

ECHOES INHABIT THE GARDEN: THE MUSIC OF POETRY AND PLACE IN T.S. ELIOT

BY

BRADFORD O. GOLDSMITH

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

English

May, 2018

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Approved By:

Omaar Hena, PhD., Advisor

Eric G. Wilson, PhD. Chair

Jefferson Holdridge, PhD.

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For Dorothy Jacobson Austin and Robert Penny Goldsmith

The loving tillers of significant soil
In books and earth, words and life and work;
All with humor and humility.

I would like to thank my parents and sister for their support, encouragement, and invaluable influence.

I would also like to thank Blake Nickles for

The moment in and out of time...
The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightning
Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts.

T.S. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages"

Krysten Voelkner, for reading many drafts patiently to the end, and providing helpful feedback, as well as the rest of the cohort for good company and good cheer.

I would like to acknowledge a deep debt to my professors at Davidson College. There are many, but particularly Dr. Plank, for his own enthusiasm for the gut-impact in parables and poetry and his care in teaching it—teaching that there is a life lived fully in “one good reading of one good passage” as well as Mrs. Blackwell-Plank, for the violin lessons.

Dr. Zamir, for the pen, for the tremendous effort and investment of trying to make something of my poor writing, the help in the many hours of conversation, the books outside of class, and instilling the confidence that there was meaning behind it worth working for.

Dr. Kuzmanovich, for the advising, for the gift of the Daphne, for the Faulkner class and the ride to Mississippi.

I would also like to thank Dr. Hena, Dr. Holdridge, and Dr. Wilson for their classes and their patience in reading this.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	iii
Introduction.....	v
Chapter One: Stirring Dull Roots in a Heap of Broken Images.....	1
Chapter Two: From Transplanted Poet to "Supersubtle Peasant".....	29
Chapter Three: Sounding Literary Depth through Voice in the Poetics of the Garden.....	59
Conclusion.....	88
Works Cited.....	93
Curriculum Vitae.....	95

Abstract

This paper proposes a close reading of T.S. Eliot's poetry, drama, and criticism as an examination of the way his complex orientation to place was reflected in his critical writings and his process of poetic composition. It aims to situate him in recent critical debates in modernist studies regarding local, national, and transnational formations of culture and poetry, but concentrates the majority of its focus within Eliot's work. It intends to mark the convergence of linguistic concerns and engagement with place within Eliot's work, particularly in terms of figurative language using ground, soil, gardens, voice, and music in which place and orientation of poetic voice converge. This paper will outline the consistencies and mutations of these images across his career in relation to his own sense of cultural location and footing as he moves from urban street poetry of America, to his early engagement with England through *The Waste Land*, to his shift to the countryside and the rose-garden of *Four Quartets*. The central idea of this perspective is that Eliot's compositional process of forming a poetic voice depended on his sense of orientation in both place and language, and that his process was intimately concerned with the role of this grounding of voice as a function of his poetics, as a medium itself, at work in both geographical and linguistic cultural environments. The thesis is that as Eliot's sense of stability in poetic placement and grounding within linguistic and cultural mediums increases, augmented by his use of figurative music and the order created by his own poetry, the qualities of voice and vocal structure in his poems gain solidity and coherence toward the end of his career. This process is mirrored by the development of garden imagery across his career. This approach will take into account shifts in poetic form and vocal structure as Eliot moves from an incoherent American perspective, to that of a transatlantic *metoikos* or resident alien, to his central position in English letters. It also positions this progression alongside Eliot's development of a social and religious perspective oriented toward international universalism grounded in the particularity of local culture and regionalism.

Introduction

Every detailed examination of T.S. Eliot's role at the center of twentieth century modernism must engage, on some level, with the role of place within culture in relation to regional, national, and supranational areas; an engagement which is complicated by the difference between his early and late poetry, as well as the process by which, as Seamus Heaney puts it "the intellectual mystery man from Missouri was mutating into the English vestryman" (Heaney 186). The marked difference between the tone of the T.S. Eliot of *The Waste Land* and the tone of his work after Eliot joined the Anglo-Catholic church and assumed British subjecthood contributes to a tension between regarding him as either an adaptive transnational talent of modernity or a conservative "byword for reactionary insularity" (Hart 107). While Eliot's social and critical commentaries, as well as his poetry, can be seen to border on little-England conservatism, recent criticism has extensively examined the transnational significance of his work and the crucial influence he has had upon a diverse range of next generation poets through his engagement with English poetry and culture.

The transatlantic trade of T.S. Eliot from America to England and W.H. Auden from England to America is a well-noted feature of twentieth century poetry, as well as the subtle stylistic shifts manifested in their outlook and poetic style upon relocating to a different cultural ground. The central concern of this paper is examining, when viewing the whole of his career, the cause of Eliot's impulse towards transplantation and the workings of the development of his poetic form and voice in relation to cultural ground and place. This paper will approach Eliot as a poet first and foremost, concerned with his relation to place, culture, and language as a poetic engagement of mediating his surroundings and existential relations into verse. In this sense, I am reading his sense of incoherence and displacement as directly related to his poetic process, expressed in the sentiment of his early lines "And how should I begin? / Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets..." (CPP 5). My discussion of Eliot begins at this point in which

Eliot is searching for an existential grounding through poetic language and struggling to form it out of his relation to his environment. Eliot repeats this sentiment in “Coriolan,” articulating the location of a sensibility where “We hardly knew ourselves that day, or knew the City” and later vocalizes a Biblical echo express the situation of linguistic grappling with existential reality: “Cry what shall I cry?/ All flesh is grass” (85/87). Over the whole of his career, but particularly in his early work, this struggle for meaningful speech is situated in terms of ground and environment in which metaphorical images of soil, vegetation, and gardens function both as symbolic representations of the process of forming poetic speech, but also work to demonstrate the importance of a sense of place and groundedness within Eliot’s poetic process. The tropes of vegetation along with motifs of musicality and sound allow for a tracking of the development of Eliot’s poetic voice in relation to place over the arc of his career as he moves from America to England, and moves from the urban streets of “Preludes” to the rose-garden of “Burnt Norton.”

To begin with Eliot’s relation to English culture, Jed Esty’s *A Shrinking Island* places Eliot within a late modernist movement of cultural retrenchment in the thirties and forties in which literary artists manifested a turning inward, away from the international perspective, to ground and shore up local and regional culture on English soil. Esty marks this shift in terms of part of a response to the geopolitical concentric downsizing of the British empire entering the mid-twentieth century. Esty characterizes the debate within interpretations of Eliot’s late work of *Four Quartets* as between either “Anglocentric, territorialized, provincial, or patriotic form” or “ultimately abstract, deterritorialized, conceptual, nonnationalist” (Esty 134). Esty says that if the poem “refuses either the “localist” or the “universalist” reading taken separately, it does so because of its place at the diachronic switchpoint of a major historical transition, in which the very meaning of culture in England had to be rethought” (136). The beauty of the poem’s complexity, he says stems from its superimposition of the processes of the local and the transcendent so that “its subject remains attached to local dimensions of history and geography

but cannot meaningfully dwell within those dimensions without aspiring to grasp larger patterns of time (eternity) and space (the universe)” (136). Esty points out where, in Eliot’s organicist approach, he is not advocating a particular culture but merely “preparing the ground” for a revitalization that must take place on its own and build naturally into a national model, in which England “occupies only one level within a system of cultural diversity that includes both sub and supranational entities” in a “layered model” that allows Eliot to acknowledge that England is neither “autochthonous nor exceptional” while still reclaiming local and national traditions (128).

While Esty’s approach focuses more on the geopolitical aspect of the representation of cultural ground in literature, other post-colonial critical approaches to Eliot emphasize linguistic aspects as being both the linkage to cultural ground as well as working to decenter national identification through relations of subjectivity and experience mediated in particular ways through regional language. Matthew Hart’s *Nations of Nothing but Poetry* uses the concept of synthetic vernacular writing to show how literary developments in use of language mirrors “the way that modern culture is produced by the conflict among local, national, and supranational forces,” such that the materiality of dialect, as well as cultural and geographic elements in the usage of language, becomes capable of contributing to transnational sensibilities and identifications. Hart’s chapter “Tradition and the Post-colonial Talent” delineates how the decentering rhythms, language, tone, and conversational speech of Eliot’s poetry became a significant shaping influence for the technical style of Kamau Brathwaite as a West Indian postcolonial poet writing against the Anglocentric perspective. For Brathwaite, Eliot was “the only European influence [he] can detect and will acknowledge” and Hart marks his public statement regarding Eliot, that “the tone, cadence, and above all the organization of my long poems...owe a great deal to him” (Hart 106/113). Hart draws the connection between Eliot’s sense of personal and cultural dissociation, along with the re-integrative aspects of his modernist forms, as offering a precedent, not so much in content, but in feeling, for Brathwaite, where “He

rather intuitively in Eliot an unconscious dialogism that emerges despite his antidiaporic Eurocentrism” (139). The overlapping between the two poets, Hart says, works through “the most Eliotic phrases most cited by Brathwaite” to “invoke a crisis of vernacular culture with geopolitical dimensions” (139).

Charles Pollard also notes the significance of Eliot’s voice to Kamau Brathwaite and St. Lucian poet, Derek Walcott. Pollard uses the different aspects of Eliot’s poetics that each responds to in order to comment on the post-colonial New World significance of the same tension between local particularity and universal language that Eliot dealt with in his own poetry. Pollard outlines how Brathwaite identifies more with the particularity of dialect and folk traditions as a result of feeling a sense of “rootlessness” as the most common feature of West Indian life and imagination” (Pollard 52). In Brathwaite’s eyes, this contributed to the perspective that a lack of tradition for West Indian writers caused a condition of being “unable” to “commit” to any one “position or viewpoint about their society” (52). This paper will examine a similar perspective regarding tradition and the rooting of viewpoint within T.S. Eliot as he relocated himself in England. For Walcott, identifying more with the later Eliot’s *Four Quartets*, his use of poetic language worked more toward a de-localized language amalgamating the diverse dialects and traditions into a more universal form. The point made by Pollard that I want to emphasize is how, for both poets, with their different approaches, the rhythms and speech patterns of Eliot’s voice offered the recognition of an instrument with which to construct “different, partial but complementary linguistic homes to house Caribbean Anglophone identity” (80). My paper will rather look backward to Eliot’s own struggle to develop a poetic medium capable of supporting a structural vocality that was able to effectively establish a modern poetic tradition that was able to be repurposed and utilized for subsequent generations of poets from largely different cultural backgrounds and experiences through his own engagement with England.

As Esty, Hart, and Pollard have introduced linguistic and geopolitical elements to readings of Eliot's Englishness belonging and transnationalism, I want to draw attention to Brathwaite's own work, particularly his essay "History of the Voice." The point I want to emphasize is the dynamic and process of vocal and environmental formation which goes into his concept of nation language. Brathwaite draws attention to Eliot as a model for nation language and Caribbean poetry, as he introduced the "notion of the speaking voice, the conversational tone" which was "what really attracted us to Eliot" (Brathwaite 286-287). According to Brathwaite, it was "Eliot's actual voice" and "the 'riddims' of St. Louis" which gave Caribbean poets a tool to "create their own environmental expression" (287). Brathwaite discusses language in environmental terms regarding capacity for expressing reality of experience, saying that the Caribbean poet needs the vocal sensibility "the syllables, the syllabic intelligence, to describe the hurricane, which is our own experience," suggesting that in poetic expression, the sound of the language must be adequate to the "environment and the reality" (263/262). Where Brathwaite uses the example of a hurricane to fit one problem, that of fitting rhythm to the "the natural experience, the environmental experience," he also uses natural imagery to describe the dynamic of linguistic processes and mixtures that occurred with the legacy of European slavery and trade in the Caribbean. The forced dislocation of West African tribes, South Asians, and Chinese speaking people to the Caribbean, as well as the colonizing European languages created a sort of linguistic environmental experience of their own. T.S. Eliot describes a very similar phenomenon in his essays describing the heterogeneity of the different cultural and linguistic layers in the formation of the English language. Brathwaite describes a "submergence" of the languages of subjugated peoples, which created an "underground language" which was "constantly transforming itself into new forms...adapting to the new environment and to the cultural imperatives of the European languages...influencing the way in which the French, Dutch, and Spanish spoke their own language" (262). One thing that comes out of the culture of submerged languages "underground" is emphasis on oral tradition, where "the culture itself exists not in a

dictionary but in the tradition of the spoken word...based as much on sound as it is on song...the noise it makes is part of the meaning” (271). Brathwaite makes the point that culture inheres in the sound of the word and the “native musical structures” of the language and that “music is, in fact, the surest threshold to the language that comes out of it” (270). What I want to emphasize here, is the immense importance of Eliot’s voice and sound structure in his poetry and the wide reaching effects it had for vastly different environments, cultures, and languages, and geopolitical situations, as a means of working towards both cultural and linguistic particularities and forming links of connection as well. One thing missing from these critical approaches is a closer attention to the mechanisms within the development of Eliot’s poetry and criticism for the inner workings of Eliot’s orientation towards voice and poetry as a medium that enables it to serve as a locally grounded structure of feeling which stabilizes communication on both a personal and collective level; one that is universally adaptive across contexts. My approach will focus on the whole of Eliot’s poetry and the way it engages Eliot’s relation to environment, language, and literature as a surface to ground himself within, to refine both his own sensibility through poetic communication and to have a “field of action” engagement with and cultivation of that ground.

T.S. Eliot, in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, said that “Poetry is usually considered the most local of all the arts” and recognized the award going to a poet as “an assertion of the supra-national value of poetry” (Nobel). Eliot suggested that poetry, as a barrier posed in and through language, helps to contribute to understanding between people of different nations, languages, and cultures, through providing a means and a reason to strive for understanding beyond language. Elsewhere, Eliot remarked that he strove to write “Poetry so transparent that we should not see the poetry, but that which we are meant to see through the poetry...to get beyond poetry, as Beethoven, in his later works, strove to get beyond music..” and suggested that he himself only wrote “forty or fifty original lines” which approached this condition (Selected Prose 20). Though it is impossible to guess the lines he is talking about, repeated movements in the

language of his poetry, approaching an effort to get beyond poetry by drawing attention to it as a medium will be part of my focus. As this relates to locale and nationality, Matthew Hart points to a “pre-political” aspect of Eliot’s concerns regarding Englishness and language in the sense of a foundational relation to culture which is “the stratum down to which any sound political thinking must push its roots, and from which it must derive its nourishment” (Hart 110).

My paper will largely aim at that pre-political level or “substratum” within Eliot’s writing and focus on language such as this when Eliot uses ground and plant figures of speech to discuss the convergence of thought, sensibility, and poetry. In my reading, that is the vantage point for analyzing the contribution of Eliot’s voice. Charles Bernstein’s *Close Listening* offers a beginning point for a discussion of the materiality of sound in poetry that will be useful for this paper. He discusses the aurality of poetry as creating conditions of hearing beyond speech perception that shapes the structural form of poetry as a medium itself and makes language “a transitional object” (Bernstein 16/18). He describes poetry as creating a “formal space” in which “the musicality or sound-grounding of the language is produced strictly within the range of speech-mode perception” where the work to be done by poetry attempting to transcend that grounding is that “transformation of language to sound, rather than the setting of language in sound” (17). Where this calls to mind Brathwaite’s idea of expressing the rhythm and environmental reality of the hurricane, this will also be covered within the paper regarding the natural sounds and figurations of natural sound within Eliot’s poetry. Bernstein goes on to describe “a/orality” as “sound language, language grounded in its embodiments,” where sense, logical meaning, and perception are closely intermixed within the medium of sound. In this, I am aiming at what Robert Frost called the sound of sense, which, in the context of Bernstein’s language of grounding, is not unlike the processes at work in Brathwaite’s idea of the action of underground or submerged language. Bernstein remarks that “Human consciousness has as much

a sedimentary as a developmental disposition... Consciousness is a compost heap” (19). The effect of language in this has some metaphysical value, as Bernstein says

In sounding language, we sound the width and breadth and depth of human consciousness—we find our bottom and our top, we find the scope of our ken. In sounding language, we ground ourselves as sentient, material beings, obtruding into the world with the same obdurate thingness as rocks or soil or flesh. We sing the body of language, relishing the vowels and consonants in every possible sequence. We stutter tunes with no melodies, only words (19).

My argument about the nature of sound in Eliot’s voice is that it comes from this groundedness with the layers and depths of consciousness that are worked on from underneath to give it solidity and depth in perception of reality. I intend to argue that literal images of ground and land in Eliot’s poetry support a reading in which they act as an objective correlative for the medium of language. The analogy of consciousness to a compost heap strikes a resonance with Eliot’s own words describing the poet’s mind as a “receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together” (SP 41). It is this process of synthesis and natural expression of, not the “personality” of the poet, but of a “particular medium” in which his impersonal creative artistic sensibility achieves a voice uniquely expressive of the life found within that medium and form (SP 41/42). In my reading of Eliot’s own poetry, I mark the growth and coherence of Eliot’s personal voice amidst the soil of the tradition as it takes its background up into itself in the repeated phrasing of the imagery of flowers and gardens which have a movement toward a culmination in his corpus. In my reading of Eliot, the garden and its soil, aside from their organic, natural connotations and its religious and literary symbolism, functions as an “objective correlative” for the emotion of a peculiar sensibility and orientation of the poetic imagination and voice in which Eliot cultivates a grounding of poetic sensibility in the language of a place. Per Eliot’s definition, an “objective correlative” (a term he later came to dislike), is “a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion” which is communicated by “a skillful accumulation of imagined sensory impressions” (49).

In reading the progression of the garden imagery as a formula for the stability, groundedness, vitality, and validity of the voice in the poetic medium, the first chapter establishes the framework and context of early usages and formulation of both plant imagery and the voice in Eliot's early poetry through *The Waste Land*. It uses the orientation of the speaker's fragmented subjectivity and use of multiple disparate voices in the environment of urban "vacant lots" and trash-polluted streets to frame a discussion of the Eliot's poetic voice and structure as being intimately connected to cultural and linguistic environment. In this context, it discusses the beginning developments of Eliot's voice through translocal translations of literary form and perspectives as he lends insight to his poetic process in his critical essays on international perspectives at work in the literary tradition. This is meant to be read against Eliot's personal sense of displacement and incoherence, which, beginning with his relation to America's urban industrial cityscapes as poetic material, transformed subtly as he used the work of French symbolist poets, Hawthorne, and Henry James to transplant his cultural and literary grounding to England. The chapter concludes by suggesting that Eliot's engagement with England's literary scene in botanical terms, using imagery suggesting "breeding/ Lilacs out of the dead land" is reflective of a metaphorical means that he uses as a structural support in his poetry to express the relation between medium of poetic voice and place, contextualized by his own transplantation.

The second chapter examines how Eliot balances the grounding of his poetic medium in the cultural and literary milieu of England within the broader scope of his regard of the European literary tradition. While he referred to himself as a *metoikos*, his cosmopolitan approach is balanced by an impulse toward locality and increased 'Englishness' through the increasing prominence of horticultural and agricultural imagery in his poetry as well as his advocacy for literal agriculture as a necessity to the mentality of culture. On both literal and metaphorical levels, Eliot's agricultural turn shows both his engagement with England as a place with localized cultural context as well as an important structural development within his own poetry as he shifts

toward a slightly more accessible voice structure within his poetry and begins to write verse dramas for the theatre. It takes his own agricultural metaphors used in the context of his critical prose on figures of the English literary canon and asserts that this situates his approach as one digging himself into the role of cultivating his own attachment and embeddedness within the tradition and simultaneously cultivating his contemporary field of British literature through contextualizing it in relation to its own past and its debts to foreign influences. This chapter examines the development of his poetic voice along these lines manifested in the subtle changes of repeated images from his early poetry and marks the beginning of a more solidified reach toward the universality of language through this local grounding, particularly through Eliot's essay on Dante.

The third chapter centers around the first of Eliot's *Four Quartets* and establishes his articulation of the nature of the experience in the rose garden of "Burnt Norton" as the epitome of the interrelation between the garden imagery and contextualization of voice and sound. This chapter uses the echoes of the garden and the auditory experience of the speaker to argue the significance of the importance of ground, soil, and plant growth as having an ultimately linguistic and metapoetic symbolism within Eliot's poetry. It then traces the symbolism from within his poetry to his critical engagement with literary figures that contextualize his expanded view of English locality as situated within a larger 'musical' whole of time and history through a further modification of language regarding an approach to soil and ground. This chapter aims to explain the linkage between Eliot's organicist notion of culture and his theories of the development of poetic voice through the metaphorical and literal figuration of a relation to ground and language in his poetry and criticism. Eliot's later work, most notably *Four Quartets* fully expresses Eliot's grappling with relation to place and poetic form at the high point of a coherence that his earlier work shows a reaching for. It concludes that this is related to Eliot's poetic development and his

regard of the capacity to follow and create an adequate classic standard capable of universality, yet also adequate to the particularities of place and time.

My purpose, in this context, is to examine the significance of the images of soil and the garden in the arc of his poetry, as the development of that cultural linguistic grounding comes to have a significant impact on his critical social view of literature, culture, and both local and international understanding of place, time, and language; but my dominant concern is with how underneath the surface, the engrained nature of this whole universal perspective springs from his engagement with the smallest unit of auditory patterning of voice in the poetic imagination.

Chapter One: Stirring Dull Roots in a Heap of Broken Images

“Nota: man is the intelligence of his soil, / The sovereign ghost”

“Nota: his soil is man’s intelligence. / That’s better. That’s worth crossing seas to find.”

Wallace Stevens, “The Comedian as the Letter C”

In this chapter, I will be tracing the beginnings of Eliot’s use of plant imagery and his framing of the literature of a cultural region as a garden. Eliot’s employment of plant imagery is simultaneously reflective of psychological coherence and the integrity of individual consciousness in relation to cultural environment. I will be suggesting that Eliot’s early poetry reflects a grasping after a tradition or background in which to situate his perspective, and thus, his poetic consciousness and voice. While I am implying that Eliot’s early poetry gestures to a groundlessness and a lack of a firm foundation in which orient his work, I am not suggesting that Eliot’s early poetry lacks sophistication; rather, it articulates the lack of background and foundation through an extremely skilled use of metapoetics to use the process of poetic composition itself as that ‘ground,’ which begins his perspective of poetry as a medium itself and initiates the career long process where Eliot cultivates and revitalizes his medium of poetic communication as a ground in which he revitalizes consistent imagery and tropes, until it becomes a more fertile field capable of supporting not only his own coherent resolution of fragmentation, but increasing the individual autonomy and collective resonance of voice within the unified whole of a wide range of literary, religious, and historical allusions and vocal echoes that he works into that medium itself. My framing of his development of a poetic voice through transplantation as a foreign American *metoikos* in England posits this movement as putting ground beneath his feet in such a way that concentrates and locates coherent consciousness in a way that makes it both local and universal, both restoring the cultural foundations of historical tradition and breaking it open to new growth of diversity. I will break this chapter into three sections across this development: groundlessness, transplantation, and establishment within a

garden signifying the regional manifestation of consciousness of a local pattern within a larger organization of culture.

Although he was born to a distinguished family in St. Louis, where his grandfather helped to found Washington University, and had close connections to the family's prominent New England roots (which could be traced back to England), Eliot came of age in an industrial Midwest city with a growing consciousness of cultural decadence and a sense of displacement. Eliot's anxiety regarding American provincialism, as his elite Harvard education came into contact with run-down St. Louis streets and Boston slums, was accentuated by the instability of the turn of the century and was interwoven with personal feelings of a psychological nature regarding a dissociation of sensibility in himself and the modern consciousness.

In terms of forging a point of view from and within the actual regions that Eliot experienced and identified with, Eliot shows both a sense of fragmentation and dislocation, but also a sense of trying to squeeze, not the universe, but at least time and several regions of the U.S., England, and France into one ball within his head. In 1928, he reflected on this "point of view" and wrote that

Some day I want to write an essay about the point of view of an American who wasn't an American, because his America ended in 1829; and who wasn't a Yankee, because he was born in the South and went to school in New England as a small boy with a n---r drawl, but who wasn't a southerner in the South because his people were northerners in a border state and looked down on all southerners and Virginians, and who so was never anything anywhere and who therefore felt himself to be more a Frenchman than an American and more an Englishman than a Frenchman and yet felt that the U.S.A up to a hundred years ago was a family extension. (Crawford 9, L4, 640)

I am suggesting that his early poetry comes precisely from that "point of view," that of someone who felt themselves to be "never anything anywhere," caught in something of a no man's land between various identifications. As this was written retrospectively, it also illuminates the need to be 'someone somewhere' and England takes the slight edge in this whirl where, even in America, Eliot feels himself to be a man without a country. This provides added context to the intensity of his later identification with Englishness.

Eric Sigg, in his “New England” chapter in *T.S. Eliot in Context* posits that Eliot’s artistic and cultural concerns about fragmentation and dissociation arise from the deeper levels of Eliot’s personal imagination, which was preoccupied with “the failure of the personality and the soul to cohere, to assume identity,” something which was, in Eliot’s view, inextricable from the sterility of the American cultural and literary landscape, the nature of which, furthered “emotional, mental, and cultural dissolution” (Sigg 20). Sigg referenced a review of *The Education of Henry Adams* that Eliot wrote in 1919, in which Eliot criticizes the way Adams’s “very American curiosity was directed and misdirected by two New England characteristics: conscientiousness and skepticism” (19). Eliot continued his commentary, in a way that cannot help but reveal his underlying attitude toward his own New England and Unitarian heritage:

Working with and against the conscience was the Boston doubt: a skepticism which is difficult to explain to those who are not born to it. This skepticism is a product, or a cause, or a concomitant, of Unitarianism; it is not destructive, but it is *dissolvent*...a great many things interested him [Adams]; but he could believe in nothing. *Wherever this man stepped, the ground did not simply give way, it flew into particles.* (19) (emphasis mine).

Although Eliot is reviewing another author’s work, his native perspective and his identification with the “Boston doubt” is readily apparent as he suggests that he is one who knows, being “born to it” (19). It is Eliot’s own voice that characterizes this unconscious and “very American” sensibility to be “dissolvent” such that the effect of this frame of mind causes every action and its relation to the placing of it, to occur on a plane where “the ground did not simply give way, it flew into particles” (Sigg 19). Although Eliot posits this as a regional cultural influence of Unitarianism, he is aware of it most intensely as an aspect of his own consciousness, despite having grown up in urban St. Louis. Although I will be emphasizing Eliot’s treatment of location and regional particularity in their tensions with national and international culture, it is important to establish that Eliot’s personal sense of “emotional, mental, and cultural dissolution” remains an important foundational aspect of his poetic process, despite his own theories of the impersonality of art.

When it came to Eliot's use of a point of view from which to begin the identifications of poetic consciousness and form a cohesive voice expressive of conditions of cultural environment and give them residence in the very fabric of poetic composition, Eliot's positioning was against him from the start. His early poems articulate with great precision, detail, and verbal tenacity the workings of consciousness which arise from an intense engagement with ambiguity. His most lyrical early poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" contemplates before ever beginning "Would it have been worth while, /... To have squeezed the universe into a ball/ to roll it toward some overwhelming question" (CPP 6). It is important to note here, that he frames the task of being able to compel into unity an impossible spatial broadness, to 'squeeze the universe into a ball' in relation to the ability to direct it "toward" the orientation of an "overwhelming question" which would "force the moment to its crisis (6). Unable to confront that question, the poem contains a series of questions directed back upon Mr. Prufrock himself "Do I dare?"; "So how should I presume?"; "Then how should I begin?"; "And would it have been worth it after all?" (CPP 4/5/6). In the relation of his poetic speech to his environment, his voice is in the environment, but rather expressive of distance from it. He shows Prufrock's orientation to it and its sterility by questioning what he might say to express his grasp of his own experience in that place: "Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets/ And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes/ Of lonely men in shirt sleeves, leaning out of windows?" (5). The majority of the poem and its wandering through the scenes of the "streets that follow like a tedious argument" stems from the speaker's inability to verbalize anything meaningful in a lasting, substantial, and durable sense: "It is impossible to say just what I mean!"(6).

The association between "point of view" and national culture becomes transferred to a metaphorical ground in Eliot's literal dislocation from America. In 1919, having relocated to England, Eliot wrote about the "benefits of transplantation" of fellow American writers, such as Henry James and Nathaniel Hawthorne who were able to hold a transatlantic perspective and "maintain the role of foreigner with integrity" (Crawford 290). In an essay on Henry James that is

telling of the discrepancies between his views of England and France (not to mention America), Eliot praises James for being, in his novels, “like the best of French critics” in how his work manifests the approach of “maintaining a point of view” where “the focus is a situation, a relation, an atmosphere, to which the characters pay tribute,” and in which each personality is “a distinct success of creation” established “with great art” for their “place in a general scheme” (SP 152). He connects James to the French critics through a sensibility and perspective in regarding ideas, and does so through explaining that, in England, France is seen as “the Home of Ideas” where “In France, ideas are very severely looked after; not allowed to stray, but preserved for the inspection of civic pride in a *Jardin des Plantes*” (152). Eliot then turns his comparison back onto England, critiquing that in England, “ideas run wild and pasture on the emotions,” manifesting a basic point of view of epistemological relation where “instead of thinking with our feelings (a very different thing), we corrupt our feelings with ideas: we produce the political, the emotional idea, evading sensation and thought” (152). Both the image of an orderly garden and the close and particular attentive care of it, suggest a working of the ground and direct contact with “sensation and thought,” which then direct feelings before developing into a rooted organic idea, instead of the wild undisciplined pasture of thoughts growing from senseless politics or unanchored emotion which then corrupts Eliot’s idea of feeling. This idea of feeling, discussed in philosophical terms regarding literature and poetry, is in keeping with plant metaphors, as it seems to imply both the ability to form vital connections and the growth of an independent form from those connections, the ability to take nutrients from the soil, and to grow out of it. The conditions of this type of environment have a deep impact on not only point of view, but epistemological relation and every aspect of existence that grows out of that milieu.

Both the elements of transplantation, with its connotations of contact and taking root, and the *metoikos* perspective of a resident alien, contribute to the formation of the type of point of view that Eliot is trying to ground and locate. At this time, Eliot’s readings and writings about

Hawthorne and James serve as literary foregrounding identifications to assist Eliot's parallel effort to graft and ground himself, as an American expatriate, into the English and European tradition. Hawthorne, and James's own critical writings regarding Hawthorne's work, both used language of plant growth and soil to serve as metaphors for the growth of art and cultural conditions that it must grow out of. Even as early as his college philosophy essays, Eliot was using the metaphor of the soil to discuss the formation of ideas. Robert Crawford notes in *Young Eliot* that Eliot "discussed philosophical ideas almost as if they were forms of vegetation" in a 1913 essay:

...the germ of skepticism is quickened always by the soil of the system (rich in contradictions). As the system decomposes, the doubts push through; and the decay is so general and fructifying that we are no longer sure enough of anything to draw the line between knowledge and ignorance....(Crawford 177).

The "soil of the system" and its decomposition, in this isolated early writing, quickens the "germ of skepticism," which then affects the mind's distinctions between "knowledge and ignorance," providing an example of how Eliot has used soil and plant growth to illustrate philosophical elements within cultural environments (177). As Eliot was also beginning his shift from philosophy student to poet in this stage, a transition in which his move from America to England and entrenchment within English culture was essential, I would like to illustrate how the utilization of plant and ground metaphors carries elements of these concerns into his poetry. Rather, I would suggest that they are also essential to his process of poetic composition and his philosophy of poetry which surfaces directly in his poetry as well as his prose, linking place and perspective inseparably to processes of consciousness and the development of art and literary culture.

To begin with a brief example of the association of point of view and integral contact of thought and sensation with plant life as they converge in his poetry, his poem "Whispers of Immortality" serves as a good example. As the poem begins with the Jacobean dramatist John Webster, morbid enough to be a modern, it characterizes him as having a penetrating vision that enabled him to see "the skull beneath the skin/ And breastless creatures under ground" (CPP 32).

In seeing beneath the “ground,” Eliot’s Webster does not just know mortality, but is “possessed by death” (32). His ‘whisper’ of immortality is a *memento mori*, in which, confronting a skull, he sees that “Daffodil bulbs instead of balls/ Stared from the sockets of the eyes!” (32). The seed germs which take the place of eyes represent a point of view in which there is a living element of reality growing from the engendered unity within the sight organ in which sensation, knowledge, and thought combine. Eliot speaks of the way “thought clings round dead limbs” in such a way that suggests the function of roots as he moves on to John Donne, who was “such another/ Who found no substitute for sense,/ To seize and clutch and penetrate;/ Expert beyond experience” (32). The rest of the poem catalogues a degeneration of feeling and thought as it shifts from describing the perspective of Donne, who knew that “no contact possible to flesh/ allayed the fever of the bone,” to the study of the appearance of a Russian woman Grishkin, shifting to sexual language before concluding that instead of the earlier metaphysical perspectives “our lot crawls between dry ribs/ To keep our metaphysics warm” (33).

The solidity of the daffodil bulbs and the life they contain in their knowledge of death contrasts with the regard of Grishkin, in which thought is merely “tightening its lusts and luxuries,” a kind of living death (32). Eliot writes that, for Webster, sight through daffodil bulbs “instead of balls” came from this regard of mortality, and this language suggests an alternate kind of sight that Eliot describes elsewhere, in “Prufrock’s Pervigilium” as the kind of vision where “I have seen the world roll up into a ball/ Then suddenly dissolve and fall away” (March Hare 44). Although both types of vision are present in Eliot’s early poetry, I intend to outline how the view of dissolvent reality and consciousness predominates, but as his perspective shifts toward greater cohesion and solidity, assisted by his own transplantation and literary labors in England, the plant and garden imagery flowers and proliferates, having solid ground beneath it.

In his 1919 essay “The Metaphysical Poets,” Eliot, writing about the English literary tradition, claimed that “In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which

we have never recovered” (SP 64). As he begins with Johnson’s characterization of the work of the English metaphysical poets in which “the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together” and states that the current poet must be able to comprehend great “variety and complexity” in order to match the difficult complexity of present cultural conditions, Eliot suggests that the task of the poet is to become “more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary language into his meaning” (65) The cultural significance of this literary movement is, he tells us, an effort to reinvigorate a failing “struggle toward unification of sensibility” in which fragmented experience and sensibility led to the further need for the dislocation of language in order to better find and establish “the verbal equivalent for states of mind and feeling” (65). Eliot gestures toward the condition of poetic sensibility present in the seventeenth century metaphysical poets where they “possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience” and sensibility was so refined that they “feel their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose,” without sacrificing the precision and clarity of thought so that “A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility” (64). Although Eliot writes with detachment and distance, one can still trace his personal preoccupations mapped and translated onto a much larger cultural scale and marked within a separate field of literary criticism. Eliot continues to write that “When a poet’s mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man’s experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary...In the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes” (64). At the back of these words, from time to time, one can hear some of the personal feeling behind Eliot’s poetry composed into this detached criticism of the broad impersonal literary tradition.

I am suggesting that Eliot’s criticism and poetry outlines a fragmentation and dissociation of sensibility in cultural environments where the “mechanism of sensibility” has decayed, and in the degradation of the ‘equipment’ of the mind for the work of amalgamating disparate experience and creating “new wholes” there arises a sense of an interrelation between both a

general and individual state of dissociation and schizophrenia, *anomie* and *aboulie* (64).

Conversely, Eliot's dexterity in both showing these states and resolving them into new poetic wholes that express equally and honestly the dissociation, fragmentation, and the effort of re-association, is its own justification of his view of poetry itself. Formulating this perspective of poetry, literature, and culture in his work as both a poet and a critic allowed him to sustain his poetic grip and vitality as a transplant without the native sense of a rich soil of tradition.

As Robert Crawford has picked out the echoes in Eliot's work of the teachings of his philosophy instructors, the words of Harold Joachim, whom Eliot studied under at Oxford, seem to resonate here in regards to Eliot's words on the poet's ability to 'form new wholes.' Joachim configured a "coherence theory of truth" where:

A 'significant whole' is such that all its constituent elements reciprocally involve one another or reciprocally determine one another's being as contributing features in a single concrete meaning. The elements thus cohering constitute a whole which may be said to control the reciprocal adjustment of its elements, as an end controls its constituent means. And in this sense a Centaur is inconceivable...(Crawford 216).

This idea bears a strong resemblance to Eliot's suggestions in his essay "The Metaphysical Poets" in its description of the poet's mind as working against a "dissociation of sensibility" evident in certain periods of literature by forming new "wholes" out of a "heterogeneity of material," but perhaps bears an even stronger resemblance to Eliot's ideas regarding tradition in literature in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (64/61). Eliot describes the relation of the individual artist to the body of a tradition in a similar way to the previous examples I have described of Eliot's writings on the relation of disparate experience compelled into unities and 'new wholes' in which part and whole have reciprocal influence upon each other within the same unity as relations are acknowledged. This is an early example in Eliot's scaling of order from smallest to largest scale, in which one must both be conscious of the largest scope and the most minute particularity and be capable of coherently harmonizing them into one whole. Eliot, in this early stage of his career, as he is struggling to solidify his commitment to poetry and the literary field and his recent relocation, focuses this conceptualization of order onto the matter of poetry.

Charles W. Pollard, in his book *New World Modernisms*, notes how Eliot mentioned beginning to shape the idea of what would become “Tradition and the Individual Talent” in a 1919 letter to Mary Hutchinson, which is also commonly cited for Eliot’s asking her to “remember that I am *metic*--a foreigner, and that I want to understand you, and all that background and tradition of you” (*Letters* 318). Pollard views the essay as a mark of Eliot’s combination of “public and personal motivations” which “reconceives tradition not only to revitalize an apparently exhausted European culture but also to claim authority for his own poetic practice as part of that tradition” where, from his estranged position of the *metic*, “constructing a tradition becomes a way to respond to this alienation” (41/42). Pollard argues that critics “tend to overlook the colonial anxiety in Eliot’s idea of tradition” and that readings of this essay that do not account for this, and perceive it as a closing of a canon along lines of the Western literary tradition, do not fully account for the processes and nature of the “whole” of the living tradition as Eliot conceives it in his critical statements on poetic composition itself (Pollard 43).

In the essay itself, Eliot emphasizes “the importance of the relation of the poem to other poems by other authors” and suggests “the conception of poetry as a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written” (SE 40). As this echoes slightly of Joachim’s coherence theory of significant wholes and Eliot’s description of the association and unification of sensibility that occurs within the poet’s mind in reconciling chaotic and irregular fragments of experience, we can see the beginning of lines of correspondence between the patterns of experience within the mind of the poet, the mind of the poet as a whole, and the relation of that whole of the individual consciousness to the whole of the tradition, which is essentially “all the poetry that has ever been written” (40). The same process of unifying the “heterogeneity of material” essential to the poetic process, an aspect of sensibility which Eliot says is “omnipresent in poetry,” occurs at each level and between each level in order to form a universal coherent whole achieved between vastly disparate thoughts, experiences, languages, and elements. In this sense, the skill or sensibility of

poetic composition becomes material in the poetry itself in which “the poet has, not a ‘personality’ to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium...in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways” (42). In this sense, the medium of poetry expresses both the material which the mind composes into the poetry itself, but also reflects the state of the mind, judged by its ability to express not itself, but the medium, wherein Eliot claims it is not the “greatness” of “the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process...under which the artistic process takes place” (SE 41). What I want to emphasize in this, is the way Eliot’s description of poetry in this essay construes it as both the means and sustaining element, as both material and medium for sustaining the relations between fragmentation and wholeness between the varying levels of consciousness, the individual poetic process of the mind, and the larger living whole of the tradition of poetry, in which the function of poetry at each level operates in such a way that is universal and translatable on any scale within broadest conception of tradition. Poetry serves as a means of reconciling personal consciousness, thought, and experience, and the same sensibility that this process both requires and cultivates serves as a means for viewing larger patterns of disparate elements and forming new living whole sensibilities with which to construct a larger order and meaningful pattern.

Another important element in Eliot’s conception of tradition and the medium of poetry is the surrender of personality. Eliot writes that in the artistic process “What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is to something which is more valuable” and “The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality” (40). Frank Kermode identifies Eliot’s mode of relating between the scales of these differing orders through an artistic “self-sacrifice” as a process in which he works from smallest to largest and only discovers the larger pattern and perceives “a pattern behind the pattern” by working through an intense engagement with the particular, which is a detachment from the self and ideas of the larger scale being

privileged for the sake of a top-down system. Kermode cites a letter Eliot wrote to Stephen Spender in which he spoke of Spender's work, but also his own approach to criticism:

You don't really criticize any author to whom you have never surrendered yourself...Even just the bewildering minute counts; you have to give yourself up, and then recover yourself, and the third moment is having something to say, before you have wholly forgotten both surrender and recovery. Of course, the self recovered is never the same as the self before it is given (13).

Kermode marks how Eliot's theories of the living wholes and the relation between the poet's mind and the tradition of poetry do not work the other way, from larger to smallest, because "that is not surrender but conquest" and that Eliot's mode of both criticism and poetry had its foundational ground "achieved by surrender and meditation on surrender" which results in an interpenetration of intellect and sensibility, thought and feeling, and exchange between the elements of material and medium. Eliot's use of other poetry as his material for his poems also shows the fluidity of the relation and the ultimate emphasis on poetry's role as a medium in which diverse elements are brought together and held in a coherent unity. To return this to the context of ground and stability, I am trying to emphasize how, through Eliot's poetic process, material becomes united in a medium through skill which becomes a consciousness which one can ground sensibility in and further use the medium to refine both the material and the sensibility.

In the context of Eliot's own sense of dissociation and dissolution, Pollard cites Jeffery Perl's work in outlining how Eliot's "ambivalence" can also be used to explain, in part, Eliot's conversion to Anglicanism by its assertion of "an authority of consensus through listening to a multitude of voices" (26). Pollard cites Perl's work to establish a perspective of Eliot which places him as a cornerstone or at least a stepping stone for helping post-colonial poets such as Kamau Brathwaite and Derek Walcott in his mode of working through the sensibility of the uprooted metic where "Eliot's skepticism and relativism deepen his commitment to the conventions of tradition, language, poetry, and religion as contingent ways to hold together the opposites of experience," where his variety of perspectival arguments "represent conventions of

meaning as both groundless and significant, both philosophically untenable and pragmatically indispensable, both products of skepticism and tenets of faith” so that Eliot does create a means of grounding poetics and translatable common grounds through a consciousness of groundlessness and dissolvent foundations (26)

Eliot’s avowed status of the metic, which Pollard defines in the context of ancient Greece as “an alien allowed to reside in the city because of a special skill but never granted full rights as citizen,” both firmly grounds Eliot within England and its cultural and literary traditions, but also keeps him at a distance in that grounding (41). Eliot’s construance of himself as “metic” to Mary Hutchinson in his desire to “understand...all that background and tradition of you” aligns with Pollard’s definition of metic to place great emphasis not only on the use of a particular skill in creating an autonomous belonging within a tradition, but also construing relation to place itself through skill (41). Pollard points to Eliot’s remark that tradition “cannot be inherited” and that it can only be obtained “by great labour” to emphasize how this contributes to Eliot’s mode of claiming authority within English letters (46). Eliot’s shifting of the metaphor from one of inheritance to that of labor becomes an act of the poet working to “dislocate” in geographical cultural terms, “language into his meaning” (Pollard 46/SP 65).

Pollard illustrates that this shift of the transmission of tradition through labor not only opens up England to the metic, so that “tradition passes not by the English Statute of Wills but by the U.S. Homestead Act” and allows Eliot to ensure “that the accident of being born in St. Louis will not impede his claims on the ‘whole literature of Europe’”, but reverses the flow further so that the poet can “freely mix other traditions in the labor of his art” having “both Augustine and Buddha speak about sensuality in *The Waste Land*” (46). As Pollard marks Eliot’s conception of tradition as “a temporally contingent but structurally coherent matrix through which he constructs, compares, and evaluates the relations between participants in a cultural practice,” I would construe this “structurally coherent matrix” as mapping the idea of a significant whole onto

a cultural metaphorical soil and ground of perspective within which Eliot's poetry developed and functioned to create an environment which sustained a reflexively revitalizing relationship between the matrix of tradition and the coherence within his own poetic voice. I would also emphasize the role of Eliot's *metic* as a laborer, and accentuate Eliot's tropes and metaphors of ground, garden, and culture to characterize his own poetic labors as taking on the role of an agricultural laborer, a cultivator, and something of the gardener of an accessible *hortus conclusus* with roots reaching for the universal. Through the rest of this chapter, I will outline the progression in his early poetry of the workings of groundlessness, foundations, soil, and plant growth with this trajectory and development in mind.

One characteristic element of Eliot's early poetry that exemplifies a sense of dissociation, fragmentation and groundlessness, is a repeated use of synecdoche where human subjectivity is fragmented into parts which represent the loss of a coherent whole. His synecdochal phrasing of eyes or feet as extensions of sensation often places them in prepositional relationship to a surface, which functions as a foundation which determines how, as well as what, they feel or comprehend. The narrowing myopia of synecdoche within incoherent urban streets reflects Eliot's anxiety over a sterile provincial narrowness. This relation to surroundings reflects a commentary upon both the environment and the poet's mind, while severing the connection between the two, creating a gap that can only be mediated through language and sound. In his unpublished "First Caprice in North Cambridge," the sounds of "a street-piano" and a wail of "children's voices" are "flung against the panes/Of dirty windows" over "Bottles and broken glass/ Trampled mud and grass;/ A heap of broken barrows;" and condemned as "minor considerations" (IMH 13). The landscape of "Fourth Caprice in Montparnasse" places the speaker "among such scattered thoughts" as dilapidated houses "grey with rain...dashing from the slated roofs/ Into a mass of mud and sand,/ Behind a row of blackened trees" (14). In "Second Caprice in North Cambridge" the poem locates the speaker's consciousness and his epistemological stance as coming to terms with "This charm of

vacant lots!/ The helpless fields that lie/ Sinister, sterile and blind” which “entreat the eye and rack the mind” reflecting a state of mutual degradation acting upon both subjectivity and place as its natural growth is only “ashes and tins in piles,/ Shattered bricks and tiles/ And the debris of a city” (15). The poet’s environment and the landscape of his consciousness merges with little hope for renewal as the poet says “Let us pause/ With these fields that hold and rack the brain” (15).

Eliot’s early poems also reflect the beginnings of a translocal and transnational perspective as they span urban cityscapes from St. Louis, to Cambridge, to London, and Paris as he wrote them across a span of three years. Eliot would later remark that “My urban imagery was that of St. Louis, upon which that of Paris and London have been superimposed” (Crawford 48). In the small poem “Interlude in London,” one can trace the beginning images and themes of spring’s rejuvenation falling ineffectually on apathetic and infertile ground, which would be dramatically expounded and intensified in *The Waste Land*. Analogous to the opening lines of WL, this early poem begins “We hibernate among the bricks... Indifferent to sudden rains/ Softening last year’s garden plots” (16). The poem’s human subjects, “We,” are aligned with the state of “last year’s garden plots,” as they are “apathetic” and “careless,” while “down the street the spring goes/ Inspiring mouldy flowerpots” (16). Eliot’s utilization of the image of a flower among grounds developed and sterilized into the urban streets is a dominant motif, recurring in “Easter: Sensations of April,” prefiguring the cruelest month as a state of mind, with “geraniums geraniums/ Withered and dry... In the sweepings of the memory” (23). Part of the insubstantiality and mortality of life in the cityscapes of Eliot’s poetic imagination arises from an insecurity of the location of consciousness where “shifting scenes,” and “different planes” come to “rack the mind” in “helpless fields” which is both causal and symptomatic in the structural voicing of his poems (19/21/15).

While there are many images and themes that Eliot will return to and further develop with greater force later, Eliot is also honing his practice of composing using the words and images of another writer to establish a position and enable his own poetic voice to engage with

his surroundings. This lays the groundwork of the development of his echoing allusive style which incorporates the words and images of diverse literary sources as the very material with which he constructs his poetic voice. In "First Debate Between Body and Soul," the young Eliot's subject of a metaphorical old man, a summer wind about to die into autumn, is "stumbling among the alleys and the gutters" and "pokes and prods/ With senile patience/ The withered leaves of our sensations" (64). Eliot's poem is reading his unspecified, dislocated street in such a way that uses images and metaphors from Nathaniel Hawthorne's New England story "Buds and Bird Voices" to ground his consciousness and mediate the voice of his speaker in the poem. Hawthorne speaks about the metaphorical scene of "the soil of thought, and the garden of the heart" as a ground where there lies "withered leaves; the ideas and feelings that we have done with" (Hawthorne 828). Hawthorne writes that the decayed fruits and wastes of these ideas and feelings are the responsibility of the "cultivator" to clear away so that their consciousness is not "treading always on these dry bones and mouldering relics" accumulated when the "earlier year had strewn its decay upon the virgin turf" (829). For Hawthorne, the ability to see afresh and access "the renewing power of the spirit" depends on the ability to "have our feet again upon the turf" and avoid the condition where the "withered leaves" become the mind's realities and springtime only a dream (829). The urban flaneur of Eliot's early street poems consistently encounters underfoot the material debris and detritus of meaningless trivialities which color his contact with the environment so that the "yellow smoke that slides along the street" leads to "the yellow soles of feet" and effects a pollution of this fundamental prepositional relation of the poet to the place of his consciousness (CPP 4/13).

Eliot repeats the image of withered leaves yet again to give a sense of a degenerative effect between sensation and the imagination resulting from an epistemological relation to environment in "First Debate Between Body and Soul." Eliot's subject is one who is "devoted to the pure idea" yet "sits delaying in the vacant square" where a street piano is heard "through the dusty trees/ Insisting "Make the best of your position" while "The pure idea dies of inanition"

accompanied by the “whine and wheeze” of “the street pianos through the trees” (64). Eliot’s refrain throughout this poem is repeated with a slight variation: “Imaginations/ The withered leaves of our sensations” (64). What all these natural images are working to express comes through directly in the next stanza and points at a debility of the mind’s ability to make meaning out of reality, an endeavor that is closely linked to “position” of the consciousness: “the eye retains the images/ the sluggish brain will not react/ Nor distils/ the dull precipitates of fact/ the emphatic mud of physical sense” (64). Mud here is neither fertile ground nor concrete, but the real problem is the inability of the mind to ‘distil’ anything out of fact and the uncertain ‘mud’ of its sensations. It only reveals “the cosmic smudge of an enormous thumb/ posting bills/ on the soul” (IMH 64). Far from living, vital growths, the imagination is only able to produce “withered leaves” out of its sensations, which Eliot refers to in the varying refrains as “Masturbations”, and “Defecations” (64/65). Eliot reasserts the primacy of positioning in this debate when he enjoins the “blind old man” directly and positively as a “complete idealist... A supersubtle peasant in a shabby square/ Assist me to the pure idea--/ Regarding nature without love or fear/ For a little while, a little while/ Standing our ground--/ Till life evaporates into a smile” (65). Eliot’s phrasing of “Standing our ground,” which relies on the conjoined perspective with the “supersubtle peasant,” contains both literal and figurative resonances in terms of the localized contact of consciousness.

In *Prufrock and other Observations*, Eliot is still concerned with the insubstantiality of the foundations of the mind’s relation to the world through its senses. J. Alfred Prufrock takes in his cityscape “Like a patient etherized upon a table,” wandering “certain half-deserted streets” which are compared to a “tedious argument” that lead to an “overwhelming question” that neither speaker nor listener are prepared to confront (CPP 3). The anaesthetization of the senses in the city positions the poet in relation to it like a limp body “upon a table” and the speaker consciously articulates his irresolution with precision and accuracy in “a hundred indecisions” and “a hundred visions and revisions” (4). Yellow fog and yellow smoke “slides along the street” and “rubs its

back upon the window panes,” as an ethereal presence that pervades the city, is part of it, yet also is separate enough to be set in prepositional relationship to it, both “on the window-panes” and “upon the pools that stand in drains” (4). The smoke is further contextualized by Eliot’s allusion in a later poem “Burbank With a Baedeker” to the painter Andrea Mantegna’s words that “Only the divine endures; the rest is smoke”; such that the smoke and fog are also symbolic of the meaningless temporality of man’s works and consciousness. For the speaker, his orientation is a series of questions about himself “Do I dare disturb the universe?...how should I then presume?/ And how should I begin?” such that he cannot speak confidently and comes to consider retreating to live in this world as merely the crude sensations of a fragmentary synecdoche: “I should have been a pair of ragged claws/ Scuttling across the floors of silent seas” (5). Because of this epistemological relation to his environment, the speaker says “It is impossible to say just what I mean!” and likens it to “as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen” (6). The effect of the dissolvent relation to insubstantial grounds and planes of action has the effect of fragmenting subjectivity such that the speaker articulates his own perspective through synecdoche in prepositional relation rather than taking for granted the rooting of a perspective in a coherent medium.

In “Preludes” much of the same imagery from his Cambridge poems and “Prufrock” are repeated with a continued portrayal of human consciousness and subjectivity as synecdoche, such that the materiality of the objects and city landscape come to be merged with the production of meaning as “The conscience of a blackened street/ Impatient to assume the world” (13). Hawthorne’s “withered leaves,” repeated from “First Debate Between Body and Soul,” recur here as “the grimy scraps/ of withered leaves about your feet,” still troubling the ground upon which the subject stands and the basis of their relation to it by contact with their feet (12). Eliot continues the synecdoche as it is the “morning” and no human speaker that “comes to consciousness/Of faint smells of beer/ From the sawdust-trampled street/With all its muddy feet that press/To early coffee stands” (12). When the subject does think, it is in synecdoche,

transferred this time to “all the hands/ that are raising dingy shades/ In a thousand furnished rooms” (12). The synecdoche transfers, in the third section to the second-person subject’s conception of their soul. As the street is a whole, encompassing “all its muddy feet that press,” the subject thinks of the soul in the same way, as their mind contemplates the ceiling in the “furnished room”: “You dozed, and watched the night revealing/ The thousand sordid images/ Of which your soul was constituted; They flickered against the ceiling” (12). The mind plays out its fragmentation upon the surface of the ceiling, which stands for a landscape itself, reflecting the mind’s inability to formulate meaning back upon itself, like the line from Prufrock, as “nerves in patterns on a screen” (6). The “thousand sordid images” also predicts the basis for the subject in *The Waste Land* to be able to “say or guess”, as “you know only/ a heap of broken images” (38). There is a marked disconnect between what the subject contemplates and what they see as the whole that is shattered into synecdoche in such a way that destroys conscious relation between the two: “You had such a vision of the street/As the street hardly understands” (13). Eliot implicates the soul directly as constituted in the “thousand sordid images,” on the ceiling, but also in such a way that shifts the pronoun and places the soul in predicated relation to the way the subject is conscious of the landscape, where “His soul stretched tight across the skies/ That fade behind a city block,/ Or trampled by insistent feet...assured of certain certainties” (13). In these words, the soul becomes imminent as it is merged in the speaker’s perception of his surroundings. As the poem closes, although the speaker assumes for the first time a first person perspective “I am moved by fancies that are curled around these images, and cling” he is dismissing what earlier stood for the soul as merely “fancies,” and reverts to the cynical final statement: “Wipe your hand across your mouth, and laugh; the worlds revolve like ancient women/ Gathering fuel in vacant lots” (13). The poet’s world is unstable, and he gathers his material in “vacant lots” of little meaning. When the speaker has gathered his subjectivity into an assertive expression of his perspective in the final three lines, it is one lacking the perceptive intricacy of detail of the preceding lines and disowns the “I” which is “moved by fancies” that are curled around the

“thousand sordid images” of both city and soul in its infinite capacities for suffering and gentleness (13). A narrowness of vision and feeling which resembles Eliot’s later definitions of provincialism is the final vision of “Preludes.”

A number of other poems in this early volume reflect the same sense of dissolvent and insubstantial foundations along with fractured consciousness. In “Rhapsody On a Windy Night” midnight in a city street works upon the poet’s mind as “Whispering lunar incantations/ Dissolve the floors of memory/ And all its clear relations/ Its divisions and precisions” and “shakes the memory/ As a madman shakes a dead geranium” (14). Eliot begins here with a dissolved floor and a dead flower in the mind’s locus in a grimy city street to emphasize the dissipation of clear relations; but shifts the flower metaphor slightly to human subjectivity in the next poem “Morning at the Window,” where the speaker, noting “trampled edges of the street” states “I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids/ Sprouting despondently at area gates” (16). Eliot employs another figure of metaphorical plant growth to slight the readers, newspaper content, and the times itself in “The Boston Evening Transcript,” writing that “The readers of the Boston Evening Transcript/ Sway in the wind like a field of ripe corn” (16). As the metaphorical plant growths stem from the ground and its condition, Eliot alternatively strikes at the insubstantiality of such surfaces and the impact of human action and consciousness upon them. In “Morning at The Window,” the street becomes a layered mixture of fog and water as “the brown waves of fog toss up to me/ Twisted faces from the bottom of the street” (16). In “Cousin Nancy,” it is not just the urban scene that fails, as “Miss Nancy Ellicott,” who “smoked” and “danced all the modern dances,” to the perplexity of her aunts, “Strode across the hills and broke them,/ Rode across the hills and broke them--/ the barren New England hills” (17). The barren hills are broken (and re-framed in poetry) by the way the way they are walked upon or traversed, just like the streets of Eliot’s urban poems. While Eliot is indicting the New England landscape itself as culturally “barren” of vital meaning, the actions of “Cousin Nancy” and the “modern dances” set the subject and environment against each other, creating an equally alienating dissonance.

In "Mr. Apollinax," written after a social tea with the visiting philosopher Bertrand Russell, Mr. Apollinax is established as a foreigner who "visited the United States"; a figure both far deeper and more elementally vital, both more living and more crude than his present company. The speaker's impressions of Mr. Apollinax are mediated nearly entirely through the hearing of his voice and his laughter, which "tinkled among the teacups," yet was also "submarine and profound" (18). The laughter leads the speaker to think of "Fragilion, that shy figure among the birch-trees,/ And of Priapus in the shrubbery,"; whereas both figures inhabit vegetation, but Fragilion is shyly hiding, while Priapus, a god of fertility, and protector of horticulture and viticulture, used in Roman gardens and appearing in Latin literature as a scarecrow, is sexually bold, "Gaping at the lady in the swing" (18). In relation to surfaces, the speaker places Mr. Apollinax's laughter as having great depth "submarine...Hidden under coral islands/ Where worried bodies of drowned men drift down in the green silence," mixing layers of sound and silence. Yet alternately listening to his "passionate talk" which "devoured the afternoon," the speaker heard "the beat of centaur's hoofs over the hard turf" insisting again upon the prepositional relationship of the sound of movement's impact upon a surface (18). This recalls Joachim's remark that the "centaur is inconceivable"; for Eliot, Joachim's conception of the significant whole was flawed in its incapacity to comprehend the blending adaptations of modern subjectivity in reality—the centaur seemed perfectly fitting to describe this figure. When the speaker says of the other guests, out of their depth, "I remember a slice of lemon, and a bitten macaroon", the tone calls to mind a passage that indicts the cultural vitality of this gathering from Virgil's *Eclogues*: "A bowl of milk, Priapus, and these cakes, are all you can expect year by year; the garden you watch is poor..." (Virgil, *Eclogues* 7.33). In this early phase of his poetry, Eliot's treatment of location, culture, consciousness, and the sound of it all reflects "music which we seize/ to body forth our own vacuity" as Eliot writes in "Conversation Galante," which swipes at the inane nature of the "vagrant moods" and "mad poetics" underlying trivial conversation (19/20). Eliot's poetry up to this point is marked by proceeding from a point where all products of

the environment and its cultural processes are indictments against themselves and their origins, which are only overcome through the precision of the crippling consciousness of fragmentation and dissolution. Rather than transcendent music, it sounds a purposeful hollow note.

Although Eliot found a cultural ground to root himself in with his move to England, that is not to say he did not reserve for it an equally harsh critique as he held for American culture.

Tellingly returning to horticultural language, Eliot wrote in Wyndham Lewis's *Tyro* in 1922 that American literature was gaining a step, aided by "the complete collapse of literary effort in England," continuing to say that

The present situation here has now become a scandal impossible to conceal from foreign nations: that literature is chiefly in the hands of persons who may be interested in almost anything else; that literature presents the appearance of a garden unmulched, untrimmed, unweeded, and choked by vegetation sprung only from the chance germination of the seed of last year's plants" (Discovering Modernism: T.S. Eliot and His Contexts, note 64).

This remark of literature as a "garden" in need of careful and vigorous tending adds a significant resonance to the opening section of *The Waste Land* and the images of land and plants throughout the poem, as well as creating a modified light for reading all similar images and tropes occurring before and after. I am suggesting that this marks at least, in the very slightest degree, Eliot's conception of himself as a cultivator of England's literature and redeeming the literary fertility of that region, which I suggest is traceable throughout the further development of his poetry and the garden and ground images he employs.

In the opening section of *The Waste Land*, "Burial of the Dead," Eliot straightaway condemns the cultural fertility of the land, calling it cruel to breed "Lilacs out of the dead land" and to stir "Dull roots with spring rain" (37). Similar to the vacant grimy streets and the "thousand sordid images" of the soul in "Preludes," Eliot invokes the question of the growth of consciousness simultaneously with that of life in relation to environment: "What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow/ Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,/ You cannot say or guess, for you know only/ A heap of broken images" (38). The "Hyacinth garden" is where one

voice of the poem encountered a mystical experience “looking into the heart of light, the silence” (38). As the section concludes, the garden becomes the place for the burial of the dead and the possibility for new life where another voice questions “That corpse you planted last year in the garden,/ Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year? Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?” (39) The speaker seems to insist that it will only sprout if the burial of the death is complete, otherwise the “Dog...that’s friend to men” will “dig it up again!” (39). The image of a corpse sprouting in a garden aligns with Eliot’s thinking regarding artistic progression as a continual self-sacrifice, especially in the context of a remark that he made in a letter to Conrad Aiken: “It’s interesting to cut yourself to pieces once in a while, and wait to see if the fragments will sprout” (Vendler viii). In the notes to *The Waste Land*, Eliot cites the chapters on Adonis, Attis, and Osiris in James Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*, as mythical figures whose dismemberment was associated with agricultural fertility and plant growth, saying that “anyone who is acquainted with these works will recognize in the poem certain references to vegetation ceremonies” (50). The combination of these remarks, particularly Eliot’s remark about cutting himself to pieces to “see if the fragments will sprout,” suggests a ritual aspect of his poetic process that is designed to bring about an effect outside of himself within the medium of his poetry.

In “A Game of Chess,” the setting is that of a bedroom, not a garden where candle smoke drifts “Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling,” reminiscent of the line in “Prufrock” where “a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen,” yet Eliot returns it to garden imagery by the mention of a “sylvan scene” which recalls the scene in Book IV of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, where Satan gazes on Adam and Eve in the garden. However, the scene described in the poem is that of the rape and change of Philomel into a nightingale who “filled all the desert with inviolable voice” (40). Despite the “inviolable” nature of her voice, the crime behind its change makes her tongue one of many “withered stumps of time” (40). The rest of the human voices that follow in this section fit the image of “withered stumps” in the emotional qualities that they vocalize. The voices are insubstantial, unanchored, and desperate, as the woman, echoing

something of the tone of Prufrock's questioning asks "Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak/ What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?" (40). The reply she gets gives her the location of the other speaker's state of mind as a reference to what he is thinking: "I think we are in rats' alley/ Where the dead men lost their bones" (40). Rather than birdsong or other natural noises of life, we have only their voices and the voices in the pub, and their hearing of the wind, which is "Nothing again nothing" to gauge the life of the place. The woman asks her husband "Do/ You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember/ Nothing?....Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?"—his nonsensical reply sends her into a Prufrockian state where she wonders "What shall I do now? What shall I do?..What shall we ever do?" (41). It is in these voices and Eliot's grasp of the structure of their feeling that the greatest emptiness and shallowness of modernity becomes most prominent in the poem.

In "The Fire Sermon," as if to answer the question "What are the roots that clutch?" it begins as "the last fingers of leaf/ Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind/ Crosses the brown land, unheard." (42). Far from an image of a garden, "A rat crept softly through the vegetation/ Dragging its slimy belly on the bank" and the "low damp ground" is filled with trash and is used for the satisfying of low lusts. This reaches a high pitch as the Thames daughters are brought low amid "Trams and dusty trees" where "Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew/Undid me" (46). While Kew does carry the connotation of Kew Botanical Gardens, Eliot's depiction of the Thames daughters returns to his early use of synecdoche to place them in a fractured consciousness in relation to their environment. The first says "I raised my knees/ Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe" (46). Eliot conveys sexual encounters where the "daughters of song are brought low" and, through synecdoche, highlights that they are being taken advantage of in a meaningless degrading experience that is pervasive of their entire situation and in which they are the helpless fragments of the whole degradation of culture. The second daughter, again emphasizing the synecdoche of feet from "Preludes" and other earlier poems, yet inverting their relation to the ground, says "My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart/ Under my feet" (46). The

third daughter reflects the inability to grasp “heap of broken images” she stands upon, saying “On Margate Sands./ I can connect/ Nothing with nothing” (38/46).

“Death By Water” marks a transposition to a scene where the dead “Phlebas the Phoenician” lies on the ocean floor where “a current under sea/ Picked his bones in whispers,” the “burning” of the self’s desires extinguished into softer sounds (45/46). Though the medium of the environment is completely different, somewhat of the same effect is transmitted as the image of the corpse Eliot “planted” in the garden in the first section of the poem (39). The locus of “Death by Water” also suggests the final stanza of “J. Alfred Prufrock” and contrasts its whispers of the deep sea current with the “chambers of the sea” where “human voices wake us, and we drown” (7). The dynamics of voice and sound in relation to consciousness and depth are the connections that I want to emphasize here. Those elements of sound, along with death (in garden as well as ocean), also somehow recall Eliot’s poetic vocal imagery in “Portrait of a Lady,” where the Lady tells her story of “My buried life, and Paris in the Spring,/ I feel immeasurably at peace, and find the world/ to be wonderful and youthful, after all” (9). Her words create a dialogue across poems and periods of Eliot’s poetic career with the description of Phlebas the Phoenician, and his own ‘buried life,’ where “As he rose and fell/ He passed the stages of his age and youth” (46). This triangulation of images and words between the poems allows their differences and different contexts to work upon each other and create a unity of their soundings of the movement of Eliot’s poetic material. The ‘buried life’ within “Portrait of a Lady” points more directly at the corpse planted in the garden of *The Waste Land*, and through this transposition of imagery, associates questions of it sprouting or blooming with music, as the Lady discusses her musical taste saying “So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul/ Should be resurrected only among friends/ Some two or three, who will not touch the bloom/ That is rubbed and questioned in the concert room” (8). In this cross-stitch of quotations, it is something of a silence on the other side of sound that blooms out of the buried life of these images and the words that evoke them in the imagination.

As the early section of this chapter is concerned with groundlessness and dissociation, the following stanza of "Portrait" serves to contextualize the relation of the woman's "buried life" and remarks on listening to music as a "resurrection" of the "bloom" of the soul: "I am always sure that you understand/ My feelings, always sure that you feel./ Sure that across the gulf you reach your hand" (9). While this represents a statement of the interpersonal significance of the two subject's communication between each other across the "gulf" that separates them, the main speaker, within whose narrative the woman's voice resides, undercuts this perspective as shallow and naïve in its dissonance. The main speaker describes his impression of this view, in his hearing as "The voice returns like the insistent out-of-tune/ Of a broken violin on an August afternoon" (9). Still, the main speaker articulates being strongly affected by the dissonance in his hearing. His consciousness of the dissonance in his relation to the female speaker, as well as the public events he reads about in the newspaper, manifests itself as an aspect of personal self-control. Yet the speaker sharply undercuts this perspective of his own, again through an act of hearing: "I remain self-possessed/ Except when a street-piano, mechanical and tired/ Reiterates some worn-out common song/ With the smell of hyacinths across the garden/ Recalling things that other people have desired" (10). As the poem concludes with a line that says "This music is successful with a 'dying fall'", this poem's treatment of music and imagery of gardens within a speaker's consciousness serves to foreground an early mode of Eliot's approach to feeling and meaning, as sensory experiences that must be re-purposed and rejuvenated in their dissonance and failure to take root.

In "What the Thunder Said," the garden is used to serve as an image leading to the contemplation of sacrifice and death, in the context of Christ's agony in the garden: "After the frosty silence in the gardens/ After the agony in stony places" (47). The next lines of the published poem read "The shouting and the crying/ Prison and palace and reverberation," but Eliot's working project, "He Do the Police in Different Voices," shows that his initial thought was "Garden and palace and reverberation" before he substituted prison for garden (Poems of

T.S. Eliot 343). This passage, particularly the “frosty silence” and the “shouting and the crying” links the image of the garden to not just patterns of life, but also to the nature of patterns of sound arising from that place.

This is a direct reversal of “Death by Water” as this section takes place in a desert-like rocky place where there is “no water but only rock/ Rock and no water and the sandy road” (47). Again Eliot speaks in synecdoche where “Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand,” expressed in pieces because “Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think” (47). It is of note however, that the only vegetation there is “dry grass singing” while the speaker hopes for birdsong amid pine-trees, but there is only grass “singing/ Over the tumbled graves” (48/49). The whole working of the poem has the borrowings of a primitive springtime vegetation rite or a ceremony designed to bring about the coming of rain to a dry place through certain words and ritual actions. The rain comes with the voice of thunder, and in doing so, gives clarity to the formulation of the poem around the three Sanskrit words. However, the speaker’s work is not complete, as he assumes the voice of the Fisher King “upon the shore/ Fishing, with the arid plain behind me” to ask the question “Shall I at least set my lands in order?” (50). That question placed in the final stanza directs the attention to the mind of the composer and the importance of integrity of consciousness for the individual, so that instead of inability to clutch subtle complexity with broken synecdoche, living upon a “heap of broken images” one can, through the relational and synthetic process of poetic contemplation, say “These fragments I have shored against my ruin” (50). This is a much more hopeful ending than that of “Preludes”; the worlds do not revolve, they have some fuel, and even though they are in danger of collapse, there is a ground where roots can clutch and branches can grow out of its “broken images” (38).

Robert Crawford notes that in his editorship of the initial issue of the *Criterion* in which *The Waste Land* appeared, Eliot positioned it “carefully among prose with which it resonated” and that the reading context was arranged so that T. Sturge Moore’s ‘Tristram and Isolt’ “(which Tom had edited so that its first part ended with mention of how ‘cut or wired flowers doomed to

sterility' compared poorly with 'bloom on thriving plants') was the last thing readers saw before turning the page to *The Waste Land* and the "lilacs" and "dead land," "roots" and "tubers" of its opening lines (Crawford 420). The purpose of this chapter has been to show Eliot's early treatment of gardens with simultaneous motifs of the groundlessness of consciousness in relation to place. The extensive quotation and interposing of separate poems has served the purpose to begin a view of Eliot's poetry as a whole with attention to minor resonances and repetitions within the locality of his early work. The music of the words of a poem, and their associations, depends on the larger patterns surrounding the texts, and both Eliot's imagery and his arrangement suggest the garden as the most fitting emblem of this effect of placement and musical sound. The next chapter will detail the mutations and consistencies of Eliot's continued use of garden and musical imagery within the context of his engagement with English culture from the perspective of a foreigner.

Chapter 2: From Transplanted Poet to “Supersubtle peasant”

“The experience of a poem is the experience both of a moment and of a lifetime. It is very much like our intenser experiences of other human beings. There is a first, or an early moment which is unique, of shock and surprise, even of terror (*Ego dominus tuus*); *a moment which can never be forgotten, but which is never repeated integrally; and yet which would become destitute of significance if it did not survive in a larger whole of experience; which survives inside a deeper and calmer feeling*”

T.S. Eliot

I have lain in the soil and criticized the worm.

T.S. Eliot, “Murder in the Cathedral”

This chapter will track the development and convergence of language and tropes of voice, vegetation, ground, and garden in Eliot’s writing, roughly spanning from the early 1920s to mid-1930s, covering his poetry, criticism, and his first ventures into verse drama. Where the first chapter dealt with a sense of groundlessness manifested in his poetry, this will chapter focus on the engagement of ground surfaces in his writing as he matured as a poet while gaining a stronger sense of his own location in England. I am arguing that, as Eliot gained a sense of definite place, his language began to gain solidity. The plants and gardens in Eliot’s poetry, given the way they are employed as metaphor in his critical works, are structural metaphors for the grounding of language in contact with reality.

The appropriate growth and flourishing of language and words which carry the vital association of thought and feeling into their verbal expression links the language to an established and carefully cultivated ground or field of sensibility which allows for the formation of ‘culture’ and communication across lines of difference, time, culture, and language because of their grasp of and growth from universal humanity in a particular place and form. Aided by his own sensibility as a *metoikos*, Eliot’s use of foundational ground carries a greater philosophical and poetic importance that is not entirely attached to Britain as a location of culture, but as a location and tradition capable of transcending British culture in a meaningful way.

For Eliot, manipulation of voice in his poetry becomes a structural means of grounding contact with the patterns and orders that transcend cultural location, but at the same time serves to ground it in actual localities and sensibilities that must be worked through and have their own positioning within that larger order. In terms of literature on this scale, Eliot states his basic view of literature in a 1923 essay as one ordered on levels of wholes:

the literature of the whole world, of the literature of Europe, of the literature of a single country, not as a collection of the writings of individuals, but as ‘organic wholes’, as systems in relation to which and only in relation to which, individual works of literary art, and the works of literary artists, have their significance (68).

Eliot’s point in emphasizing this scaling of wholes is that “there is accordingly something outside of the artist to which he owes allegiance” and that it requires “a devotion to which he must surrender and sacrifice himself in order to earn and to obtain his unique position” (68). It is the larger consciousness of place and relation within the larger order and pattern that makes the ‘unique position’ possible. His phrasing of “organic wholes” suggests a natural working of the same system at work in the smallest level of “individual works of literary art” as the largest level of global literature. His statement of the need of self-surrender to this order in order to establish a unique position becomes an essential part of his view of, not just the local and regional systems of literature, but also the creative and critical faculties inherent in artistic production and their manifestation within the fields of poetry and criticism.

Asserting the importance of a placement within a framework of operation, Eliot takes aim at the whole environment of criticism, saying that “far from being a simple and orderly field of beneficent activity from which impostors can be readily ejected, is no better than a Sunday park of contending and contentious orators, who have not even arrived at the articulation of their differences” (69). Eliot continues the gardening metaphor of the field of criticism to a more individual commentary on the critic himself, saying that, “if he is to justify his existence” in the field, he “should endeavor to discipline his personal prejudices and cranks—tares to which we are all subject—and compose his differences with as many of his fellows as possible, in the common

pursuit of true judgment” (69). Eliot’s use of the word “tares,” suggesting the Biblical usage of a word for weeds to represent “personal prejudices and cranks,” carries the resonance of the Parable of the Tares in relation to the unruly “field” of criticism, with the parable’s injunction to let the weeds and wheat grow together and then separate them from each other at the harvest (69). His usage of the metaphor of “tares,” also applies the metaphor of a field to the individual personality of the critic within the field of criticism. What Eliot next suggests is the careful examination and application of critical thought to one’s own limitations of personal perspective before judging the growths of the field, and laboring with constant recognition of “what aims and methods of criticism” should be followed in cultivating the field.

To shift back to how this point of view, and its use and maintenance through voice manifests itself in poetry, we will go by way of Eliot’s 1921 essay on the seventeenth century poet, Andrew Marvell to show that concerns of personality and voice were on his mind in his discussion of literature leading up to completing *The Waste Land* and its cacophony of outer voices and literary allusions. Eliot wrote that Marvell’s importance in his relatively small output of verse, was that the “really valuable part” of his work, was “probably a literary rather than a personal quality” and more so “a quality of a civilization, of a traditional habit of life” (161). Eliot’s valuation of this quality was that “Marvell, therefore, speaks more clearly and unequivocally with the voice of his literary age than does Milton” (163). This exemplifies Eliot’s perspective that poetic voice should emerge out of a “habit of life” and the nature of the culture itself.

Eliot describes this wit, which is a quality “fused into” the imagination, and links feeling and language in its agility, as having faded in the later generation of poets, so that “when we come to Gray and Collins, the sophistication remains only in the language, and has disappeared from the feeling” as Gray and Collins, though masters, “had lost that hold on human values, that firm grasp of human experience, which is a formidable achievement of the Elizabethan and

Jacobean poets” (165). The connection to vegetation, in all of this, lies in Eliot’s selected quotation of Marvell’s poetry and the importance of the voice being expressive of a capacious grasp, or rooting, through a “hold on human values” and “grasp of human experience,” which shows itself through the wit in the “variety and order” of the language and its expression of “concentrated images” (165/163). It is this “grasp” that makes Marvell’s the “voice of his literary age,” to the extent that his verse is expressive of a wit that grows from “a quality of a civilization, of a traditional habit of life” (161). The lines of Marvell that Eliot quotes tend to carry images of plants, gardens, and vegetation; it exhibits this ‘wit’ particularly in the lines “My vegetable love should grow/ Vaster than empires and more slow,” where Eliot singles out the “witty fancy in the successive images” as, not fancy for its own sake, but “a structural decoration of a serious idea” (163/164). I am arguing that the plants and gardens in Eliot’s poetry, given the way they are employed as metaphor in his critical works, are just that: “structural decoration of a serious idea” (164).

In the Marvell essay, Eliot quotes a number of lines of Marvell’s dealing with plants and verdure, including the most recognizable line from “The Garden”: “annihilating all that’s made/ To a green thought in a green shade,” before citing the lines “I have a garden of my own/ But so with roses overgrown/ and lilies that you would it guess/ to be a little wilderness” to compare it to lines from a William Morris poem: “I know a little garden close/ Set thick with lily and red rose” I would associate this repeated figuring of the private garden with Eliot’s description of Marvell’s maturity in comparison to later poets, where “nowadays we find occasionally good irony, or satire, which lack wit’s internal equilibrium, because their voices are essentially protests against some outside sentimentality or stupidity” and that this “quality which Marvell had” is “something precious and needed and apparently extinct” (171). I would read these remarks as Eliot’s elegy for the loss of ‘the green thought in the green shade’ and wit’s ability to maintain “internal

equilibrium” as a private *hortus conclusus* against outside influence to keep the mind’s autonomy over its voice and the sensibility, thought, and ‘culture’ expressed by it.

When turning his perspective onto the culture of his own age, in his 1925 poem, “The Hollow Men,” Eliot’s description of qualities of the voice and its vitality use language of vegetation to emphasize a state of lifelessness and degeneration even bleaker than *The Waste Land*. Repeating phrasing from *The Waste Land*, he writes “Our dried voices, when/ We whisper together/ Are quiet and meaningless/ As wind in dry grass/ Or rat’s feet over broken glass/ In our dry cellar” (56). In this “dead land” and “cactus land” Eliot writes that “In death’s dream kingdom... There, is a tree swinging/ And voices are in the wind’s singing/ More distant and more solemn/ Than a fading star” (57). But that “there” of underworld imagery becomes linked to “here” later in the poem, transposing imagery of the Stygian banks onto his location perceiving the cultural reality of twentieth century England where the location of voice and speech remains of paramount importance: “In this last of meeting places/ We grope together/ And avoid speech/ Gathered on the beach of the tumid river” (58).

By the time he published “Ash-Wednesday” in 1930, Eliot had converted to Anglo-Catholicism and his religious turn in his poetry is reflected by an extensive treatment of the garden as an image conveying a religious experience. Eliot confessed he was trying to write “a deliberate modern Vita Nuova” combining his reading of Dante with “a direct employment of a dream I had, together with the yew trees and the garden god” (Poems of T.S. Eliot 750). For the speaker in this poem, the place of the garden is essential to the state of his religious contemplation and the integrity of his formulation of prayer. The speaker describes a certain way of thinking and knowing as “the one veritable transitory power” arising from a place “There, where trees flower, and springs flow, for there is nothing again” (CPP 60). The speaker rejoices in his task and certainty of “having to construct something/ Upon which to rejoice”—he must construct the grounds for his contemplative garden of the speech of prayer. The speaker does this, not through

describing his environment or others in synecdoche or as “fragments” or “broken images,” but through the sacrifice of himself and the actions of his devoured bones with the sentiment that “I who am here dissembled/ Proffer my deeds to oblivion, and my love/ To the posterity of the desert and the fruit of the gourd” (38/50/61). The speaker’s “here” is directed toward a beginning, a place to start from in order to benefit a ground beyond himself, of which he is only a part, expressed in terms of time and ‘fruition’ in relation to landscape. The song arising from the sacrificed bones, and the movement of the speaker’s subjectivity toward a fragmentation of “self-sacrifice” is directed toward “Lady of silences...Rose of memory/ Rose of forgetfulness” where “The single Rose/ Is now the Garden/ Where all loves end” (62). The location of this highly-charged traditional symbol of the rose and garden is not connected to any geographical place, but a condition of the mind as a location of consciousness. Far different from the early “Streets that follow like a tedious argument,” this garden is “End of the endless/ Journey to no end/ Conclusion of all that is inconclusible/ Speech without word and/ Word of no speech/ Grace to the Mother/ For the Garden/ where all love ends” (3/62). T.S. Eliot’s poetic stance of voice in relation to the world has arrived; somewhere where the speaker can say “This is the land” (62/63). This prefigures the linguistic location appearing in the last of his later *Four Quartets* as “England and nowhere. Never and always,” more importantly “where prayer has been valid” (139).

Section IV of the poem continues a vision of a “silent sister veiled in white and blue” who “moved among others as they walked,/ Who then made strong the fountains and made fresh the springs/ Made cool the dry rock and made firm the sand” (64). In the presence of this state, time moves forward “restoring with a new verse the ancient rhyme,” all this occurring in the midst of the music of the “silent sister...Whose flute is breathless...and signed but spoke no word” located “between the yews, behind the garden god” (64). Section V elaborates a search for the “unheard” and “unspoken word...The Word without a word, the Word within/ The world and

for the world” (65). Eliot’s capitalization of the “Word” presents the Word of God as logos, while the lower case “word” represents the material language of the spiritually concerned poet. Again, the location of meaning and the movement of speech becomes a central element, as Eliot writes “Against the Word the unstilled world still whirled/ About the centre of the silent Word” and then asks “Where shall the word be found, where will the word/ Resound? Not here, there is not enough silence” (65). Contrasted with the interplay of silence, meaning, sound of words, and mere noise, is the significance of place itself and capacity for these elements, as the stanza ends “The right place and the right time are not here/ No place of grace for those who avoid the face/ No time to rejoice for those who walk among noise and deny the voice” (65). The location of the word becomes essential to reception of its sound in a meaningful way for the listener. This perspective views speech as a “spitting from the mouth the withered apple-seed” to transform the environment which is “The desert in the garden the garden in the desert,” a delocalized transposition whose vitality is determined by the function of speech and sensibility (66). In this way, the speaker appeals to the “spirit of the fountain, spirit of the garden” to redeem the spirit through “lost sea voices and “the voices shaken from the yew tree” to reinvigorate the spiritual climate of the postulant and their senses so that “smell renews the salt savour of the sandy earth” (66). The allusions of “salt savour” and “sandy earth” bring the connotations of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount, showing Eliot’s concern with the foundational sensibilities upon which one’s words and prayers must “construct something upon which to rejoice” out of a fundamental relation to perception and language (61). This shows a larger consciousness in Eliot’s perspective of, not just English literature, but the intersection of religion, culture, and literature, and how language is essential to fundamental relation to a sense of solidarity of meaning.

Where the word will resound was also a question Eliot was asking on a cultural scale in his literary criticism, particularly within the relations between regional variations of language and the larger national and international cultural patterns of linguistic relation. His 1929 essay on

Dante, which aligns with the deeply Dantean images of “Ash-Wednesday” written roughly around the same time period, is grounded in an analysis of Dante’s Italian vernacular language and poetic composition, but articulates this analysis as a component of his concern with the mental harmony of Europe as a whole. One can read his anxieties about international relations after World War I into his literary criticism and analyses of poetry. In this, one sees his own language and literary approach as a manifestation of a more broadly attuned sensibility expressed in terms of literary and poetic criticism. It becomes clear that Eliot’s underlying concern, in his discussion of the dialectic of the local and the universal in Dante’s vernacular, is the “national or racial differences of thought” evidenced by modern consciousness and sensibility as it manifests in language (SP 206). Eliot posits Dante as the most “universal of poets in the modern language” because of the proximity of his Italian vernacular to its roots, and the classical roots of other modern languages, in “universal Latin” which tended to “concentrate on what men of various races and lands could think together” (206). Retrospectively, from Eliot’s point of view, Dante, “none the less an Italian and a patriot, is first a European” (207). Although Eliot argues that “some of the character of this universal language seems to me to inhere in Dante’s Florentine speech; and the localization (‘Florentine’ speech) seems if anything to emphasize the universality, because it cuts across the modern division of nationality,” he locates the cause of Dante’s universal resonance to factors which are not removed from the “process of disintegration” that “separated nation and nation” culminating in the Treaty of Versailles (207). Rather, he points to pre-linguistic conditions of culture which were beyond the control of Dante, by suggesting that Dante’s universality and the translatability of his lucidity into foreign languages arises from conditions inherent in his own processes of growth and composition; the central reason being that “in Dante’s time Europe...was mentally more united than we can now conceive” (207). Eliot compares Dante to Shakespeare, Sophocles, Racine, and Moliere and concludes that although their material is equally as universal as the material of Dante, “they had no choice but to deal with

it in a more local way” and that “Dante’s advantages are not due to greater genius, but to the fact that he wrote when Europe was still more or less one” (209).

Eliot’s writing in England deals with a far different perspective regarding modern Europe, but the located ground of Dante’s sensibility gave him an inherent quality of clarity and simplicity in his poetic voice that contributed to the reach and resonance of his poetry, because “he not only thought in a way in which every man of his culture in the whole of Europe then thought, but he employed a method which was common and commonly understood throughout Europe” (209). By Eliot’s thinking “even had Chaucer or Villon been exact contemporaries of Dante, they would still have been farther, linguistically as well as geographically, from the center of Europe than Dante” (209). By this logic, we may have an added context for Eliot’s own poetic, linguistic, and geographical relocation to London as the late imperial center of modern Europe and the Atlantic.

The other relevant aspect of this essay is Eliot’s recurrent telescoping of perspective in which this larger perspective is inscribed into the very bones of the poetry and his analysis of it. When this regard of poetic communication and regional and international European culture is shifted to poetry itself, Eliot articulates a balance between the translucent or opaque nature in the character of the words used. Dante’s lucidity is countered by “a kind of opacity” in the words of English poetry “which is part of their beauty” where rather than “mere ‘verbal beauty’... words have associations, and the groups of words in association have associations, which is a kind of local self-consciousness, because they are the growth of a particular civilization; and the same thing is true of other modern languages” (207). Within the disintegration of the common cultural mind of Europe, Eliot perceives the distinction and solidity of local languages as a means to work back toward the common depths through the sharpening of consciousness of particularity and diversity in order to cultivate a more comprehensive and sensitive sensibility. In other words, the later turn in Eliot’s career toward a localized England in his poetry can be seen as a return to

smaller units of solid ground to calibrate a linguistic sensibility capable of matching the increased fragmentation and incoherence of modern Europe.

From the micro-level of the words within poems, Eliot suggests breaking Dante's poems down piece by piece, moving from small pattern to large as one should "acquaint oneself well with Dante's poem first part by part, even dwelling specially on the parts that one likes most at first, because we cannot extract the full significance of any part without knowing the whole" (211). In the sense of local language or culture—they lead back to the common mind and sensibility if they have but the germ of the larger meaning. Moving to the slightly larger level of a whole poem itself, Eliot writes:

The experience of a poem is the experience both of a moment and of a lifetime. It is very much like our intenser experiences of other human beings. There is a first, or an early moment which is unique, of shock and surprise, even of terror (*Ego dominus tuus*); *a moment which can never be forgotten, but which is never repeated integrally; and yet which would become destitute of significance if it did not survive in a larger whole of experience; which survives inside a deeper and calmer feeling*. The majority of poems one outgrows and outlives, as one outgrows and outlives the majority of human passions: Dante's is one of those which one can only just hope to grow up to and the end of life (216). (emphasis mine).

What Eliot prizes so much about Dante, and gives him such distinction for the modern world, is the depth that his lucidity, his way of thought, and his method allows him. It is the way the local and the universal are so interconnected in his very sensibility and language that Eliot esteems so greatly. Eliot's concerns with English literature and national culture must take a backseat here, as locality and particularity come to cripple even the Bard, where "Shakespeare gives the greatest width of human passion; Dante the greatest altitude and depth" (228). Within Eliot's own work, the seemingly fragmentary nature of words, images, and phrases serve as "moments" which exist in the larger whole of his own corpus of poetry, relying on a view of the "larger whole of experience" for a great deal of their meaning. This requires the reader to put them back together within the "deeper and calmer feeling" of sensibility which both the sound and the dissonance create in the reader. What Eliot's telescoping perspective oscillating between moment and lifetime, part and whole, surface and depth, local and universal, is trying to demonstrate, is how

“Every degree of the feeling of humanity, from lowest to highest, has, moreover, an intimate relation to the next above and the next below, and all fit together according to the logic of sensibility” (230). Dante’s katabasis, and Eliot’s vertical description of the altitude of his depths, is in keeping with subterranean metaphors of surface and depth in relation to the composed layers of feeling and their stratification within “the logic of sensibility” (230). With this in mind, Eliot’s preoccupation with terms of depth in his criticism and poetry proceed with a certain connotation towards a groundedness of language in relation to this ordered stratification of the logic of sensibility.

Eliot’s ideas of grounding sensibility in terms of “culture,” in reference to the sophistication of literary arts, social systems, values, and sensibility, returns to its earlier connotations of the agricultural cultivation of the biological and plant life of a specific plot of land or field. In his “Commentaries” published in the *Criterion* in the early 1930s, Eliot’s writing shows an increasing conceptualization of agriculture as being of critical importance to the culture and development of a region. In the October 1931 issue, he writes that “The essential point is that agriculture ought to be saved and revived because agriculture is the foundation for the Good Life in any society” and suggests that it is “the normal life” that modern society has departed from and that “the land of the country should be used and dwelt upon by a stable community engaged in its cultivation” (Nagaoka 93). In his essay “Envisioning the “Good Life”: Some Thoughts behind *Coriolan*,” Miyuki Nagaoka examines the rhetorical contrasts between the city and the country in this unfinished political poem by Eliot. As he brings some of Eliot’s “Commentaries” mentioning agriculture to bear on “*Coriolan*,” Nagaoka suggests that underlying the “literary and historical grounds” for Eliot’s estimation of agrarian life and culture, there is a “third ground, a religio-poetic one” (95). Reading Eliot’s later work and his perspective on agriculture through the frame of a search for a “religio-poetic” orientation upon a metaphorical “ground” remains a coherent perspective able to account for Eliot’s treatment of the insubstantiality of surfaces and thought

within his early urban poetry of the streets and vacant lots as he was trying to find his epistemological footing within his cultural environment through poetry.

Nagaoki posits that the “religio-poetic ground for Eliot’s appreciation of country life” rests in how an agrarian way of life, as a whole tradition, keeps people in contact with the natural order in which “life comes out of the earth and goes back into the earth” in which they are “living a perpetual Ash-Wednesday of penitence and humility” as they are “in a better position than city-dwellers to be mindful of the admonition that ‘dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return’ (Genesis iii. 19)” (Nagaoki 97/96). He suggests that this fits into Eliot’s view of religion “as distinguished from modern paganism, implies a life in conformity with nature,” keeping man within a consciousness of an order where “man, however he is improved by social and economic reorganization, by eugenics, and by any other external means possible to the science of intellect, will still be only the *natural* man, at an infinite remove from perfection” (Nagaoki 96/ Eliot commentary Oct. 1932). Nagaoki offers his definition of the “‘Good Life’ as envisioned by Eliot” as “a kind of life which is lived in humility in the awareness of the eternal and in which the awareness can be kept alive through generations” (98). The growth and vitality of this consciousness out of the dust, both of the earth and the human, out of humus and humility, is paralleled by the function of plant life in Eliot’s poetry. It is both dependent on and constituent of its culture, degraded by its deficiencies yet also able to contribute to further fertility through being absorbed into it. Eliot alludes to the regional and national significance of this orientation of consciousness in relation to the land in another commentary where he laments that

The American intellectual of today [unlike people in the early New England and the agrarian South] has almost no chance of continuous development upon his own soil and in the in environment which his ancestors, however humble, helped to form. ("A Commentary," *Criterion*, 10, No. 40 (Apr. 1931), p. 484.)

Here, there is a latent retrospective justification for Eliot’s method of transplantation and emigration out of American culture searching for an environment with deeper set traditions of “intellectual” soil. Eliot remarked in a 1931 commentary that “only in a primarily agricultural

society, in which people have local attachments to their small domains and small communities, and remain, generation after generation, in the same place is genuine patriotism possible” (Reeves 90, Criterion October 1931). In this sense, taking into account Eliot’s own transplantation to England, “genuine patriotism” is not construed national or racial terms, but in terms of regional and local communities and a deep cultural engagement with those particular regions in such a way that grounds a religio-poetic cultivation of orientation towards life.

In keeping with his metaphors of literature and criticism as fields to be cultivated for point of view and grounding in thought and sensibility, his agricultural views are accordingly centered around their impact on sensibility and processes of thought. He expanded this idea later in a 1938 Commentary: “To understand thoroughly what is wrong with agriculture is to understand what is wrong with nearly everything else: with the domination of Finance, with our ideals and system of Education, indeed with our whole philosophy of life... What is fundamentally wrong is the *urbanization of the mind*” (emphasis mine) (Reeves 93). In this emphasis on the nature of processes of production in the mind, Eliot’s approach to localism is also balanced by his own metropolitan location which connects him to the influx of ideas and culture from abroad. Eliot’s dislocation across cultures as a transplant, and then within English locale as a *metoikos*, disrupts his localism and rather positions him and his literary endeavors in England as reflexively mediated by cross-cultural influences.

Concentrating on the critical application of Eliot’s ground and garden metaphors, Eliot’s Norton Lectures, composed in the fall of 1932 in Cambridge, Massachusetts and later republished as a whole: *The Use of Poetry & The Use of Criticism*, construct an examination of the field of English poetry and its criticism which marks out the grounds of the limitations within the plot of English poetry, probing, excavating, and turning over the historical stratification of periods containing movements of British literature. Within this framework, Eliot repeatedly discusses the poetic insight, wit, and wisdom of various poets and periods in terms of depth, stratification,

substratum, and shallowness in relation to an allusive metaphorical ground level and 'culture' which is always changing. He discusses the relation of both native and foreign elements to this plot of a cultural medium. All of this contributes to an impression of Eliot's framework and viewpoint from which he discusses poetry and criticism as being repeatedly expressed in terms connotative and representative of metaphorical soil, ground, and growth. The significance of this framework of the objective correlative of soil and a garden to poetry and criticism is that it embodies the model of a whole and organic culture. It solidifies the linkage between Eliot's creative philosophy of poetic composition and his prose writings that venture toward cultural and social criticism. The depth and intensity of this linkage further emphasizes Eliot's insistence on coherent patterns and re-associative efforts of consciousness toward forming harmonious wholes out of dissonant, fragmented parts and processes.

Eliot begins this series with a few words on Charles Eliot Norton, establishing that "for him, the permanent importance of literature if not of dogma was a fixed point" (5). What Eliot emphasizes through his own writing in this work is the importance of a people's relation to and contact with literature as a fixed point. The nature of the fixed point in the sense of Eliot's usage, is not so much a narrow constraint, as it is a gravitational order of contact with a solid ground, or the milieu of an environment, for the construction of sensibility through language. Throughout the lectures, Eliot emphasizes the necessity of a capacity for change, the influx of foreign and diverse elements, and a pluralistic variety within this "fixed point" (5). The arc of the essays moves from a delineation of the native elements of genius and how they have been both defined and assisted by creative tensions with foreign influence, to an analysis of the stratifications of accruing movements and the depth of their sensibility, before arriving at a movement which comprehends the ultimate variety to establish the conscious feeling of permanent elements which transcend the ever-present "limitations of particular men in particular places and at particular times" (UPUC 135).

To contextualize this in terms of Eliot's earlier metaphor of the critic's individual "personal prejudices" as "tares," Eliot does not suggest that these "personal prejudices" or "tares" can be eradicated from one's feeling and taste (his own writing and remarks reveal quite a bit of prejudice and personal cranks). He does suggest that, through the cultivation of a regard for deeper feelings and unities within a larger consciousness, one can lay the groundwork for approaching a more universal sensibility which is validated by its consciousness of its own limitations. He maintains that his standard for judging poetry remains its relation to "All poetry," which he explains as "Everything written in verse which a sufficient number of the best minds have considered to be poetry" and takes further care to clarify that by "sufficient number" he means "enough persons of different types, at different times and places, over a space of time, and including foreigners as well as those to whom the language is native, to cancel every personal bias and eccentricity of taste (for we must all be slightly eccentric in taste to have any taste at all)" (132). The fixed point of a field which this creates is one that depends upon both its distinction and its fitting within the workings of a larger whole, and accordingly the necessary influence of cross-fertilization from other fields.

Eliot reuses the image of tares in commenting upon the literary production of an entire period: "We are apt, in thinking of the age of Shakespeare, to imagine something like a fertile field in which tares and fine wheat luxuriated, in which the former could not have been eradicated without risk to the latter. Let both grow together until the harvest" (32). In this sense, the value is in the cultural milieu that allows them both to flourish. The common cultural background and the instinct of growth native to the field supports both good and bad writing; however, in keeping with Eliot's metaphorization elsewhere of tares as personal prejudices and cranks, the 'tares' of poor writing would seem to represent the manifestations of native growth and which are lacking critical depth in their translation of their background and sensibility into expression.

When Eliot moves on to comment on the age of Dryden, he tells us that the “maturing of the English mind in this time is well seen by reading the treatises of Sidney and his contemporaries, and then the *Discoveries* of Jonson. He called his *Discoveries* also *Timber*, and it is timber with much undergrowth and dead wood in it, but also living trees” (45). In this remark, Eliot shows something of the background he is trying to place behind his own words; where I suggest Eliot’s own poetry and criticism as cultivating a garden or a field, Eliot alludes in his own commentary to the language of Jonson, who framed his *Discoveries* as

A wood—Sylva—of things and thoughts...from the multiplicity and variety of the material contained in it. For, as we are commonly used to call the infinite mixed multitude of growing trees a wood, so the ancients gave the name of Sylvae—Timber Trees—to books of theirs in which small works of various and diverse matter were promiscuously brought together” (Gutenberg).

While I have been suggesting that Eliot’s work contains elements of this same frame of composition, they are more subtle; the metaphor is more subdued in Eliot’s context as, in his own readjustment with place and time, his material is less organic, more chaotic. While his *corpus* is writing which enacts “various and diverse matter...promiscuously brought together,” the dissociation of the times and environment which acts upon his mind and his material in the process of poetic composition has wasted the wood. However, the roots of this metaphorical frame are most persistent as permanent elements of the English tradition within Eliot’s discussion of the relation between, imagination, sensibility, word, and sound. Eliot yokes together the poetic maxims of Jonson and Dryden through Jonson’s requisite of “imitation” that the poet be able to “convert the substances, or riches of another poet, to his own use,” language which is suggestive of biological processes, such as a seed deriving nourishment from the nutrients of its soil (46-47). Eliot transitions this into a passage from Dryden, which he quotes several times throughout the course of the lectures

The first happiness of the poet’s imagination is properly invention, or the finding of the thought; the second is fancy, or the variation, deriving, or moulding of that thought, as the judgment represents it proper to the subject; the third is elocution, or the art of clothing and adorning that thought, as found and varied, in apt significant and sounding words; the quickness of the

imagination is seen in the invention, the fertility in the fancy, and the accuracy in the expression (47).

This seems to describe exactly that process of Jonson's conversion of substance into poetry.

Eliot's exegesis of the passage picks out the word "devising" as suggesting "the deliberate putting together out of materials at hand" and inserts his opinion as "I believe that Dryden's "invention" includes the sudden irruption of the germ of a new poem, possibly merely as a state of feeling" (48). In this use, at this level, the "germ" of Eliot's metaphor is the poem as a plant, as a "state of feeling," a whole organism unto itself capable of growing out of itself into a larger sophistication (48). Eliot explains Dryden's "fancy" as an analogous "conscious elaboration" and the "deriving" of the thought as its dictionary definition, suggesting an action "to extend by branches or modifications" (49). Here, I would recall the lines from *The Waste Land*: "What are the roots that clutch? What branches grow?/ Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,/ you cannot say, or guess, for you know only/ a heap of broken images" (CPP 38). Supposing Eliot is using this image to speak of the composition of poetry, the scene where "the dead tree gives no shelter," stands in sharp contrast to the "living trees" that Eliot found among Jonson's *Timber* and his framework grounded in the English tradition (CPP 38/UPUC 45). The most important aspect of this quotation is Eliot's attention to the meaning of Dryden's "sounding words": "Observe that 'sounding' here means what we, just as approximately, should be likely to call 'musical': the finding of the words and the order of words expressive of the underlying mood which belongs to the invention" (49). This characterizes the sound of word order in a poem as enacting an Orphean katabasis of musical effect through levels of sensibility and arriving at a foundational mood or feeling, a firm ground at depth.

This sounding aspect of poetic composition resurfaces later in the series in Eliot's analysis of Matthew Arnold, where he builds upon these thoughts to define the "auditory imagination" as

the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end. It works through meanings, certainly, or not without meanings in the ordinary sense, and fuses the old and obliterated and the trite, the current, and the new and surprising, the most ancient and the most civilized mentality (111).

The auditory aspect of the sound of certain words and rhythms enacts a harmonizing effect on various degrees of sensibility as it descends through surface levels of thought and feeling and connects orders of meaning through the deeper levels of sensibility within the keener points of articulation occurring on the surface. Eliot's language of poetic soundings in relation to surface and depth, in this case, provides a new way to look at the poetics of sound in relation to the sense of groundlessness, fragmentation, and dissociation in Eliot's early poetry discussed in the first chapter.

The essay on Matthew Arnold becomes one of the most interesting of these lectures due to Eliot's approach to Arnold as a poet and critic in terms of shallow depth, instability, and inner uncertainty of foundations. Many of Eliot's remarks about Arnold seem to reflect his own view of literature in his own age. Fittingly, Eliot explains his valuation of critical "masks" in this essay by describing how "the critic assumes, in a way, the personality of the author whom he criticizes, and through this personality is able to speak in his own voice" (104). Thus in light of the first chapter's emphasis on groundlessness and instability, there lies a similarity in Eliot's remark "I feel rather than observe, an inner uncertainty and lack of confidence in Matthew Arnold: the conservatism which springs from a lack of faith, and the zeal for reform which springs from dislike of change" and that Arnold was likely "disturbed" by "looking inward and finding how little he had to support him" as he was "looking outward on the state of society and its tendencies" (112). As Eliot also defines the auditory imagination in this essay, these two concepts of the auditory imagination and the lack of support and inner confidence in regard to surroundings seem to be related.

Eliot also takes liberty to attribute some words about tradition to Arnold, putting his own words in Arnold's voice and coming quite close to his own sentiment expressed in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" and his extensive founding of his modern verse on classical foundations. Although Arnold did say that "The English poetry of the first quarter of this century, with plenty of energy, plenty of creative force, did not know enough," the following words may very well be Eliot's for his own age:

This poetry is very fine, it is opulent and careless, it is sometimes profound, it is highly original; but you will never establish and maintain a tradition if you go on in this haphazard way. There are minor virtues which have flourished better at other times and in other countries: these you must give heed to, these you must apply, in your poetry, in your prose, in your conversation and your way of living; else you condemn yourselves to enjoy only fitful and transient bursts of literary brilliance, and you will never, as a people, a nation, a race, have a fully formed tradition and personality (96-97).

Eliot's concerns with tradition and personality resurface here, along with the injunction to learn from foreign models of virtue in order to strengthen their formation. Eliot also insists that these are not only for poetry, but for incorporation into one's "way of living" as well. In the context of cultural depth as well as sounding of the auditory imagination, Eliot takes issue with another remark of Arnold's, that "Poetry is at bottom a criticism of life" (103). Eliot goes off on a tangent to say

At bottom: that is a great way down; the bottom is the bottom is the bottom. At the bottom of the abyss is what few ever see, and what those cannot bear to look at for long; and it is not a "criticism of life." If we mean life as a whole—from top to bottom, can anything that we can say of it ultimately, of that awful mystery, be called criticism? We bring back very little from our rare descents, and that is not criticism (103).

While there is mystery at the "bottom" of "life as a whole—from top to bottom," Eliot is quite definitive about the narrowness of critical vision, and even more assertive about the narrowness of trying to put the depths into definitive words.

Eliot describes the "most useful poetry" in terms of depth as working in a ploughshare-like capacity in its ability to "cut across all the present stratifications of public taste—stratifications which are perhaps a sign of social disintegration" (146) The unification of various

sensibilities through the most universal aspects of rhythm emphasizes the importance of musical elements and sound in the depth of the descent through stratifications of sensibility to that “substratum” which the best words of poetry express a contact with solidity through the “descent” through “life as a whole—from top to bottom” manifesting some vague sense of reality “at bottom” (103). The timing and movement of thought of *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* also marks the transition of Eliot’s efforts into writing plays, as he viewed the theatre as the “ideal medium” and the “most direct means of social ‘usefulness’ for poetry” in his developing thoughts on the role of his own poetry in relation to his new cultural environment of England (146). In 1934, Eliot acted upon this thought, and wrote the words for the verse drama “The Rock,” complete with a Greek chorus. Drawing heavily on religious allusions, the play expresses Eliot’s more social purpose as a cultural and social critique of modern British culture. As he employs simpler and more colloquial speech, Eliot’s figures of speech shift away from horticultural imagery to agricultural imagery, reflecting his preoccupation with agricultural in his *Criterion* commentaries, repurposing that perspective into poetic metaphors charged with religious and social meaning.

Tellingly, the character “The Rock,” is the central character also referred to as “The Witness. The Critic. The Stranger,” revealing Eliot’s vision for the social role of the critic (97). The character of The Rock employs a directive tone that carries heavy Biblical resonance, whose allusions carry the weight of the verse of Matthew 7:24 behind them: “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock” (KJV Matthew 7:24). The character of the Rock also echoes the Parable of the Sower, in further comments upon the relation of foundations and growth, saying “take no thought of the harvest,/ but only of proper sowing” (97). This resonance, if it pulls up the deeper text of the words in the ear, as Eliot’s allusive style has the intention doing, carries the metaphor of the parable regarding the contact of the word with the ground of consciousness, as a farmer

scattering his seeds where “some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root” (Matthew 13:5-6). This adds further resonance to Eliot’s concerns with depth and his imagery of soil in relation to thought and speech, as it requires a placement and order for the poetic understanding of a word to locate itself and grow out of.

This play continues Eliot’s framing of states of cultural and spiritual sensibility in terms of land; particularly a metaphorical landscape. The Rock counsels the listener that “they neglect and belittle the desert” for the “desert is not remote in southern tropics,/ The desert is not only around the corner,/ The desert is squeezed in the tube-train next to you,/ The desert is in the heart of your brother” (98). This further contextualizes the relation between inner sensibility and relation to cultural surroundings in regard to the cultivation of meaning through speech. Eliot also orchestrates the voices of choruses of both “WORKMEN” and “UNEMPLOYED” and alternates the “WORKMEN”’s chants of “Where the word is unspoken/ We will build with new speech,” a work that occurs “in the vacant places,” with the speech of the UNEMPLOYED as the vocal inhabitants of the region of “open places” where “only the wind moves/ Over empty fields, untilled/ Where the plough rests at an angle/ To the furrow. In this land...” (98-99). Both building and the working of the ground carry the work of the voice and speech, and in this imagery, Eliot’s vision of poetry occupies some of the same function as the plow in the “empty fields, untilled”; repeating the same work it did in the “vacant lots” of “The Preludes,” except transformed to more natural, religious imagery aimed at a broader audience (CPP 13). Eliot returns to imagery of groundlessness and dislocation with religiously laden plant metaphors to further this point, in that to avoid “waste and void” and for man not to be “dodging his own emptiness,” he requires a field of action, for “man without God is a seed upon the wind: driven this way and that, and finding no place of lodgment and germination” (107/108). While this does not depend on a fixed place, it

does depend on engagement with some element of fixity in an order of values beyond the self to structure an orientation toward life and the world.

In 1935, Eliot published another play “Murder in the Cathedral” the same year he wrote the first of the *Four Quartets*, “Burnt Norton.” The play is Eliot’s adaptation of the murder of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket. Eliot’s agrarian language shifts slightly, localizing the martyrdom of Becket in Canterbury as a “holy ground” by contrasting the political situation with the Chorus voices of the women of Canterbury as expressions of the natural conditions of the place. The play parallels the theme and movement of *The Waste Land*, in redeeming an infertile land and restoring a state of consciousness, but shows Eliot’s reworking of it from an orthodox Anglican religious perspective. Where *The Waste Land* utilizes disparate voices and events occurring within an individual consciousness as it struggles with its own coherence, “Murder in the Cathedral” enacts a similar treatment of the ground, yet constructs a communal perspective of an attitude toward English nationality and place within England which privileges religious consciousness and historical sense over political and national loyalties. While decidedly Christian and Anglican, Eliot’s choice of content and location prefigures another step in the beginning trajectory of the localized universality of *Four Quartets* and its synthesized lyric texture encompassing Eliot’s typical multitude of allusions and religious themes in a coherent vocal frame.

While *The Waste Land* begins with the April rains stirring life “out of the dead land,” “Murder in the Cathedral” begins with a description of the earth as “brown sharp points of death in a waste of water and mud” (CPP 37/175). The voices of the Chorus, made up of “the poor women of Canterbury” speak from a perspective attached to the place, as if they were the voice of the people *as a place*, speaking of the natural elements and conditions of the landscape, the grounds of its culture. Recalling *The Waste Land*, they use natural imagery and seasons to describe the state of their existence: “Now I fear disturbance of the quiet seasons: Winter shall

come bringing death from the sea,/ Ruinous spring shall beat at our doors,/ Root and shoot shall eat our eyes and our ears,/ Disastrous summer burn up the beds of our streams” (176). Once again, Eliot returns to phrasing movements, locations, and sensations in terms of the relation of feet; they are a dominant means of sensation, nearly as important as eyes and ears throughout his work. The Chorus tell us that “Some presage/ Of an act/ Which our eyes are compelled to witness, has forced our feet/ Towards the cathedral” (175). In this case the movement of the feet acts on a supersubtle sense that precedes a knowledge of what the eyes are going to see. As the priests discuss the return of Becket from his exile abroad in France and their own uncertainties about him, one priest affirms the sanctity of the religious office of the Archbishop and places his confidence with Becket, saying “We can lean on a rock, we can feel a firm foothold/ Against the perpetual wash of tides of balance of forces of barons and landholders./ The rock of God is beneath our feet” (179). This links their relation to place with a resistance to consciousness of larger patterns. Like the “dull roots” of *The Waste Land*, “feeding a little life with dried tubers,” in which Eliot expresses a spiritual state through metaphors of vegetation, the Chorus of Canterbury wishes to preserve their order of things as they are: “Living and partly living” (37/181). The people of Canterbury fear Becket’s disruption of their own settled grounding, their epistemological orientation to themselves and their place in the world, asking him to “leave us be, in our humble and tarnished frame of existence...do not ask us/ To stand to the doom on the house, the doom on the Archbishop, the doom on the world” (181). Eliot’s framing progression of effect here, from house to office to world, reflects a patterning he will expand upon that emphasizes a privileging of the local as an integral holding to preserve larger relations and patterns of culture.

Although the Chorus tends to sing of natural process and seasonal cycles, Eliot returns the focus from the voices of the Chorus to the ground itself as Becket undergoes the visitations of four tempters counseling him regarding his impending martyrdom. The voices of the Chorus

operate to signal the upheaval in his mind, singing of the ground as if it were the climate and landscape of his mind: “There is no rest in the house. There is no rest in the street. I hear restless movement of feet. And the air heavy and thick. Thick and heavy the sky. And the earth presses up beneath my feet...the earth is heaving to parturition of issue of hell” (194). Eliot then orchestrates the voices of all the tempters to speak at once, then all the priests, counseling Becket to avoid the “unreality” and “deception” of his own perspective (194). Eliot then shifts into a rapid alternation between the Chorus, Priests, and Tempters, each group uttering short, staccato questions and statements that create a heightened chaos of unease. The effect of all of this vocal dissonance is to unsettle the inner voice of Becket and shake it from its natural independence through the upheaval of the natural conditions of his surroundings and the voices acting upon his hearing from the outside.

The Chorus then describes the plight of the women saying “We know oppression and torture/ We know of extortion and violence,/ Destitution, disease...And meanwhile we have gone on living,/ Living and partly living,/ Picking together the pieces,/ Gathering faggots at nightfall,/ Building a partial shelter” (195). They then shift to a more direct religious contemplation, as “Sweet and cloying through the dark air/ Falls the stifling scent of despair”: “God always gave us some reason, some hope; but now a new terror has soiled us, which none can avert, none can avoid, flowing under our feet and over the sky; Under doors and down chimneys, flowing in at the ear and the mouth and the eye” (195). What I want to emphasize here, pausing for a moment to telescope outward to the larger picture of Eliot’s work, is Eliot’s echoing of himself; an act which shows not only the artistic integrity that shapes his career into a musical whole, but also the cultivation and growth and sophistication of the same ideas which “become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern” (LG 142). This section of “Murder in the Cathedral” contains precise echoes of Eliot’s “Preludes” published in 1917. The “restless movement of feet” and the “terror” which “has soiled us...flowing under our feet and over the sky” comes by way of the

soul “stretched tight across the skies...trampled by insistent feet...assured of certain certainties,/ The conscience of a blackened street/ Impatient to assume the world,” along with the temporal smoke and fog of “Preludes” and “Prufrock” that covers the city streets (13). Eliot’s “Preludes” ends with the pessimistic view of reality such that “The worlds revolve like ancient women/ Gathering fuel in vacant lots” (13). What is of note here is Eliot’s framing of the simile such that the worlds are the unstable element that revolves, while the women themselves ‘gather fuel in vacant lots.’ For the women of Canterbury, their England and their central significance in the play becomes Eliot’s more developed equivalent of the earlier “vacant lots,” and we now hear the voices of the “ancient women” as anchoring the reality of their location (13).

What Eliot emphasizes at this junction in the play, through the chaos of noise and voices of the chorus, is the necessity for Becket to form some kind of inner voice and judgment dictating the correct action. Becket is trying to avoid the “last temptation” and the “greatest treason”: “to do the right deed for the wrong reason” (196). The counter to ambition in his thought is expressed in natural imagery that conflates “Delight in sense, in learning and in thought/ Music and philosophy, curiosity/ The purple bullfinch in the lilac tree,/ The tiltyard skill, the strategy of chess,/ Love in the garden, singing to the instrument” (CPP 196). Far deeper than nostalgia for some kind of Edenic pastoral innocence, or even organicism, Eliot is framing an existential and epistemological orientation to relation of order that he expresses in images that have been charged with “personal saturation value” from “depths of feeling” that he has consistently re-used and developed along a consistent line throughout his career (UPUC 140/ 141). This section marks a location within the whole of his work that contributes to an internal music, without seeking to establish referential points outside of itself. The “delight in sense, in learning and in thought” recalls his words on Donne from “Whispers of Immortality” as one who “found no substitute for sense,/ To seize and clutch and penetrate” (CPP 196/32). “Music and philosophy” adds to the complex all of Eliot’s prior usage of musical elements, and emphasis on auditory imagination.

The “purple bullfinch in the lilac tree” compresses the charged image of Eliot’s poetic treatment of birdsong, from *WL*, to “Cape Ann”, to “Marina,” and “Burnt Norton” with the “lilac tree” which occurs in the opening section of *WL* and “Portrait of a Lady” (196). The reappearance of “the strategy of chess” in this context suggests an echo of the underlying feeling of “A Game of Chess” within *The Waste Land*. “Love in the garden” carries rich associations by itself, but is even more immensely suggestive when viewed within the whole of Eliot’s work; the mystical experience of the “hyacinth garden” in *WL*, the “garden where all love ends” in “Ash-Wednesday,” the mystical experience in the rose garden in “Burnt Norton,” as well as the garden scene in “La Figlia Che Piange,” all are present in this passage through the convergence of echoes. These are not so much Eliot’s allusions to literary material or other authors, but these are his own images repeated, echoing and creating resonance within his own poetic voice.

Part II of the play opens with intimations of spring carrying the religious overtones of the self’s “death in the Lord” which “renews” the world, as “the world must be cleaned in the winter, or we shall have only/ A sour spring a parched summer, an empty harvest” (201). The “harvest” contains a plenitude of Biblical resonances, but also resonates in the context of Eliot’s metaphors of cultivation of the fields of poetry and criticism and their yield. There is a concentration of the agricultural religio-poetic field metaphors and the combination of the sound of birdsong and children’s voices, as this offers another intensified instance of the groundwork of the Eliot sound-garden:

The ploughman shall go out in March and turn the same earth
He has turned before the bird shall sing the same song.
When the leaf is out on the tree, when the elder and may
Burst over the stream, and the air is clear and high,
And voices trill at windows, and children tumble in front of the door,
What work shall have been done, what wrong
Shall the bird’s song cover, the green tree cover, what wrong

Shall the fresh earth cover? (202).

While the fresh earth offers the possibility of regeneration and new growth, both the soil and the sound also function as the medium in which actions and meaning can become buried and obscured by the stratifications of time and patterns of life. This field is more of a burial ground, as the question is “what wrong/ shall the fresh earth cover?” and the unchanging repetition of the same action and song by ploughman and bird obscure new growth of life even as they live (202). Eliot, as a poetic ploughman, is turning over and over the same images and “same earth” to cultivate the field of his poetic creation and its harmony establishes a field of resonant images that localizes his personal voice within his broader material.

Eliot’s *Becket* markedly accentuates the characteristic self-assertive and subjectivity-orienting “here” voiced within the lyric of his poetry (207). The Chorus, representing the collective whole of the region and the cultural sensibility of the people give individual first-person voice to the sensibility of the ground and represent the depth and substratum underlying the stratification of all actions and perspectives that evade confrontation with ultimate reality, and reveal a deep foreknowledge: “I have smelt them, the death-bringers, senses are quickened/ By subtile forebodings; I have heard fluting in the nighttime,/ fluting and owls....I have felt the heaving of earth at nightfall, restless, absurd. I have heard/ Laughter in the noises of beasts that make strange noises” (207). The repetitive “I have heard” operates in conjunction with the “heaving of the earth” and the quickening of the “senses” (207). This voicing of the Chorus also repeats charged imagery from Eliot’s earlier poems and criticism as it articulates the substratum of deep feeling. I would read this as a sounding of the concrete grounding at the bottom of Eliot’s own epistemological uncertainty. It is here that he faces up to the “overwhelming question” that is not to be asked in “Prufrock” (3). The repeated “I have heard” in this context, is an echo of Prufrock’s line “I have heard the mermaids singing” (9). The next lines of the Chorus say “I have eaten/ Smooth creatures still living, with the strong salt taste of living things under sea” and

configures this as an apprehension and incorporation of the living order of organisms at the depth of both the sea floor and the earth, recalling Eliot's earlier concerns with depth in discussing poetry and criticism:

I have smelt

Death in the rose, death in the hollyhock, sweet pea, hyacinth, primrose and cowslip...

I have lain on the floor of the sea and breathed with the breathing of the sea-anemone, swallowed with the ingurgitation of the sponge. I have lain in the soil and criticized the worm (207).

This song of the Chorus articulates the moment of apprehending a singular, foreknown reality where "What is woven on the loom of fate... Is woven also in our veins, our brains,/ Is woven like a pattern of living worms/ In the guts of the women of Canterbury" (208). This offers a radically more transcendent re-working of the line in Prufrock which muses "I should have been a pair of ragged claws/ Scuttling across the floors of silent seas" (5). Eliot's use of the word "criticized" regarding the worm, seems quite out of place for the characters of his Chorus and suggests his own voice surfacing from a buried life within the voice of the chorus. The sensory apprehension of the sea creatures, the taste of salt, the smell of the flowers, and the 'criticism' of the worm from the perspective of the soil all configure as a form of communion with these natural organisms to make the knowledge of the Chorus "United to the spiritual flesh of nature" (208). This enacts a transformation of sensibility through language. According to Becket, as he tells the Chorus, this is their part of "the eternal burden" and will pass to be "changed in the telling" for "Human kind cannot bear very much reality"; this realization and the assent of his "whole being," rather than a synecdoche of ambition, will, or desire allows him to transcend Prufrock's limitations and "force the moment to its crisis" (209/212/6).

Becket also voices a perspective of his location and the significance of his movement in relation to proper placement within the larger apprehended pattern. Where I have emphasized the importance of the synecdoche of feet in Eliot's early poems, "Preludes" in particular, I would like to emphasize the significance of Eliot's Becket saying, at the point at which he waits for the

coming of the Knights, “All my life they have been coming, these feet” (209). This repetition works to give the effect that Eliot’s poetic feet, wrapped with “grimy scraps of withered leaves,” the “muddy feet,” the “yellow soles of feet” and the “insistent feet” traversing the “sawdust-trampled” “conscience of a blackened street” have been headed for this point since the beginning of his career (12/13). Once Becket is killed, the Chorus immediately has a psychological and verbal reaction to the state of the environment saying the “The land is foul, the water is foul, our beasts and ourselves defiled with blood./ A rain of blood has blinded my eyes. Where is England? Where is Kent? Where is Canterbury?/ O far far far far in the past; and I wander in a land of broken boughs” (214). The action occurring upon that plane in that place upon the land has defiled even its natural elements and unsettled not just an individual, but a collective epistemological relation to surface aspects of consciousness and environment.

The Chorus and Becket’s relation to place is strongly contrasted by that of the English Knights who kill him and afterward appeal directly to the audience on the basis of nationality, repeatedly saying “You are Englishmen” and that “We are four plain Englishmen who put our country first” and each give a lengthy and articulate rationalization of the murder (215). What distinguishes the women of Canterbury from the Knights, is their supersubtle sense arising from contact with deep substratum of feeling as figured by the imagery of the sea floor and the soil and the natural life within it. As the play comes to a close, the place itself of Canterbury as a holy place is of equal importance as the spiritual state of the people, as both Becket and the Chorus are grounded into the religious consciousness of the location.

This chapter has emphasized the trajectory of Eliot’s establishment of a religio-poetic ground in his perspective through his poetry, criticism, and drama heading into the mid-thirties. It has attempted to connect his use of imagery of working the soil and ploughing its depth for optimal cultivation across these three disciplines, as well as his advocacy for actual agriculture. Across its usages, Eliot’s intention remains consistent that the ultimate value of this focus is the

maintenance of a point of view or a surface of sensibility grounded on a stable foundation and order of values. Eliot's emphasis on the auditory imagination and its workings in both the creative imagination and the perceptive imagination joins with his employment of voice in both his poetry and drama. The final chapter will track the further elaboration of these themes and their subtle variation and pose the question of the larger significance of Eliot's repeated usage of particular imagery through his strategies of vocal framework and what place the image of the garden has in the vocalicity of his poetry.

Chapter 3: Sounding Literary Depth through Voice in the Poetics of the Garden

“Then there are other poets and poetry that turn out to be more like plants and growths inside you. It’s not so much a case of inspecting the produce as of feeling a life coming into you and through you. You’re Jack and at the same time, you’re the beanstalk. You’re the ground and the growth at the same time”

Seamus Heaney, *Stepping Stones*

The first two chapters have posited that Eliot’s treatment of ground and its solidity and depth manifests a grasping toward a solid perspective and point of view to found consciousness upon. His persistent use of botanical imagery in his poetry and metaphors of the work of cultivating a field in terms of criticism suggest the careful maintenance of this perspective framework as a ground in which and out of which a natural growth of consciousness would come to increase itself as the yield of that ground. In this chapter, I will continue an examination of these themes that oscillates from small particulars outward to the larger whole to arrive at the fullest development of the repeated garden imagery in *Four Quartets*. I will attempt to trace its ultimate significance back to its origins in order to better understand what the process represented by its growth means for reading both Eliot’s poetry and his views of culture outside of poetry, which, I argue, are not removed from his poetics. This chapter will show why the method of this paper, with its extensive quotations and digging through allusions and echoes, justifies the reading of Eliot’s poems as individual fragments of a whole corpus, which must be read at a certain depth. As we have discussed Eliot’s reference to both poems and the fields of poetry and regions of literature as wholes themselves, an examination of his own poetry in this context necessitates the form of this oscillating examination, shifting from the microscopic particularity of words to the larger whole of literature and culture. Due to the intensity of his concerns with the depth and quality of consciousness and sensibility, in both literature and criticism and his own work, Eliot did not produce poetic output unless it was intricately layered to a depth of solid

background through containing wholes of the voices of cultures, traditions, and poets as whole ‘fragments’ shored against his ruin in the form and structure of his own poetic voice.

The first of *Four Quartets*, “Burnt Norton” illustrates a marked development and notably intensified concentration of the imagery of plants and a garden as convergent with sound. Continuing this reading of plant and garden imagery into this poem, the plant life of the rose-garden of Burnt Norton would suggest the past growth and flowering of other men’s consciousness where the soil sense of their individual cultures and times are mixed and imposed upon each other within a concentrated pattern in a specific place. While the poem is rooted in the literal and concrete location of the Burnt Norton estate in England, it quickly transcends it, moving to more universal grounds through detached yet resonant language, where the word choice carries some of Eliot’s idea of lucidity in their individual clarity and simplicity, yet the language achieves density through their patterning, and the echoing allusions embedded in the language that ranges from the Bible, to Greek myth, to Eastern religious philosophy, and numerous English literary references. As the ultimate development of the imagery in Eliot’s poetry, the place of the garden becomes capable of supporting the mystical experience through the contemporaneous presence of the prior voices, where “all is always now” and the presence of the plants signifies the embodied presence of the sounds of states of feeling inherent in the location (CPP 121).

Surface, Sound, and Sense in Burnt Norton

Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose-garden. My words echo
Thus, in your mind.

But to what purpose
Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves

I do not know.

Other echoes

Inhabit the garden. Shall we follow?

Quick said the bird, find them, find them,

Round the corner. Through the first gate,

Into our first world, shall we follow

The deception of the thrush? Into our first world (117-118).

“Burnt Norton”

Sound figuration is essential to the significance of the subject’s encounter with the place of the garden in “Burnt Norton” as surface and sound converge in the language of the poem. The imagery of feet in contact with a surface resurfaces here and suggests a much more meaningful relation as a correlative to language upon a ground, where “Footfalls echo in the memory” and “My words echo/ Thus in your mind” (CPP 117). While the rose garden is introduced amid abstract language of eternity as a place existing in an open state as “perpetual possibility/ Only in a world of speculation,” it is solidified through the grounding of motion and words in the mind and consciousness, where a shared perspective is created, as the speaker’s poetic creation enacts a bridging of the gap between subjectivities as it is “my words” which echo in “your mind” (117). As these sounds are “Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose leaves” without specified purpose, the following lines lead on to say “Other echoes/ Inhabit the garden” and exert a calling within the mind from its surroundings which call it “into our first world” (117/118). As the sounds are echoes, they recall a prior presence and action in which the “first world” of the sound occurred. Eliot’s heavily allusive style that is filled with echoes of the rhythms of prior words of other poets, writers, and texts enacts a similar function and creates a space in the consciousness for the presence of multiple voices and the feelings underlying the rhythm of the words.

In this segment of the poem, Eliot is repeating the imagery of a bird and birdsong in the garden, which is charged with not just his own resonance, but that of others, such as Keats’s

nightingale, and more specifically, Nathaniel Hawthorne's story "Buds and Bird Voices" which contains the same basic content and imagery of "the soil of thought, and the garden of the heart," and "withered leaves" which figure as "the ideas and feelings that we have done with" as well as a chorus of birdsong in which there is "expressed the sentiment of renewed life" (Hawthorne 828/830). In "Burnt Norton," an articulate bird asks of the echoes in the garden "Shall we follow?" and says "find them...through the first gate,/ Into our first world" (117-118). Hawthorne, whose "Buds and Bird Voices" also describes the world in terms of plant life in spring and discusses the relation of subjectivity to it in terms of being able to see afresh and access the "renewing power of the spirit" and enter the authenticity of a "first world" through vital thought and the ability to "have our feet again upon the turf" (829/830). Eliot's echoes of footfalls in the memory enact Eliot's echoing of other writers in the creative element of his poetic memory.

Through his own poetic voice, Eliot uses the sound of his own echoing of imagery as a means to bring the listener into the presence of prior ideas and feelings, which have their own life as they "inhabit the garden" of his work (as well as his readings and experience) to the extent that they are heard and felt; an auditory sensation that increases as he concentrates the resonance of their multiple associations. Eliot configures this connection through the auditory imagination as the musicality of time in this place is unheard, yet apprehended as the speaker articulates hearing the sound where "the bird called, in response to/ The unheard music hidden in the shrubbery" (CPP 118). In the poetic imagery of these lines, the music becomes most directly merged *in* the plants. Eliot also places a point of view within the unheard echo and musicality in the plants as "the unseen eyebeam crossed, for the roses/ Had the look of flowers that are looked at" (118). As the plants contain both an "unheard" music and an "unseen eyebeam," they are representative of the manifestations of a more super-subtle sensibility. Eliot's use of pronouns in "find them" marks the "echoes" that "inhabit the garden," as the "they" found within the "first world" where

“There they were, dignified, invisible/ Moving without pressure, over the dead leaves” (117-118). In this sense, the words suggest an entrance through the “first gate” by way of the “unheard” sound, which brings them into contact with the pre-verbal and pre-linguistic ground of “What might have been and what has been... which is always present” (118).

The disorienting effect of Eliot’s vague and allusive language forces the reader to rely on the ear alone, like most modernist poets, but we are struck by the repeated imagery of “echoes” and the variety of ways in which it contextualizes itself in each repeated occurrence. First it is “footfalls” which echo, then it is words, and through these echoes, the reader is told that “other echoes” inhabit the garden, as a place in which the speaking poet has heard these sounds and the context in which we, as readers, place the poet hearing and speaking these sounds. This achieves a significance built upon the aural resonance of the associations within these lines, but contains a deeper sound due to the depth of associations built around these images and their diverse associations in various repeated contexts which have developed over the course of Eliot’s poetry.

The feet of Eliot’s early poetry which merely stood in for an expression of synecdoche and the narrow sight of a fragmented subjectivity now fall upon a solid surface and create a sound which echoes in the memory. The solid surface and sound persisting as a whole moment in the memory through echo should be compared to his earlier works where the prefiguring use of the same basic imagery creates an echo through the corpus of his whole poetics. In “Rhapsody On a Windy Night,” the speaker walks at midnight in an urban street where shadowy “lunar incantations/ Dissolve the floors of memory” and each streetlamp in the dark “Beats like a fatalistic drum” as the “spaces of the dark...shakes the memory/ As a madman shakes a dead geranium” (14). Memory here remains the constant word which pivots in various contexts yet remains constant through the functioning of its poetic symbolism both within this poem and in the linkage to “Burnt Norton.” In “Rhapsody,” memory is both the dissolvent floor upon which the speaker fails to establish “clear relations,” but it is also an internal aspect of consciousness which

is shaken by the dark night through a simile in which the memory is a “dead geranium” (14). The speaker’s consciousness uses sound through a simile to express the state of his perception of, not just the street, but his existential relation to reality as like the beating of a “fatalistic drum” (14). The two opening stanzas of both poems contain a walking figure upon a surface plane, mediating consciousness through the sound of impact upon a surface, and flowers. The growth of spiritual vitality and consciousness as Eliot undergoes some evolution of poetic capacity and orientation to the world reflects the poetic transformation of the memory as a “dead geranium” shaken by a madman, to the mystical Edenic rose-garden where “all time is eternally present” (14/117). The persistence of Eliot’s poetic imagery, re-used and re-used again with slightly different variations and soundings, works to create a variety of harmonizing musical effect that is grounded in a poetic landscape of images and sounds that allows Eliot both an element of constancy and the foundation of a pattern to build upon and elaborate.

As Eliot’s writings about the poetic composition process and literary tradition, along with the previous contextualization of his use of garden and plant imagery have shown, Eliot is doing more than echoing his own images—there are other voices present in the material and the words of his poems. No instance in his poetry better attests to this than the “other echoes” which “inhabit the garden” as a localized context of image and sound pattern within the poetic structure of “Burnt Norton” (117). To begin with one beginning, as Eliot’s ever present concern for depth and stability converges with his solidified stance on religion at this point in his career, we will lay the Biblical allusions first and work upward with layers from there. When Eliot uses the words “the leaves were full of children” in conjunction with “Human kind cannot bear very much reality” and ends “Burnt Norton” with an image of “children in the foliage,” we know he is talking about only the speaker’s consciousness within the rose-garden at Burnt Norton, but the words cannot help but recall the beginning of the Christian tradition in still resonant imagery of the Garden of Eden (118/122). This is one instance of Eliot’s plumbing the religio-poetic and

literary depths of the accumulated ‘cultural’ soil of tradition to strike a resonance in the state of the modern mind.

Eliot plants the roots of this connection deeper through more specific connotations that also recall a distinct grasp of particular moments in Genesis, which are loaded with their own symbolic resonance of meaning. The conjunction of the sound of footsteps, echoing voices, and children in the leaves has its own solid growth point from the moment after Adam and Eve have eaten the fruit of the tree and had their eyes opened and realized their nakedness: “And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden” (Genesis 3:8). The language of this verse leaves open some room for ambiguity that Eliot capitalizes upon in his own repurposing of the material. Do ‘they’ hear the voice while *they* are walking in the garden? Or do they hear the *voice* of God walking in earthly garden? The mechanics of this complex of images of the sound of walking on path is one Eliot has used again and again throughout his poetry, but only places it within the context of a garden in his later career. To briefly cite one of his plays, Eliot’s reuse of extremely similar language regarding walking in a rose-garden creates a firm resonance with “Burnt Norton” and its other echoes. In his play “The Family Reunion,” Eliot does mention gardens in an English estate, but the main resonance here is in the symbolic value of the images of the garden occurring in the speech of two characters speaking to each other:

I only looked through the little door
When the sun was shining on the rose-garden:
And heard in the distance tiny voices
...And then I was only my own feet walking
Away, down a concrete corridor
In a dead air. Only feet walking

And sharp heels scraping. Over and under

Echo and noise of feet.

I was only the feet, and the eye

Seeing the feet: the unwinking eye

Fixing the movement. Over and Under. (CPP276-277)

This movement and its sound is representative of a movement firmly located within the consciousness, as the correlative of a character saying “I only know that I made a decision/ Which your words echo,” the strain of which is depicted by the chorus’s singing that “We do not like the maze in the garden, because it too closely resembles the maze in the brain” (279/290). The resonance between these instances marks a certain ground of consciousness that Eliot returns to repeatedly in his poems, seemingly more for the value of what he cannot say, than what he can say. Nevertheless, the echoes of this movement in the rose-garden of “Burnt Norton” have all the more meaning because of it.

Without forcing too much theological interpretation, the bird’s response to the “unheard music in the shrubbery” in “Burnt Norton” mimics Adam’s response to the Lord calling for him as he hid in the trees, to which he replies “I heard the sound of you in the garden...and I hid myself” (Genesis 3: 10). This transitions the movement and placement within the garden even more acutely to one bound up with the auditory imagination. What makes the resonance a complete whole is the harmony between the level of the underlying mood behind “Burnt Norton” and in the order of specific ‘sounding’ and echoing words themselves such as “footfalls echo in the memory” which are associated with voice as “My words echo” and the comprehensive resonant capacities of the garden’s plant life to contain both the “unheard music” and the laughter of children, communicating a reflexive double resonance embodied in its material (118).

The greater significance of the resonance coming from this specific point in the Christian tradition is how it is a whole moment of experience with its own meaning and context which fit

inside that of the poem. The nature of Eliot's poetry is to combine within a single poem a multitude of resonant and significant wholes which are independent of each other, yet become coexistent and contemporaneous within the same localized sound structure of the poem. The echoes of Hawthorne mentioned earlier in *Burnt Norton* remain as a whole meaning in combination with the echoes of Genesis, as Hawthorne himself was echoing Genesis in "Buds and Bird Voices" as well when he wrote about plant life in the "garden of the heart" saying that "There is no decay. Each human soul is the first created inhabitant of its own Eden" (829). Eliot's poetic growth of spiritual sensibility, shown by his meandering journey from the grubby streets of "Preludes" and "Prufrock" to the "dead land" of *The Waste Land*, to the garden as a place where the word and voice can be heard in *Ash-Wednesday*, coming now to the heavy Genesis echoes of "Burnt Norton," marks a journey backward, or downward by way of the auditory imagination through the accumulating waste and noise of civilization back to the Edenic garden and a spiritual state of sense where, among the living echoes that inhabit the garden, one can feel, through a "grace of sense" contact with a transcendent reality beyond the self (119).

My focus in coming to this point by way of all the emphasis on ground, soil, and garden imagery through his career is precisely to enter the garden of "Burnt Norton" with all the accrued weight and resonance of his earlier use of the same images to be folded into this reading of this garden. As his garden metaphors have grown up together with his literary commentaries and his poetry, it suggests in the context of these living echoes in the garden, a localization of states of transcendent feeling that operates much like Dante's descent into hell guided by Virgil and the contact with the words of conversational shades of familiar ghosts. The garden of "Burnt Norton" and *Four Quartets* is neither heaven nor hell; it contains significant elements of both Western and Eastern religious thought; it comprehends a vast range of literary and philosophical allusions, stands both in and out of time, and is both "England and nowhere" (139). This figurative garden, as well as its figurative musicality, is rooted in the comprehensive sensibility of a unified whole

of literary voices within a single dislocated, universal yet rooted plane of time, place, and feeling that is constructed through the auditory imagination. The spiritual state of the sensibility of the auditory imagination is one of the ultimate goals behind the ‘cultivating’ imagery and functions within Eliot’s poetry and criticism. The poem itself becomes a solid surface itself, sustaining the imagination as a garden of contemplation rather than the “helpless fields” that “rack the mind” from Eliot’s early poetry (IMH 15).

The echoes which inhabit the figurative garden are the living elements of the accumulation of voices which have gone beyond themselves and become incorporated into the medium of a figurative soil which repurposes the permanent and fruitful aspects of their vocal states of feeling. As the imagery of the garden and plants functions across the scope of Eliot’s work, this ground depends on the refinement and cultivation of the individual mind’s fertility, which in turn depends on its relation to the waste land and the desert, the city street, and the garden—a relation ultimately mediated by consciousness and speech. This creates a complex compositional dynamic within Eliot’s poetics. The uprooted discussion of the locality of this figurative garden, as “England and nowhere,” is up in the air, as it should be. It is not a place but a state of mind. It comes back to earth as it is grounded in Eliot’s creative poetics of composition and the relation between word, sound, and association. The musical aspect of sound and the sound of words has been touched upon in terms of Eliot’s idea of the auditory imagination. I would like to expand upon that concept of musicality and link it localization in the context of place and the placement of words and the images they attempt to speak for in the structure of a poem. In his essay on Dante, Eliot wrote about the localizing and particularizing associative nature of words in the context of English words being more local than Dante’s vernacular, as they are more geographically and linguistically distant from the Latin roots of Dante’s Italian. Eliot suggests that local words have a greater “opacity” or density, and that the beauty of these words is not in their singular lucidity, but in their relation and context, as “words have associations, and

the groups of words in association have associations, which is a kind of local self-consciousness, because they are the growth of a particular civilization” (SP 207). Eliot elaborates on this relation of words in place and adds a musical element to this explanation in his essay “Music and Poetry:

The music of a word is, so to speak, at a point of intersection: it arises from its relation first to the words immediately preceding and following it, and indefinitely to the rest of its context; and from another relation, that of its immediate meaning in that context to all the other meanings which it has had in other contexts, to its greater or lesser wealth of association (OPP 25).

The garden of Eliot’s poetry, as a place within his poetic imagery, seems to mark a point of departure for the musical associations of words, growing as it develops a greater fertility of associations and relations, operating as a point of intersection for Eliot’s poetic imagination and the medium of language. The echoing garden of “Burnt Norton” which begins *Four Quartets* is an image meant to help contextualize a consciousness of the localization of meaning in the arrangement and musicality of its own words.

While my argument is that the garden functions as the image of this idea of the musicality of locality and arrangement, where the flowers in a garden serve as an objective correlative of the localized arrangement of a word or group of words, the fifth section of “Burnt Norton” shifts the focus back to an explicit commentary on the poetics of language and musical sound: “Words move, music moves/ Only in time; but that which is only living/ can only die. Words, after speech, reach/ Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,/ Can music or words reach/ The stillness” (121). The “unheard music” within the shrubbery of the first section and the movement of the echoes and the listeners together “in a formal pattern/ Along the empty alley” within the order of the rose-garden suggests, in the multitude of echoes which are both words and inhabitants of the garden, a living order of stillness and meaning beyond time and the words of speech. As with *Ash-Wednesday*, the garden serves as a placement of “the Word within/ the world and for the world,” where both plants and words have a life beyond their individual life and time, as part of a meaningful arrangement on a fertile ground (65). The counter point to this in “Burnt

Norton” is the terrain where “The Word in the desert/ Is most attacked by voices of temptation” where “Words strain/ Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,/ Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,/...will not stay in place,/ Will not stay still” (121). The gardens found in both “Ash-Wednesday” and “Burnt Norton” function as a place in the consciousness in which the meaning and sensibility, in these instances a religious sensibility, beyond words holds firm and provides a fertile ground for meaningful cultural growth.

The significance of garden imagery and musicality is not just within sound and the movement of specific words but within the whole of a poem itself as a locality, and a poet’s entire body of work as a region. In “The Music of Poetry,” Eliot posits that “In the plays of Shakespeare a musical design can be discovered in particular scenes, and in his more perfect plays as wholes. It is a music of imagery as well as sound” and that scholars have shown “how much the use of recurrent imagery and dominant imagery, throughout one play has to do with the total effect” (30). The reason why I have been paying such exhaustive attention to disparate instances of images of gardens and sound throughout the entire scope of Eliot’s poetry and criticism is to emphasize precisely the nature of the musical effect the imagery has in the individual instance as a part of a larger musical whole, which is only to be heard by considering both the note and the harmony.

One of the main emphases of “The Music of Poetry” is an assertion of the validity of an approach to poetry through his own subtle definition of the music of poetry which leads to endorsing a mainly auditory reckoning of the life of the poem in the language. Eliot asserts that the training of the ear is of ultimate importance; an approach which necessitates the perspective of an approach “to the study not of poetry but of poems” (19). Eliot points out a goal of this approach as being “able to speak and hear them as the authors did” and says that rules of classifications of metres, of different numbers of “syllables and stresses in different places” are only “a simplified map of a complicated territory” (19). This metaphor utilizes the blending of

sound with geographical terms to describe an arrival at an understanding of poems and poets, which is not unlike a “passage...Into the rose-garden” of “Burnt Norton” among the echoes (CPP 117). In this metaphor, it would make sense that a listener might enter a horticultural region where this “complicated territory” is a localized arrangement of feeling in words that is representative of a unified tradition in which each poet occupies their own unique place in the order of the whole, has become grounded in their mind. In this sense, the garden, with its roses and echoes and musicality, becomes the metaphorical ground of linguistic composition “where prayer has been valid” and “every phrase/ and sentence that is right (where every word is at home,/ Taking its place to support the others” (139/144).

Eliot continues the metaphor of sound and region as he describes the feeling of being moved by language which is not understood, and suggests that this is the equivalent of “an imitation of instrumental music” employed because words will not convey the meaning as “the poet is occupied with frontiers of consciousness beyond which words fail, though meanings still exist” (23). The garden in “Burnt Norton,” viewed in this context, marks a field of instrumental music in which one is conscious of some order of meaning without exact words, but the grounds give the foundation of order within a cultural tradition for the development of consciousness and inner voice.

That foundational order which acts as a ground for consciousness in this metaphor, can be traced to, not so much the poetry and words of prior poets, but the consciousness and sensibility which can be apprehended through their words and poetry. In “Poetry and Drama” Eliot suggests that a “peculiar range of sensibility” can be expressed by poetry at its “moments of greatest intensity” where “at such moments, we touch the border of those feelings which only music can express” (OPP 93). Nevertheless, Eliot asserts that the poetry “must not stray too far from the ordinary everyday language which we use and hear” and it is the poet’s task to perform the function of grounding those ungraspable musical feelings in everyday language. Conversely,

the poet's sensibility which expresses that wrestling with meaning serves as the ground upon which the student of poetry must work, and the garden they must find their way into. Eliot's emphasis is acquainting the listener with, not the words, but the craftsmanship, as "we must accept the practices of great poets of the past, because they are practices upon which our ear has been trained and must be trained" (20). This is only a further development with added musical ornamentation of the concept Eliot was insinuating in his earlier metaphors of literature and criticism as fields which required practices of discipline and cultivation.

Through the "eyes of a familiar compound ghost": Literary Shades of Eliot in the Echoing Garden

Eliot's masked commentary on various poets reflects him at work training his own critical and creative ear, which manifests itself through his poetry as the development of a unique position grounded in the garden of literary voices. This essay has emphasized different aspects of his critical engagement with other poets over the course of his development according to the focus of each chapter. Essentially, his relation to them is that of a craftsman honing his practice on the same grounds to enrich and solidify the depth and solidity of his own poetic background. The purpose of the commentary on these essays is that they allow for a reading of Eliot's own views beneath the critical mask. As he reads them, we read him, and in the progression of this essay, we can observe differences in his reading of authors, but more importantly, the way he changes his view of his own writing in relation to them. In the first chapter, American transplants like Henry James and Nathaniel Hawthorne contextualized Eliot's metaphors of soil as the nourishing cultural medium of an environment for art and the creation of a point of view detached from provincial insularity, resembling the task of cultivating a garden from rocky soil. The perspective of that grounding which manifested in his poetry was the fragmentary synecdoche of feet upon grimy city streets making their way toward a waste land of a degraded environment. Although Dante was notably present in Eliot's early work, the second chapter outlined Eliot in

relation to Dante in the context of the local and international language of poetry, as Eliot had situated himself in England and most explicitly made poetic use of his encounter with Dante in his roughly contemporaneous essay on Dante and his poem “Ash-Wednesday.” This section will emphasize Eliot’s literary models as he approaches his craft as a poet grounded in England. It will show how his poetic framework makes use of imperialism and classicism to create a conciliatory harmony between the particularity of the local and regional in tension with the national and international to form patterns of a natural whole in chaotic, violent times.

Although the discussion of subterranean depth, auditory imagination, and the descent of a chthonic katabasis is meant to dredge up the echoes of Dante and Virgil’s shade, Eliot’s emphasis on the local within the universal necessitates beginning with the immediacy of England and its own imperial history. As this chapter is grounded in the garden of “Burnt Norton,” the closest echoes to it in place and time come from Rudyard Kipling. Jed Esty and other scholars have marked the parallel resonances between the echoing garden of “Burnt Norton” with Rudyard Kipling’s story “They,” in which a motorist lost in the English countryside arrives at a country estate and hears the laughter of the spirits of dead children in the gardens. Eliot’s line “So we moved and they, in a formal pattern” hints at an intertextual dance involving not only the story “They,” but an even more particular echo of a poem of Kipling’s titled “We and They,” a poem of intricately patterned rhyming which pivots between the viewpoints of foreign people regarding each other, which ends with the context of emigration or transplantation: “every one else is They:/ But if you cross over the sea,/ Instead of over the way,/ You may end (think of it!) looking on We/ As only a sort of They!” (*Debits and Credits*, Kipling). While this is a tenuously rooted echo within the garden of “Burnt Norton” it does ground the movement of a transpersonal international viewpoint within the consciousness of a local place. It also parallels Eliot’s own movement from America to England and his viewpoint as a resident alien. Esty observes that the connection between Kipling’s garden in “They” and Eliot’s exemplifies “a larger turn away from imperial

settings...toward a romance with rural England” which Eliot celebrates in his 1941 essay on Kipling (Esty 138). What I wish to emphasize in Eliot’s essay on Kipling is how soil remains a prominent image of his engagement with another author and undergoes a nuanced elaboration from earlier his view and usages. His commentary in this essay now uses a more literal approach. The contextualization of soil in his literary criticism is no longer metaphorical, but argues for literal agriculture as a means of literary and cultural recuperation of a psychological integrity of sensibility. This more literal agriculture is still bound up with a training of the ear through auditing verse which grows out poet’s sensibility in close contact with the earth. Both of Kipling’s locations, India and rural England, which he brings to bear on his transplantation to Sussex, are groundings of a mentality in contradistinction to the values of a “country of industrialized mentality” and the mental organization which is a product of capitalist imperialism, which manifests itself “here and abroad” (OPP 291/ CPP143).

Eliot asserts that “Kipling was not trying to write poetry at all,” but calls the purpose beneath Kipling’s poetry that of the “ballad-writer,” by which he means the conveyance of a full understanding through the first hearing where the simplicity of the form contributes to an “incantatory effect” (269). Eliot’s appreciation of Kipling’s ballad-like verse is the way its form operates at the level of culture where “poetry develops a conscious virtuosity, requiring a virtuosity of appreciation on the part of the audience” (269). Any reader of Eliot’s verse will recognize that Eliot’s form demands a similar virtuosity out of its audience, but presents a more formidable barrier to the ear. Kipling’s use of ballad form seems far closer to Eliot’s 1932 definition of “the most useful poetry” as cutting through all the “stratifications of public taste—stratifications which are perhaps a sign of social disintegration” (UPUC 146). Eliot sees the musical aspect of Kipling’s ballad verse as being immediately perceptible on the surface level and also bringing up a deeper meaning to satisfy a deeper intellectual probing as well. This had the effect of uniting a diverse audience through aiming at a universal appeal through the multilayered

depth of meaning. Eliot's incorporation of this into the simpler language and more cohesive vocality in his later work suggests a reconciliation between his early avant-garde modernist poetry to the more subtle and universal layering of his later work. As Eliot's increasingly modern audience might have been less diverse in England, it was also lacking in a shared unifying sensibility—requiring Eliot to try to probe a deeper foundation through the obscurity of his verse.

Once again, Eliot brings up the question of depth to defend Kipling against charges of shallowness, saying that “Kipling knew something of the things which are underneath, and of the things which are beyond the frontier” (279). Reading the early Eliot gives the reader a sense of the feeling that there is nothing underneath or beyond, while the later poetry of Eliot gives a much greater sense of stability in what is underneath the words, in part, a sense which can only come from familiarity with his work. Eliot suggests that Kipling's “exceptional sensitiveness to environment” arises from “a peculiar detachment and remoteness from all environment” (282). The value of this remark is that it reflexively serves to contextualize Eliot and his own verse as coming from the perspective of a *metoikos*, a resident alien, who, as he told Mary Hutchinson in 1919, wanted to know all the “tradition and background” of the place and people he lived among. Eliot calls Kipling's “universal foreignness” the “reverse side of his strong feeling for the Empire, for England and for Sussex” (282). Eliot's own foreignness and his impersonality is employed as a double-sided reflexivity in his poetic form, particularly in *Four Quartets* and balances his international cosmopolitanism with his own affinity for the smallest units of the local in England such as the rose-garden of Burnt Norton and the churches of East Coker and Little Gidding. The multivocality and musicality of Eliot's poetic form as a medium is essential to this reflexivity and the range of sensibility that it manifests.

We should also read Eliot's remark that Kipling “remains somehow alien and aloof from all with which he identifies himself,” with a regard for his own approach to Englishness and regionalism. The benefit of this point of view; however, remains bound by conditions of

environment as Eliot reveals his own religious concern when he says that it is Kipling's being "of India" and his "relation to India" which determines and forms Kipling's "religious attitude...an attitude of comprehensive tolerance" (283). Kipling's "comprehensive tolerance," Eliot asserts, arises not from unbelief, but an ability to encounter a variety of religious beliefs with understanding and a detached identification because of his time within the diversity of India and his own Anglo-Catholic background. Eliot connects this perspective to the aim underlying Kipling's poetic imagination: "to make people see—for the first condition of right thought is right sensation...If you have seen and felt truly...you may be able to think rightly" (289). This emphasis on the importance of right sensation as a necessity for comprehensive tolerance brings us back to Eliot's early commentary on Henry James's critical capacities in fiction as maintaining the basis of a point of view, which he explained through the metaphor of the painstaking cultivation of a *Jardin des Plantes* (SP 152).

The regional character of the French literary perspective was not absent from that metaphor, but when he talks about Kipling's attitude toward religion in 1941, it is not metaphorical—he is saying directly that growing up in India cultivated Kipling's perspective of sensation and thought regarding religion and humanity. To return this to Eliot's own evolving images of gardens in his poetry, particularly as they mature in *Four Quartets*, we can see the widening of a comprehensive tolerance. Its Christian allusions are not more subdued, but they are masterfully blended with Eastern philosophy in Eliot's relation to England, rooted in the same ground where the speaker of "Burnt Norton" envisions a lotus in the English rose-garden.

As we have discussed in the previous chapter the relation of religio-poetic sensibility and perspective relating to ground in Eliot's advocacy for the type of mindset engendered by agricultural societies in his *Criterion* commentaries of the early thirties, we find the same preoccupation elaborated yet again in his Kipling essay. There are certainly elements of the agrarian nostalgia latent within colonial imperialism in both Kipling's and Eliot's writings, the

geopolitical and cultural significance of which is well covered in Jed Esty's *A Shrinking Island*. However, as Eliot is concerned with a deeper aspect of Kipling's verse on a lower level of sensation, I am concerned with a more particular examination of how and why Eliot is again using terms of soil to engage with his reading of Kipling. Eliot discusses the development of Kipling's view of empire as "a view that expands and contracts at the same time," as at the end of Kipling's movement of dwelling first in India, then America, and finally England, where "a particular corner of England became the centre of his vision," gave him a location which allowed him at the same time to take a "larger view" and see "the Roman Empire and the place of England in it" (286). The proper place of these remarks about Kipling's vision is in the context of Eliot's own work as he is composing the universality of medium in his own vision from particular corners of England in *Four Quartets*, expanding and contracting perspective at the same time. The question is what does the role of soil have to do with this in connection to poetry?

I would like to take a moment to address the mode of my analysis, and emphasize that I think it necessary to carefully track the developments of Eliot's ideas which will resurface in his poetry in order to justice to the image as we find it: "In my beginning is my end" (123). We find the connection of religious attitude and sensation with soil, in Eliot's use of the word discussing what he thinks is most important in Kipling's work: "Kipling's vision of the people of the soil" in which "it is not a Christian vision, but it is at least a pagan vision" which contradicts the order of values of materialism, consumerism, and industrialism and represents "the insight into a harmony with nature which must be re-established if the truly Christian imagination is to be recovered by Christians" (292). The use of poetry as a medium, a metaphorical soil to 'people' with multivocal qualities of feeling, by both Kipling and Eliot functions as a means of transmission of that initial "insight" of the imagination whose values are ordered upon a connection with nature. Kipling, as Eliot says, was trying to convey, "not a programme of agrarian reform, but a point of view unintelligible to the industrialized mind," a remark which we must again turn upon Eliot's own

work and use as a lens to regard his own use of garden imagery as it progresses from his early urban American environment and street poems to his later poetics of the universalized garden of the English countryside. With the musicality of this imagery, his purpose is not merely to write poetry, but use it to cultivate the transformation of sensibility and feeling towards a religio-poetic ground to work against the prevalence of the industrialization and urbanization of thought in perspective. What Eliot exemplifies in the musical vision of the peasant folk dancing in “East Coker,” where they are “Keeping time,/ Keeping the rhythm in their dancing” by “Lifting heavy feet...Earth feet, loam feet” in a “mirth of those long since under earth/ Nourishing the earth” is a parallel of the movement between the ‘we’ and ‘they’ of the echoes “accepted and accepting...in a formal pattern” in the garden of “Burnt Norton”(CPP 124). As he moves from describing a movement in concordance with pure sound, to visions of actual people, Eliot uses 16th century vernacular to describe them in “necessarye coniunction...which betokeneth concorde,” in order to “give the imagery in that section a local habitation in time,” as he explained in a letter (Poems of T.S. Eliot 934). His intention, here, was to do exactly what he points out in Kipling’s later work which “aims...to give at once a sense of the antiquity of England, of the number of generations and peoples who have laboured the soil and in turn been buried beneath it, and of the contemporaneity of the past” (291). Eliot’s *The Use of Poetry and The Use of Criticism*, written nine years earlier, endeavors, in slightly different language, but with the same intention, gives a sense of the generations English writers who have labored on the same literary soil, been buried beneath it, and given up some insights of permanent value from their buried life.

In both writers, the content and form springing from their view of the poetic medium emphasizes “the essential contact of the civilization with the soil” (287). The scope of my argument details how Eliot’s early American environment and consciousness precluded the development of the “roots that clutch” and did not allow him a working ground for the exercise of his “geographical and historical imagination” (CPP 38/ OPP 286). What the latter half of his

career, and the flourishing gardens within it, suggest, is Eliot's realization of what he sees in Kipling as "an imaginative grasp of space," which, having England situated within its roots, enables him to better proceed toward "a similar achievement in time" (291). What Eliot is hoping to achieve in time, at this point is to become a great European, a concept he describes in the essay "Goethe as the Sage" as necessitating the criteria of "Permanence and Universality" (245). In the context of this late career commentary on Goethe, we can observe a continuity of Eliot's perspective regarding the region of Europe, in looking back to a remark he made regarding Henry James, which is equally revealing of his own colonial anxiety: "It is the final perfection, the consummation of an American to become, not an Englishman, but a European—something which no born European, no person of any European nationality, can become" (Crawford 291).

Kipling has sufficed to help us trace the reach of Eliot's grasping for background in terms of agrarian ideals and Empire in relation to England, but this grounding in the English countryside through Kipling brings us to a region where he can guide us no further, and we see that Eliot takes up Virgil for his next voice to ground his vision of an ideal reality in England. While Eliot has mentioned Virgil before in essays and allusions in his earlier poetry, his essays "What is a Classic?" (1944), "The Social Function of Poetry" (1945), and "Virgil and the Christian World" (1951) offer explicit commentaries that serve as contextualization for Eliot's own application of both a point of view of agrarianism within empire and a point of view which aligns his poetic method with that of Virgilian method; Eliot has changed none of his views, only refined them and merged elements of these prior artists into the background of his own voice. As Eliot pays attention to Virgil's *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and the *Aeneid*, I would like to emphasize the reversed trajectory for Eliot as a modern poet and *metoikos*, as his early journeying poetry of the streets and *The Waste Land* correspond as fragments of a larger journey of the mythical structure of the *Aeneid*, after which, transplanted and grounded, Eliot then finds himself able to dig in to cultural location in order to write poetry such as *Four Quartets* as his own modern version of

Virgil's *Georgics*. Gareth Reeves's *T.S. Eliot: A Virgilian Poet* cites the approach of Jackson Knight's in *Roman Vergil* that links Eliot's poetic "method" to Virgil's through their dependence on derivation from past literature and a re-harmonizing of material through "audially-delivered construction" (3). This re-aligns with my own line of thought in which this method and poetics of construction constitutes the ground underlying the experience in Eliot's echoing rose-garden in "Burnt Norton" (3). Knight also connected Eliot's and Virgil's auditory method through quoting Eliot's Kipling essay in which he claimed that "the poem may begin to shape itself in fragments of musical rhythm and its structure will first appear in something analogous to musical form" (3). My insistence is that the echoing vegetable growth of Eliot's garden and the auditory experience in the garden is an objective correlative of that same poetic structure growing out of deep rhythms and is "analogous to musical form" (3). This functions to embed Eliot's poetry with a metapoetic element, as well as literary depth, to emphasize the work of the auditory imagination in its creation and its reading.

In "What is A Classic?" Eliot discusses the originality and "literary creativeness" of any society and how its creative work testifies to "civilized consciousness and conscience" on the scale of a "plane of manners" in which "all of the levels at which we may consider a particular episode, belong to one whole" (SP 119/124). The whole is that of the sensibility grounded in language, in language "as a living language and the language in which we live" within which "the classic, within its formal limitations, express the maximum possible of the whole range of feeling which represents the character of the people who speak that language" (126/127). I would again emphasize the recurrence of Eliot's concept of wholes, which is embedded in his idea of the classic, and he claims that "without the constant application of the classical measure, which we owe to Virgil more than to any other one poet, we tend to become provincial" (129). This insinuates a provinciality within language leading to a narrowness of "range of feeling" (127).

Eliot's concept of the metaphorical garden undergoes a further evolution in the context of

Virgil and the classic standard, as Eliot's comments upon the relative provinciality of eighteenth century English writers compared to the standards of the broad perspective of Shakespeare and Milton, by saying that "the eighteenth century had perfected its formal garden, only by restricting the area under cultivation" (121). In this context, Eliot's image of the garden takes on a representation of the vitality of the structure and the "formal limitations" of the classic as a region within a living language (127). Eliot solidifies the metaphor of cultivating language with literature as plant growth, when he says that, in English and French poetry, "the greatest poets have exhausted only particular areas" and "every supreme poet...tends to exhaust the ground he cultivates, so that it must, after yielding a diminishing crop, finally be left in fallow for some generations" (125). Eliot then cites the fertility of the English language as lying with its resistance to the classic form because of its being "the most various of great languages in its constituents" and tending to "variety rather than perfection" with "the greatest capacity for changing and yet remaining itself" (126). Elsewhere, Eliot cites the English language as being the most remarkable "medium" for poetry because of its "variety of elements" in the vocabulary and meters assimilated from other languages, each of which "brought its own music," and shows the layered stratification of the distinct subtleties of the interaction of the residual "rhythm of early Saxon verse, the rhythm of the Norman French, the rhythm of the Welsh, and also the influence of generations of study of Latin and Greek poetry" so that "the English language enjoys constant possibilities of refreshment from its several centres" when poets of various backgrounds "show their differences in Music" when writing in English (Christianity and Culture 187).

In this context, the garden of Eliot's modern British poetry symbolizes a patch of ground in which the fusion of heterogeneous elements and intricate orders of arrangement contextualize the relations of individual particularities within a bounded whole. The concern for the fertility of the soil of the garden also necessitates the introduction of outside elements, yet solidifies the garden as a fixed place "changing and yet remaining itself" (126). Here, Eliot's emphasis on

depth is clarified within this relation to place where his definition of provinciality is “a distortion of values, the exclusion of some, the exaggeration of others, which springs, not from a lack of wide geographical perambulation, but from applying standards acquired within a limited area, to the whole of human experience; which confounds the contingent with the essential, the ephemeral with the permanent” (129).

Eliot’s English garden, at its best, functions as a symbol for the reverse; the application of universal standards from the “whole of human experience” within a space re-used for successive generations where one is able to transcend the modern “provinciality, not of space, but of time” (129). To make a leap from the Eliot’s metaphor of the garden as the “formal limitations” of the comprehensive area of a classic “whole” to be cultivated within a language, the garden image in his poetry functions to illuminate Eliot’s “concern...with the corrective to provincialism in literature.” Eliot translates this element of poetry as a medium to a perspective of the universal communication grounded in location with his remark that “As Europe is a whole (and still, in its progressive mutilation and disfigurement, the organism out of which any greater world harmony must develop), so European literature is a whole, the several members of which cannot flourish, if the same blood-stream does not circulate through the whole body” (129). Eliot’s vision for the function of poetry, in this sense, is to create wholes out of the fragments which are comprehensive enough of England to be translatable elsewhere, to circulate a wholeness of life and culture into the larger scale of the pattern on an international level. Eliot’s biological language of “organism” suggests a further association of organic life with the nature of literary composition which is necessary to create the vocal and musical aspects of “harmony” across the larger area of the world.

What I wish to emphasize here is how the vocality and musical structure of Eliot’s poetic method is also utilized in his commentary on the life of culture and international politics through his literary lens. A similar reflexive correspondence exists between the musicality of his dominant

imagery of gardens, soil, and plants in both his poetry and his writing about the nature of literature and poetry. Eliot translates his critical metaphor of literature being a garden of organic growth to that of culture, remarking in a lecture “The Unity of European Culture,” that “culture is something that must grow; you cannot build a tree, you can only plant it, and care for it, and wait for it to mature in its due time...you must not complain if you find that from an acorn has come an oak, and not an elm-tree” (Christianity and Culture 196). In speaking of culture to an international audience, and insisting upon the necessity of diversity and local culture, Eliot asserted that “We need variety in unity: not the unity of organization, but the unity of nature”; an idea he phrased in his *Notes Toward the Definition of Culture* as an “ecology of cultures,” emphasizing of cultural biodiversity of local peculiarities and their manifestations in the rhythms of poetic speech.

This essay has marked out the transformation of Eliot’s poetic vocality and imagery from a state of groundless and insubstantiality, to a garden grounded in the rich soil of the structure of sensibility within the auditory imagination. To recall the agricultural imagery and religious tones of his play “Choruses from the Rock” I will repeat a few of lines that emphasize this point: “Out of the sea of sound the life of music,/ Out of the slimy mud of words, out of the sleet and hail of verbal imprecisions...There spring the perfect order of speech, and the beauty of incantation” (CPP 111). It is in this context of these words regarding the complex of images here in the sound of the sea, music, “the slimy mud of words,” and their mixture which produces the “perfect order of speech” as incantation, that I want to enter his essay “Virgil and the Christian World” in which he discusses the ways Virgil’s sensibility was constructed in such a way that lent itself to cohesive appropriation by the Christian tradition.

Eliot’s deeper concerns of religion and foundations of consciousness become evident as Eliot emphasizes the resonance of Virgil’s philosophy beyond his own age and culture, as something that is made by both Virgil’s adaptive use of Greek poetic forms and the larger

meaning which was given to his work in the context of Christianity, and for Eliot, the poetry of Dante. Eliot writes that the *Georgics* are essential to an understanding of Virgil's philosophy, and in praising his originality in recreating prior poetic forms, distinguishes that he believes there is "no precedent for the *spirit* of the *Georgics*; and the attitude towards the soil, and the labour of the soil" (141). Eliot marks this as "particularly intelligible now" as "urban agglomeration, the flight from the land, the pillage of the earth and the squandering of natural resources are beginning to attract attention" (141). Despite the fact that Eliot was a vocal proponent of agriculture, organicism, and conservation, I am more concerned with the poetic *cultura* of Eliot's own body of poetry, and am ultimately interested, not in agrarianism within his work as a unifying principle as much as the necessary symbolic paradigm of an attitude or sensibility. Eliot singles out the piety of Aeneas within Virgil's work and remarks on the wider meaning of the word in Virgil's use and says that "It is an attitude towards all these things, and therefore implies a unity and an order among them: it is in fact an attitude toward life" (142). Eliot's own attitude toward the soil and the spirit of his use of agrarian and garden imagery in his poetry and criticism is without precedent, I think, in its aim to construct an attitude and foundational point of view for his modern life, which carried forward the sensibility of the past and created a new ground for modern sensibility to grow out of in the midst of individual and cultural dissociation and fragmentation.

In this context, I would like to merge Eliot's perspective of Virgil as the poet of the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*, the poet of both the small scale agrarian unit of life and the poet of the nation-founding Aeneas as "the original Displaced Person" with my own perspective regarding Eliot's engagement with place and poetry as a transplanted *metoikos* seeking depth, stability, and an insightful and creative knowledge of tradition and background. The significance of this is a reading of Eliot's corpus of work through his consciousness of himself and the point of view or attitude toward life as a grounding point, both a beginning and end for the tradition and the

individual imagination in the modern world. In the development of his garden imagery and poetic voice in a progression from the sterility of an urban street seen through synecdoche to the transcendent gardens of *Four Quartets* the poetic drama of this whole enacts a cosmogony of the modern consciousness grounding itself in a religio-poetic sensibility.

In this framework, it would seem that the smallest unit of organic development from which the whole of Eliot's poetic creation proceeds can be traced to his essay "The Three Voices of Poetry" in which Eliot discusses the problem of poetic communication. The significant voice in light of this argument is Eliot's definition of the "first voice" as "the voice of the poet talking to himself—or to nobody" (96). Eliot cites a lecture titled *Probleme der Lyrik* by the German poet Henrik Benn, in which, lyric, as the first voice addressed to no one, begins with a "creative germ" positioned against Language. Eliot's explanation is that the poet "has something germinating in him for which he must find words; but he cannot know what words he wants until he has found the words; he cannot identify this embryo until it has been transformed into an arrangement of the right words in the right order" (106). Eliot goes further to say that the poet's only concern is "expressing in verse—using all his resources of words, with their history, their connotations, their music—this obscure impulse" (107). The association of this process of voice with "germination," I hope, harmonizes the winding path of quotations and the ground this paper has covered to get to this point. Eliot himself calls this a kind of "meditative verse" and I have been reading the whole of Eliot's work with an ear trying to pick out the forced repetition of what might be this "first voice" in his own work, not as an explanation of what is in the poems, but what comes out in the process, what the haunting liminality of the unspoken behind the poetic expression may signify. I have taken the ground and the musicality of Eliot's gardens to be something of the form of the process of Eliot's composition in the first voice, particularly seizing on this language of the "creative germ" and the impulse "germinating" to be expressed in the poems (106).

Eliot asserts that in nearly all poems, more than one voice is heard; the second voice is that of the poet addressing an audience and the third voice is the voice of the poet creating the speech of an imaginary character in dialogue with another imaginary character (106). Depending on the poet's aim and content the all three voices may be present but varying in proportion and interposed within each other, only surfacing at certain points according to the movement of the poem. Eliot's working title of *The Waste Land*, "He Do the Police in Different Voices", taken from Charles Dickens's novel *Our Mutual Friend*, gains a new resonance here as it is expressive of Eliot's manner of masking and dispersing his own voice. Eliot also posits that each type of poetic voice has its own process, and that in the first voice. "the unknown, dark psychic material...the octopus or angel with which the poet struggles" tends to "create its own form" where form and material develop simultaneously until finally "the material is identified with its form" (110). Eliot's repeated figuration and variation of ground and garden imagery in conjunction with sound suggests an expression of that merging of material with form, where the plant life of the garden and the richness of the soil as connected with speech manifested his struggle to put into vocal form the depth of material he was struggling to express or trying to create through his poetry. Eliot writes that "the work of a great poetic dramatist, like Shakespeare, constitutes a world" and that it is a world "in which the creator is everywhere present and everywhere hidden" (112). Eliot was no Shakespeare, and his verse drama enjoyed nowhere near the success of his poetry, mainly because he is rather a poet of primarily the first voice, as his poetry makes a world and a language of its own which brings into being a multitude of other voices, and a voice beyond them. The arc of his poetry moves from a voicing of inner consciousness, to a pastiche of outer voices reconciled within the inner consciousness, to his most lyric vocality in *Four Quartets*.

Across his entire career he is dredging up material and lines and echoes from the other voices of writers who he has felt affinities with and repurposed them into his own voice. Out of

the background behind this, his material manifests itself and the growth of consciousness pushes up through that ground. The developing garden imagery suggests the fruit of his labor of digging into that background, both the literary and the creative digging. The wholeness of the garden at the end of his career suggests a walking backward through sounding the depths of this backgrounds from the formless mental ground of modernity, out of the waste and void, into the waters to create a firmament, and then establishing a garden in which one hears a solid structure of voice beyond his own, everywhere present and everywhere hidden. I emphasize this because of Eliot's own emphasis on right sensation and thought as primary concerns before that of social or political approaches to artistic creation. The effect of this movement in the context of region, nationality, and international harmony is that it plumbs the depths of personal sensibility through a multitude of traditions, cultures, languages, and voices, and expresses the underlying universal feeling by which the "creative germ" is translated. The intensely personal nature of Eliot's concept of the first voice, and the correlation between that germination and the sophistication of the germination of the musical garden within his poetry necessitates a reading at this depth of the buried life of Eliot's corpus, where "purification of the motive/ In the ground of our beseeching" leads to "The life of significant soil" (CPP 143/137).

Conclusion

My ultimate reading of the significance of the way that Eliot's poetic voice enacts an orientation to language and the world is that it fractures conscious identifications with place or language and redirects sensation or thought back to the poetic mode of communication. In the context of his dislocation and transplantation from America to England and the move from groundlessness toward embedding himself in English culture, the significant orientation I would emphasize is a perspective of "serving his art with entire integrity" and through that, structuring his relation to "nation and the whole world" as he said of Yeats (307). In terms of this mode of poetic grounding or orientation, I would again re-work his words on Yeats back toward himself, that, based on the trajectory and cultivation of his personal poetic medium over the course of his career, moving from groundlessness to garden, 'Eliot had nothing, and we have had Eliot' (306). As I have been engaging nearly entirely in examining the workings of Eliot's voice in his own work in these chapters, I think the most lasting aspect of his approach to local, national, cross-cultural, and international culture was a primary focus on cultivating the culture of poetry within the medium, and structuring the communication of his voice from that point.

The influence of his voice on Kamau Brathwaite and Derek Walcott is echoed by Seamus Heaney, as he affirms the experience of encountering Eliot's poetry in the "inner ear," the "physicality of his ear," and engaging its "underworkings" through the "basement life of Eliot's ear" (37/39). Heaney, with much greater connections to agriculture and local culture than Eliot himself, continues the line of the association of poetic voice with plant growth as he spoke of Eliot's Dantean references as growths that "sprang up in the pure mind of the twentieth century poet" where their "in-placeness does not derive from their meaning having a meaning transplanted from the iconography of the medieval one" suggesting their own natural place in the modern consciousness engaging with culture and place (34). Heaney spoke of his own early experience of reading commentaries of Eliot's work in which there was "nothing to fall upon, or

to combine with, on the ground of my reader's mind" (32). While Brathwaite looks backward to Eliot's voice and Heaney speaks of the sowing and grounding dynamics of Eliot's auditory imagination at work in his poetry, both are working out of distinct and deeply developed nuances within Eliot's poetry which I have tried to trace back to their origins in Eliot's own creative process.

The contrast between the environment and inner consciousness in Eliot's early poetry and that of his later poetry is perhaps best exemplified in the dialogue between two characters of his penultimate play, "The Confidential Clerk." In the play, a wealthy businessman who believes he has fathered two adult children outside of his current marriage, hires a man who he believes to be his son as a replacement for his clerk. His former clerk, Mr. Eggerson, is exceedingly down to earth, and the only notable thing about him is his cool head, the trust placed in him by the businessman, and his vegetable garden. Eliot's Waste Land motif of the grail legend of the Fisher King, and the vegetation rites associated with mythical allusions in *The Waste Land* have metamorphosed into this ordinary suburban gardener. The young man who is to replace Mr. Eggerson is a failed musician.

The musicality of location as a point of grounding consciousness and inner equilibrium and the imagery of the metaphorical garden achieve their fullest convergence in a conversation between Eggerson's replacement, Colby Simpkins, and the businessman's daughter, Lucasta. The two discuss the loss of "sense of security" and Lucasta tells him she envies his inner sense of security, what she describes as "something your music stands for" in which "you've still got your inner world—a world that's more real... You have your secret garden" (Confidential Clerk 63). Colby asks her if she has a secret garden, and she tells him "my only garden is... a dirty public square/ In a shabby part of London... I've no garden/ I hardly feel that I'm even a person:/ Nothing but a bit of living matter/ Floating on the surface of the Regent's Canal./ Floating, that's it" (63). My insistence on the importance of garden imagery in Eliot's poetry stands here; it is

something the music stands for. Her remarks characterize much of the sense of groundlessness of Eliot's early poetry and contextualize his preoccupation with depths and instability. Her comment about not feeling like a person correlates to the sense of personal incoherence and synecdoche that Eliot's poetry and mental state leading up to *The Waste Land* reflect. Lucasta insists to Colby that "Your garden is a garden/ Where you hear music that no one else could hear,/ And the flowers have a scent that no one else could smell" (63). This firmly contextualizes the garden as associated with musical, pre-verbal feelings which arise from the natural grounding of the auditory imagination and serve as the structure for the sound and voice behind Eliot's most meaningful and personal speech, which often conveys its strongest meaning in that "unheard music" (CPP 118). When it comes to expressing this "unheard music" or flowers that "no one else could smell," Eliot's goal is not to be entirely clear, operating within language, but rather reflecting his earlier preoccupation with getting "beyond poetry as...Beethoven..strove to *get beyond* music" (SP 20). Eliot once wrote in a letter to a friend who said he liked his poetry, but didn't understand it, that there is a "good" kind of obscurity: "that which is merely the obscurity of any flower: something simple and to be simply enjoyed, but merely incomprehensible as anything living is incomprehensible" (Poems 730). This unites the garden with some aspect of living speech that inheres in the musicality of associations and sounding language, and the 'dislocation' of language into personal meaning (SP 65).

As an example of a relation to a broader sense of incoherence outside the self reflected in this garden imagery, Colby tells Lucasta that his "garden" does not feel as real to him as the outside world because of his feeling alone there and his sense of the dissonance between the inner and exterior world. He tells Lucasta that he believes that Eggeron's garden is more real, because he retires to his garden—literally,
and also in the same sense that I retire to mine
But he doesn't feel alone there.
...What I mean is, my garden's no less unreal to me

Than the world outside it. If you have two lives
Which have nothing to do with each other—
Well, they're both unreal. But for Eggerson
His garden is part of one single world (64).

In the context of the separation and the unreality of Colby's sense of inner consciousness and outer world, the role of music as an expression of a sense of security functions a grounding element that harmonizes the two worlds, not from any definable reality, but through the relation of the two manifested in the medium of poetry. Which, in the context of the larger paper, is the poetic function of language itself that is capable of developing of the larger consciousness of an underlying sensibility in its reconciliation of fragmentary elements of meaning and experience. Lucasta discusses the sense of unreality as a feeling where "the flowers would fade/ And the music would stop./ And the walls would be broken./And you would find yourself in a devastated area...a dirty public square" (66). Lucasta understands the music as a symbolic expression of a "means of contact with a world/ More real than any I've ever lived in" (66). She is not asking for a literal garden or even to be removed from the public square, but she desires what the music is an expression of, a contact with reality beyond her sense of it. The scene she depicts of the "dirty public square" is a resurfacing of the common scenery of Eliot's early poetry. Ultimately, my reading of the material of Eliot's poetry and its engagement with place is a process of refining his medium and working to create a foundational vocal structure of feeling that is detached from place and grounded in the consciousness, capable of enhancing the grasp of an orientation through a poetic sensibility.

Seamus Heaney wrote that Eliot did not intend to create "a mutual help" of a "corroboration relation between a landscape and a sensibility" and commented that

When I visited Burnt Norton, for example, I did indeed find a rose garden and a dry concrete pool; but I also found this very documentary congruence between poem and place oddly disappointing. I realized that I did not really want a landscape to materialize, since I had long internalized a soundscape" (41).

My reading of the plant and garden imagery across the development and various phases of Eliot's poetry is that of a grounding of this idea of a "soundscape" as an inhabitable inner structure of consciousness in which organic processes begin at the lowest level of linguistic communication and are capable of forming organic wholes out of themselves and contributing to a larger "ecology of culture," which further engenders diverse and rooted poetics on an international scale (CC 131).

Works Cited

- Bernstein, Charles. *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word*. Oxford University Press, New York, NY. 1998
- The Bible. *The Bible*. Authorized King James Version, Oxford UP, 1998
- Brathwaite, Kamau. "History of the voice." *Roots*. The University of Michigan Press. Ann Arbor, Michigan. 1993.
- Crawford, Robert. *Young Eliot*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York, NY. 2015
- Eliot, T.S. *Christianity and Culture*. Harcourt, Inc. New York, NY. 1967
- Eliot, T.S. *The Complete Poems and Plays: 1909-1950*. Harcourt Brace and Company, New York. 1967
- Eliot, T.S. *The Confidential Clerk*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, NY. 1954
- Eliot, T.S. *Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909-1917*. ed. by Christopher Ricks. Harcourt and Brace Company, New York. 1996..
- Eliot, T.S. *On Poetry and Poets*. Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, New York, NY. 1957
- Eliot, T.S. *The Poems of T.S. Eliot*. Ed. Christopher Ricks. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD. 2015
- Eliot, T.S. *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*. Ed. Frank Kermode. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York, NY. 1975
- Eliot, T.S. *The Use of Poetry and The Use of Criticism*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts. 1964.
- Hart, Matthew. *Nations of Nothing But Poetry: Modernism, Transnationalism, and Synthetic Vernacular Writing*. Oxford University Press, New York, NY. 2010.
- Heaney, Seamus. *Finders Keepers: Selected Prose 1971-2001*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York. 2002.
- Jonson, Ben. *Timbers, or Discoveries*. Urbana, Illinois: Project Gutenberg. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/5134/5134-h/5134-h.htm>
- Kipling, Rudyard. *Debts and Credits*. Macmillan & Co. New York, NY. 1926.
- Nagaoki, Miyuki. "Envisioning the Good Life: Some Thoughts on *Coriolan*." *Doshisha Literature*. 1984
- Menand, Louis. *Discovering Modernism: T.S. Eliot and his context*. Oxford University Press. New York, NY. 2007.
- O'Driscoll, Dennis. *Stepping Stones: Interviews with Seamus Heaney*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York.

Pollard, Charles W. *New World Modernisms: T.S. Eliot, Derek Walcott, and Kamau Brathwaite*. University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville. 2004

Reeves, Gareth. *T.S. Eliot: A Virgilian Poet*. St. Martin's Press, New York, NY. 1989.

Sigg, Eric. "New England." *T.S. Eliot in Context*. Ed. Jason Harding. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. 2011.

Stevens, Wallace. *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*. Ed. By John N. Serio and Chris Beyers. Vintage Books, New York, NY. 2015

Vendler, Helen. Introduction. T.S. Eliot. *The Waste Land and Other Poems*. Penguin Books. New York, NY. 1998.

Curriculum Vitae

Bradford Owen Goldsmith

Ph. 804-332-4267 email: BradGoldsmith55@gmail.com

Education

Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC (2016-2018). M.A. in English

Davidson College, Davidson, NC (2011-2015). B.A. in English with a minor in Religion.

Relevant Academic Experience

Worked as a Graduate Assistant Tutor in the Wake Forest University Writing Center (2017-2018)

Received a Robert T. Stone Fund Grant to work on the Davidson College Farm in the summer of 2014.

Participated in the Davidson College Cambridge Program and studied abroad at Magdalene College, Cambridge UK in the summer of 2013.