has been the very substance of his/our existence. Bacigalupo has read this line in direct relation to the response of “shock and surprise, even ...terror” of which Eliot writes

in describing the novice's kindling encounter with the master poet (181). Furthermore, this economics of self recalls the Hanged Man's stoicism and the continual surrender required of Eliot's artist.

In the second "DA" passage, the poet responds to the Sanskrit directive reserved for the demons, *Dayadhvam*, "be compassionate"; yet compassionate to whom? The context in which the directive is applied seems primarily interior:

DA

Dayadhvam: I have heard the key

Turn in the door once and turn once only

We think of the key, each in his prison

Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison

Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours

Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus (lines 410-6)

The interior context of "thinking of the key" in the speaker-poet's reflective verse suggests that the directive "be compassionate" pertains to self. Here, Eliot seems to be revisiting the artist's discipline for tradition, which must be won "in secret and without aid" ("Ulysses" 178).

Specifically, in this case, the call to have compassion for self is a call to liberate self from the prison that is creative thought without action. The speaker uses the perfect tense, "I have heard the key," which is notable since it was an event that happened, "once only," and therefore, simple past would suffice. Perfect tense may have been employed idiomatically for its potential to emphasize the resonance of the speaker's accomplishment, "*I have heard the key*" (line 411, *emphasis added*). The usage suggests that the speaker poet has heard the key, the key that can

liberate individual creativity from the prison which is confirmed by merely “thinking of the key” (414). As Brooker has observed, “immediate experience is presented ... as a key that can be used to get out of the tower” (“Modernism” 193).

Eliot’s notes to *The Waste Land* refer readers of the second “DA” verse to a specific line in Dante’s *Inferno*, Canto 33, which features the story of Count Ugolino, an overly aggressive Pisan count who was imprisoned in tower *La Muda* for treason, along with his children. In the passage Eliot cites, Ugolino is telling the pilgrim and Virgil of the moment he heard the keying of the lock below: *e io seniti’ chiavar l’uscio di sotto a l’orribile torre* (“...I heard them nailing up the door / of that appalling tower; without a word, / I looked into the faces of my sons.”) (*Inf.* 33.46-47). For Ugolino, the keying of the lock also signals that he and his sons would face starvation, as well as imprisonment. More than the nuances of Ugolino’s particular story, however, Eliot’s use of the reference and his citation of this one line emphasize the particular context of hearing the key from inside the tower. Within the context of the speaker-poet’s progression from conception of self as restricting to reverberating, the allusion allows the poet to emphasize that failing to act on “the key” inhibits self-expression, turning the self into a prison: “Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison” (414).

The important point in the allusion to Ugolino is his imprisonment in *l’orribile* tower. The tower is a metaphor for the imprisonment and then liberation of self by the mind. Ugolino represents those who are still imprisoned. However, from the perspective of the poem’s protagonist, towers have fallen: “What is the city over the mountains / Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air / Falling towers / Jerusalem Athens Alexandria / Vienna London / Unreal” (371-6). In Biblical tradition and Tarot reading, the tower symbolizes the decline of

structures of human culture, giving it a broader application than solely to the individual (see Fig. 3). In Waite’s short description of the image, he says the Tower signifies “distress” and “ruin,” among others; but also, it embodies the reverse of “imprisonment” and “tyranny.” In his commentary, Waite nods to an alternative suggested by Papus, that the Tower “signifies the materialization of the spiritual world”; he places provocative emphasis on the card’s indication of what he calls “the end of a dispensation” (132). He also relates it to intellectual destruction, yet this destruction is “the rending of... a House of Falsehood” (Waite 132).



Figure 3. The Rider Tarot Deck, XVI THE TOWER,
illustrated by Pamela Coleman Smith, London: 1909.

“Falling towers” point to the inverse of imprisonment; the tower is a symbol of *crolo*, the collapse, downfall, or ruin of the status quo. There is also the tower of Babel from Genesis (Waite 26), which was a human construct and a symbolic representation of the accumulation of

human knowledge and invention (Genesis 11:1-9). The other towers burning and falling in *The Waste Land* provide a common context, as if to show that both cultures and individuals experience cycles of decline and renewal. The destruction of the tower represents the periodic destruction of the status quo of human ingenuity in the material world.

For Eliot, the horrible tower that inhibits the poet's creativity is a condition well-known to the poet— *abolie*. The line “*Le Prince de Aquitaine a la tour abolie*” (429) provides yet another tower reference. The Prince of Aquitaine was a troubadour, a poet himself, and a knight, and through these associations, the figure connects the artist with the tower and *abolie*. Ambiguous, the line can be translated as: “The prince of Aquitaine of the ruined tower,” (429). But that does not account for the significance of *abolie* to Eliot. Another possible translation would read: “The Prince of Aquitaine at the tower (of) *abolie*” or “at the *abolie* tower,” where *abolie* functions as an adjective, meaning at the tower of “lack of will.” In this interpretation, the line provides a significant bridge between the symbol of the tower and the theme of the artist's self-liberation as it relates to his or her personal transformation. This means that the tower of lack of will is the tower that is destroyed when individual creativity is mature and the individual will breaks out. Coincidentally, Eliot had diagnosed himself with the condition of the psyche known as *abolie* and sought treatment for it at Lausanne in autumn 1921 (Harris 44). *Abolie* means “want of will,” according to the book on psycho-nervoses written by Eliot's physician at Lausanne, Dr. Vittoz (Harris 46). Eliot had marked the entry for “Aboulie” in his copy of Vittoz' book (V. Eliot, “Letters” qtd. Harris 46). The significance of *abolie* to Eliot and its appearance with the tower metaphor supports the idea that while the tower represents the decline

of cultures and cities, it also represents a personal mental construct from which the artist's creative self must be liberated, as suggested in the second "DA" passage.

The final use of the "DA" parable takes up the interpretation given to the gods, *Damyata*, or "control yourselves":

DA

Damyata: The boat responded

Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar

The sea was calm, your heart would have responded

Gaily, when invited, beating obedient

To controlling hands (lines 417-22)

The emphasis is on the speaker's transformed and disciplining hands: "controlling" hands, to which the boat responds as the former lover's heart would have. Judging from the way the directive "control yourselves" is applied, the speaker seems to have experienced success: "the boat responded" because of the speaker's skill: "hand expert with sail and oar" (418-9). The sea vessel is one of the metaphors used in Dante's *Purgatorio* and recalls the opening passage. As the pilgrim leaves behind Hell, he says: *Per miglior acque alza le vele / omai la navicella del mio ingegno*, ("To course across more kindly water now, my talent's little vessel lifts her sails") (*Purg.* 1.2). At this point in *The Waste Land*, the speaker remarks that the vessel responds to his hand and compares the journey to that charted between two human beings moving toward intimacy. The passage takes on a tone of experience tinged with regret; the speaker-poet has developed self-control and gained skills of the heart; he handles his vessel "expertly;" to him, the lover's heart would beat "obediently" (lines 420-2); he is yet alone. To be a god and be told to

control is one aspect of disciplining the individual talent, and “controlling hands” is what the oarsman claims to have achieved. The passage is a testament to the speaker poet’s accomplishments of discipline and skill in sublimating his creative desire.

In a Dantean sense, the “DA” passage allows the poet to “to retell the good discovered there” (*Inf.* 1:8), while providing further evidence that *The Waste Land* represents a progressive narrative of the artist’s development, in accordance with Eliot’s emerging aesthetic. Bookended with the image of the accounting fisherman on shore, Prajapati’s parable is the last installment in the narrative of the pilgrim’s development. Taken as a whole, the translations of the “DA” utterances are relevant to the progression of the artist as the “DA” passage showcases key events along the individual artist’s development of talent: surrender, liberation into selfhood, and discipline of talent.

Based on the position that the poem constitutes a “parody of redemption through art” (“Modernism” 187), Brooker has argued that Eliot’s purpose with the “DA” allusion is to support his “focus on the nature and limits of interpretation” (“Modernism” 172). She argues that meaning is ultimately defeated by a “hermeneutical loop,” leaving the reader “frustrated by an endless array of meanings” (Brooker “Modernism” 176). In my view, the content of the “DA” passage is relevant enough to Eliot’s aesthetic to warrant its being taken seriously. Aspects of the “DA” passage serve Eliot because they fittingly represent aspects of his aesthetic when set in relationship to other figures in the poem. In this section, Eliot incorporates allusions that together show the influence of the aesthetic paradigm he shared with Dante. In my view, as I have argued here, the “DA” passage offers meaningful resolution to some of the difficulties of the artist’s development raised in the poem.

Conclusions

After the “DA” parable, a few lines of space provide distance, and the next three lines become a kind of plateau from where the speaker sets to assess himself and his accomplishments: “I sat upon the shore / Fishing, with the arid plain behind me, / Shall I at least set my lands in order?” (lines 423-5). The speaker has “the arid plain behind” an accomplishment, and he determines to set his lands “in order.” In English “[M]y lands” are “my property.” In Italian, one way possession is indicated is by the adjective *proprio/a*, or (“proper to me; my own”). The Latinate angle is suggestive and illuminating. In terms of the narrative of the artist’s development, when the speaker-poet sets his “lands in order,” he is in the process of assessing what appropriately belongs to himself; he is reordering his sense of self and his sense of his own talent—his portion. Leavitt has made a strong argument for the “Man of Three Staves” being present in *The Waste Land* elsewhere than in the Tarot episode, and I would argue that this passage describes aspects of the illustration and themes of the “Man of Three Staves” as described by Leavitt (49). As on the card which displays an individual figure surveying the water, here, the speaker sits along the shore in appraisal of the “arid plain” he has traversed, but which is behind him; it is a scene of accomplishment (424).

The closing trio of the last line, “*Shantih shantih shantih*,” is important to understanding the ethos of the ending of the poem. Eliot’s notes say: “Shantih. Repeated as here, a formal ending to an Upanishad. ‘The peace which passeth understanding’ is our equivalent to this word” (Eliot n. 433 qtd. North 26). So, Eliot uses a sacred closure for the poem: “the peace that passes understanding.” “Shantih” meaning peace, is a kind of nothing that has substance. The repetition of *Shantih* creates aural structure, invoking meditative experience and the Absolute. Its tripling

stands in relation to the three “DA” commands before it, recalling them. Another way of understanding this ending is as language near the threshold of meaning, language with significance *beyond words*. The word and its meaning incant an imaginal trance of gratitude, inviting immediate experience, and abstractly invoking the repetition of “DA” that is the source utterance from the Vedic parable. As an entrance of abstraction into the text, the rhythmic trio of “*Shantih*” seems intended to lull the reader into experiencing a paradise of pure feeling.

Recall that “DA” has other significances beyond Sanskrit. “DA” is significant, beyond the parable, because it combines the directive of the particular and the universal, both in the narrative of the parable and linguistically as a proto-Indo-European word. A beautiful cross-lingual metonymy brings Eliot’s aesthetic theory full circle in the word “DA.” “DA” is also a word in Latin, a word that means “from.” In Italian, someone from Florence is *da Firenze*. DA has the unique function of meaning both “of” or “from,” and “by” or “of”; that is, it means both “to be a part of” and “to be apart from.” In its Latin life, DA represents a bidirectional relationship. It represents both our separateness from origin and where we are from, our status of belonging to origin. In English and other languages, Da/Pa means father. These associations might seem eccentric, were it not for the importance of patrimony in Eliot’s work; he referred to it as *tradition*. In my view, the metonymies that link meaning, graphics, and phonetics suggest a crystallization of meaning and represent an example of the hybrid nature of reality that Eliot had responded to in the philosophy of Bradley—that reality has ideal and real aspects. I can agree with Brooker that the poem leaves us at “zero,” yet speaking philosophically, in terms of the Hindu-Arabic concept of zero as a place holder that allows the accountant to accept the value of “nothing,” transcend it, and keep counting, with the consciousness of expanded value (Delvin

16-20). In *The Waste Land*, “DA,” acts as a universal key word, signifying across languages and cultural traditions. I doubt, within the context of Eliot’s classicism and his playfulness with language, that the crystallization of significance which exists on its literal and figurative levels would have been lost to him.

Interpretive association is inherently appropriate to the logic of poetry. Metaphor works this way. In an age when studies in the field of neuroscience are published regularly showing the significant influence of metaphors on the way humans experience daily reality (Sapolsky), literary studies as a discipline needs to rethink its rejection of symbology. Images that recur across literature may not be transcendently significant—but they continue to mean here and now, and they meant for our ancestors, in some form, in the mythology of nearly all the world’s cultures. Symbols are symbols precisely because they recur across history and across languages.

Because of the importance to Eliot of the abstract and of the irrational, the voice of mad Hieronymo provides a salient indication as to how to read the ending of the poem. The play of Hieronymo (*The Spanish Tragedie*, by Thomas Kyd), features the line: “Why then Ile fit you,” that Eliot sets up against “Hieronymo’s mad againe!” (line 431). The first part is a direct quote of a line from Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedie* that occurs in response to Hieronymo’s question, “is this all?” *Is this all that you want*, he questions Balthazaar, *that I create a play for you?* “Why then Ile fit you” he responds, agreeing to deliver (North 64). Like the Prince of Aquitaine, Hieronymo is a writer—an artist, a playwright, and thus is a type for the experience of the artist. This scene presents the artist as one looking to “breed variety,” as Balthazar says, to create “a mere confusion, / And hardly shall we all be understood” (North 65). Resolve is made to write the text in different languages. Like Hieronymo, Eliot uses disparate references to confuse and

obscure meaning, similar to the way Dante had used the screen woman in the *Vita Nuova* to detract the attention of onlookers and mask his admiration of his true love, the married Beatrice (9). The reference to Hieronymo deflects attention from the positively developing narrative and gives balance to the ideals being advanced by the writer. In *The Waste Land*, obscurity and confusion are effective counterpoints to the idealism advocated by the text; “realities” meant to balance and destabilize the idealities, so that they might be experienced as illuminating and meaningful when found by the reader, pursuant to Eliot’s notion of the “objective correlative” (“Hamlet” 92).

Hieronimo and his play offer further direction for interpreting the ending of the poem: “The conclusion shall prove the intention” (North 65), and “All shall be concluded in one scene” (North 66). *The Waste Land*, like the *Divine Comedy*, is a comedy, *not* a tragedy: it ends with the protagonist in a better situation than it begins because the main character experiences development. Applying the reference from Hieronymo to Eliot’s poem makes “*Shantih shantih shantih*” the concluding sentence. As Hieronymo says, no pleasure is taken in tediousness (North 66). The one who creates the play is the Hieronymo, the wordsmith. Paradise for this figure is creating. But Hieronymo’s drama is not a game. Like the Ecclesiastes writer, Eliot’s text seems to be saying, everything is meaningless, but wisdom brightens a man’s face and softens its hard appearance (Ecclesiastes 8:1). *Logos* may be subject to *Chronos*, but in the meantime, individuals evolve; we discipline ourselves for the next beating heart. Art cannot be dismissed, nor can it be expected to prevent death. But its pursuit has advantages; the fire is refining. There are ways to live which are more orderly and productive than others. Unless the artist wishes to quit life, s/he is advised to discipline her talent and liberate her individual

creativity. Neither Hieronymo's madness, nor his violence, nor his decadent realism contradicts this message. Rather, they show Eliot's desire to maintain realism until the end. The poem ends in a trance of peace, recalling the abstract, tripartite iteration of the thunder's speech, the three seekers, and the three rules of self-discipline, leaving the reader at last at a point beyond language.

* * *

Bibliography

- Antonielli, Arianna. "Dantesque Perspectives in T.S. Eliot's *Inventions of the March Hare*." *T.S. Eliot, Dante, and the Idea of Europe*. Ed. Douglass, Paul. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2011. Print.
- Appelbaum, Stanley. Introduction. *The New Life / La Vita Nuova*. Dante Alighieri. Ed. and trans. by S. Applebaum. Dual-Language series. Mineola: Dover, 2006. Print.
- Bacigalupo, Massimo. "Dante." *T. S. Eliot in Context*. Ed. Jason Harding. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011. 180-189. Print.
- Bacon, Helen H. "The Sibyl in the Bottle." *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 34 (1958): 262-276. Print.
- Ball, Robert. "Theological Semantics: Virgil's *Pietas* and Dante's *Pietà*." *The Poetry of Illusion: Virgil and Ovid in Dante's Commedia*. Ed. Rachel Jacoff and Jeffery T. Schnapp. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991. 19-36. Print.
- Banerjee, Ron D. K. "Dante Through the Looking Glass: Rosetti, Pound, and Eliot." *Comparative Literature* 24.2 (1972): 136-149. *JSTOR*. Web. 9 Dec. 2007.
- Blistein, Burton. *The Design of 'The Waste Land'*. New York: UP of America, 2008. Print.
- Bradley, F.H. *Appearance and Reality*. London: S. Sonnenschien, 1893. *Internet Archive*. 455-510. Web. 1 June 2012.
- Brooker, Jewel Spears. "F. H. Bradley's Doctrine of Experience in T. S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land' and 'Four Quartets'." *Modern Philology* 77. 2 (1979):146-157. *JSTOR*. 1 June 2012.

- Brooker, Jewel Spears; and Joseph Bentley. *Reading 'The Waste Land': Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990. *Netlibrary*. Web. 1 Nov. 2010.
- Brooks, Cleanth. "'The WasteLand': An Analysis." *Southern Review* 3(1937): 106–36. Print.
- . "'The Waste Land': Critique of the Myth." *Modern Poetry and the Tradition*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1939. 136-72. Print.
- Bulfinch, Thomas. *The Age of Fable: Stories of Gods and Heroes*. Boston: Sanborn, Carter, Bazin & Co., 1855. 367. *Google books*. Web. 17 June 2012.
- Bullaro, John J. "The Dante of T. S. Eliot." *Profilo, The Dante Lectures, 22-25 March, 1965*. Los Angeles: USC Press, 1967. 27-37. Print.
- Cambon, Glauco. "Dante's Presence in American Literature." *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society* 118 (2000): 217-242. *JSTOR*. Web. 16 Dec. 2010.
- Cameron, H. D. "The Sibyl in the Satyricon." *The Classical Journal* 65.8 (1970): 337-339. *JSTOR*. Web. 10 May 2010.
- Casella, Stefano Maria. "'By the Arena. . .Il Decaduto': Eliot & / in Italy*." *The International Reception of T. S. Eliot*. Ed. Elisabeth Däumer and Shyamal Bagchee. London and New York: Continuum, 2007. 123-140. Print.
- Charity, A.C. "T. S. Eliot: The Dantean Recognitions." *'The Waste Land' in Different Voices*. Ed. A. D. Moody. London: Edward Arnold, 1974. 117-156. Print.
- Cicero. *The Nature of the Gods*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1972. Print.
- Creekmore, Betsey B. "The Tarot Fortune in 'The Waste Land.'" *ELH* 49.4 (1982): 908-928. *JSTOR*. Web. 1 Nov. 2010.

Dante. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno*. Trans. Allen Mandelbaum. New York, Bantam: 1984. Print.

---. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Purgatorio*. Trans. Allen Mandelbaum. New York, Bantam: 1984. Print.

---. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Paradiso*. Trans. Allen Mandelbaum. New York, Bantam: 1984. Print.

---. *The New Life / La Vita Nuova*. Ed. and trans. by Stanley Appelbaum. *Dual-Language* series. Mineola: Dover, 2006. Print.

Dante Society of America. *Annual Reports of the Dante Society, (Cambridge, Mass) 1901-1950*. <www.dantesociety.org/adb/ds1901-1950.pdf>Web. 20 Jan. 2012.

Deutsch, Babbette. *Poetry Handbook: A Dictionary of Terms*. New York: Harper Collins, 1974. Print.

Diemert, Brian. "The trials of Astrology in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*: A Gloss on Lines 57-59." *Journal of Modern Literature* 22.1 (1988): 175-181. *JSTOR*. Web. 26 Jan. 2010.

Douglass, Paul, ed. *T. S. Eliot, Dante, and the Idea of Europe*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2011. Print.

Drew, Elizabeth. *The Waste Land. T. S. Eliot: The Design of His Poetry*. New York: Scribner's, 1949. Print.

Durant, Will. *The Story of Civilization: Part III, Caesar and Christ: A History of Roman Civilization and of Christianity from Their Beginnings to A.D. 325*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944. Print.

Dwivedi, Amar Nath. *Indian Thought & Tradition in T.S. Eliot's Poetry*. Bareilly: India, 1977.

Print.

Eliot, T. S. "Baudelaire." *Selected Essays, 1917-1932*. London: Faber & Faber, 1932. 335-

345. Print

---. "The Clark Lectures." (1926). *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*. Ed. Ronald Schuchard.

New York: Harcourt, 1993. 41-207. Print.

---. "Dante I: The *Inferno*." (1929). *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*. Ed. Frank Kermode. New

York: Harcourt, 1975. 205-216. Print.

---. "Dante II: The *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso*." (1929). *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*. Ed.

Frank Kermode. New York: Harcourt, 1975. 217-230. Print.

---. "III: The *Vita Nuova*." (1929). *Dante*. London: Faber and Faber, 1965. 55-64. Print.

---. "Hamlet and His Problems." *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*. New York:

Alfred A. Knopf, 1921. 87-94. *Internet Archive*. Web. 8 Nov. 2006.

---. *Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909-1917*. Ed. Christopher Ricks. New York:

Harcourt, 1996. Print.

---. *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley*. London: Faber and Faber,

1964. Print.

---. "The Metaphysical Poets." (1921). *Selected Essays, 1917-1932*. London: Faber & Faber,

1932. 59-67. Print.

---. "Prufrock." *Ara Vus Prec*. London: Ovid Press, 1920. 31-37. *Internet Archive*. Web. 3

Nov. 2010.

- . "Personality and Demonic Possession." (1934). *Virginia Quarterly Review*, Winter (1934): 94-103. <http://www.vqronline.org/articles/1934/winter/eliot-personality-demonic/Web>. 15 May 2012.
- . "Reflections on Contemporary Poetry." (1917). Ed. Jon Cook. *Poetry in Theory: An Anthology 1900-2000*. Malden: Blackwell, 2004. 102-105. Print.
- . "Tradition and the Individual Talent." (1919) *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1921. 42-53. *Internet Archive*. Web. 8 Nov. 2006.
- . "Ulysses, Order, and Myth." (1923). *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*. Ed. Frank Kermode. New York: Harcourt, 1975. 175-178. Print.
- . "What Dante Means to Me." (1950). *To Criticize the Critic and Other Writings*. New York: Ferrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1965. 125-135. Print.
- Eliot, Valerie, ed. *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Volume 1: 1898-1922*. New York: Harcourt, 1988. Print.
- . *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*. (1971). New York: Harcourt, 1994. Print.
- Falconieri, John V. "Il Saggio di T. S. Eliot su Dante." *Italica* 34:2 (1957): 75-80. American Association of Teachers of Italian. Print.
- Freccero, John. *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*. Cambridge & London: Harvard UP, 1986. Print.
- Gervais, David. "Eliot's Shakespeare and Eliot's Dante." *T. S. Eliot and Our Turning World*. Ed. Jewel Spears Brooker. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001. 114-124. Print.

- Gibbons, Tom. "The Waste Land Tarot Identified." *Journal of Modern Literature* 2.4 (1972): 560-565. *JSTOR*.Web. 20 May 2011.
- Gordon, Lyndall. *T. S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life*. London: W.W. Norton, 1999. Print.
- Harris, Amanda Jeremin. "T. S. Eliot's Mental Hygiene." *Journal of Modern Literature* 29.4 (2006): 44-56. *JSTOR*. Web. 1 Nov. 2010.
- Harvard College (1780-), Class of 1883. *Records of the class, 1883-1908*. Published by Harvard, s.n., 1908. *Googlebooks*. Web. 27 Oct. 2011.
- Hay, Eloise. "T. S. Eliot's Virgil: Dante." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 82.1(1983): 50-65. *JSTOR*. Web. 16 Dec. 2010.
- Headings, Phillip Ray. *T. S. Eliot*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964. Print.
- Hough, Graham. "Dante and Eliot." *Critical Quarterly* 16.4 (1974): 293-305. Print.
- Kelly, Craig. "Law, Justice, and Providence in Paradiso VI." *Carte Italiane* 1.1 (1980): 1-8. Print.
- Kenner, Hugh. *The Invisible Poet*. New York: Harcourt, 1959. Print.
- Leavitt, June. *Esoteric Symbols: The Tarot in Yeats, Eliot, and Kafka*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2007. Print.
- Litz, A. Walton. "Dante, Pound, Eliot: The Visionary Company." *Dante e Pound*. Ed. Maria Luisa Ardizzone. Ravenna: Longo, 1998. Print.
- Lowe, Peter. *Christian Romanticism: T. S. Eliot's response to Percy Shelley*. Youngstown: Cambria, 2006. Print.
- Malagi, R.A. "Dante and T. S. Eliot." *The Literary Criterion* 24.3&4 (1989): 18-32. Print.
- Manganiello, Dominic. *T. S. Eliot and Dante*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989. Print.

- Matthews, J. Chesley. "A Historical Overview of American Writers' Interest in Dante (to About 1900)." *Dante, Beyond the Commedia*. Ed. Anne Paolucci. Middle Village: Griffon House, 2004. 42-52. Print.
- Matthiessen, F.O. *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot*. New York: Oxford UP, 1958. Print.
- Mazzotta, Giuseppe. "The Poet and the Critics." *Dante Now: Current Trends in Dante Studies*. Ed. Theodore J. Cachey, Jr. Notre Dame: Notre Dame UP, 1995. 63-79. Print.
- McDougal, Stuart Y. "T. S. Eliot's Metaphysical Dante." *Dante Among the Moderns*. Durham: U of North Carolina P, 1985. 57-81. Print.
- Miller, James E. Jr. *T. S. Eliot: The Making of an American Poet, 1888-1922*. University Park: Penn State UP, 2005. Print.
- Moevs, Christian. *The Metaphysics of Dante's Divine Comedy*. New York: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.
- Moody, A. David. *Tracing Eliot's Spirit*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. Print.
- Moynihan, William T. "The Goal of *The Waste Land* Quest." *Renascence* 13.1(1960):171-179. Print.
- Nervo, Ruth. "'The Waste Land': UR-Text of Deconstruction." *New Literary History, Theory: Parodies, Puzzles, Paradigms* 13.3 (1982): 453-461. *JSTOR*. Web. 1 Nov. 2010.
- North, Michael, ed. *The Waste Land: Authoritative Texts, Contexts, Criticism*. *Norton Critical Edition*. A poem by T. S. Eliot (1922). New York: Norton, 2001. Print.
- Pound, Ezra. "A Few Don'ts." ("A Retrospect"(1918)). (Orig. pub. *Poetry Magazine* (1913)). *Essays on Poetic Theory*. Poetry Foundation. (<<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/essay/237886>> Web. 28 Jan. 2012.

- Praz, Mario. "T. S. Eliot and Dante." *The Flaming Heart: Essays on Crashaw, Machiavelli, and Other Studies in the Relations between Italian and English Literature from Chaucer to T. S. Eliot*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1958. 383-373. Print.
- Printz, John Robert. "The Relevance of Ezekiel and Ecclesiastes to the Theme of the Waste Land." MA thesis. The American University, 1968. Print.
- Reeves, Gareth. "The Waste Land and the Aeneid." *The Modern Language Review* 82.3 (1987): 555-572. *JSTOR*. Web. 10 May 2010.
- Richardson, L., Jr. "Trimalchio and the Sibyl at Cumae." *Classical World* 96.1 (2002):77-78. *JSTOR*.10 May 2010.
- Sapolsky, Robert. "This Is Your Brain on Metaphors." *NYTimes.com* November 14, 2010. Web. 24 April 2012.
- Schmeling, Gareth L. and David R. Rebmann. "T. S. Eliot and Petronius." *Comparative Literature Studies* 12.4(1975):393-410. *JSTOR*. Web. 1 Nov. 2010.
- Smith, Grover. *T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1956. Print.
- Spitzer, Leo. "Speech and Language in *Inferno* XIII." *Dante: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. John Freccero. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965. 78-101. Print.
- Stratyner, Leslie. "By the Banks of the Acheron: T. S. Eliot, Dante, and 'The Hollow Men.'" *Yeats Eliot Review* 10 (1989): 17-20. Print.
- Surette, Leon. "'The Waste Land' and Jessie Weston: A Reassessment." *Twentieth Century Literature* 34.2 (1988): 223-244. *JSTOR*. Web. 1 Nov. 2010.
- T. S. Eliot, Dante, and the European Tradition: An International Symposium*, Fondazione del Bianco, Florence, Italy, Jan. 19, 2008 – Jan. 25, 2008. Conference.

Young's Literal Translation. Trans. Robert Young. Edinburgh: George Adam Young & Co., 1863. Revised 1887, 1898. *Bible Researcher.Com*. Web. 3 Nov. 2010.

Vergili Maronis, P. *Opera*. Oxford Classical Texts. New York: Oxford UP, 1969. Print.

Virgil. *Aeneid*. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. New York: Vintage, 1990. Print.

Walout, Emily. Personal Interview. Librarian, *Harvard University Library Archives*. 15 Jan. 2008.

Waite, Arthur Edward. *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot*. 1910. Illustrations by Pamela Coleman Smith. New Hyde Park: University Books, 1959. *Hathai Trust Digital Library*. Web. 1 June 2012.

Wilhelm, James J. "Two Visions of the Journey of Life: Eliot and Pound." *Dante, Beyond the Commedia*. Ed. Anne Paolucci. Middle Village: Griffon House, 2004. 53-61. Print.

Williamson, George. *Reader's Guide to T. S. Eliot*. New York: Noonday, 1957. Print.

Winship, A. E., Ed. "Book Table." Rev. of *The Power of Dante*, by Charles Hall Grandgent. *Journal of Education New England and National* 27 March 1919:357. *Google books*. Web. 27 Oct. 2011.

Worthington, Jane. "Epigraphs to the Poetry of T. S. Eliot." *American Literature* 21.1 (1949):1-17. *JSTOR*. Web. 5 Oct. 2010.