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**TIME METAPHORS IN T.S. ELIOT'S *FOUR QUARTETS* AND THEIR RELATION
TO EVERYDAY SPEECH**

Tesis sometida a la consideración de la Comisión del Programa de Estudios de Posgrado en
Literatura para optar al grado y título de Maestría Académica en Literatura Inglesa

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Melisa Williams and my thesis committee, who kept me undefeated
if only because I kept on trying.

APROVAL PAGE

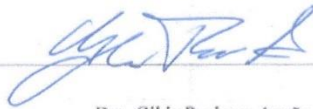
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ABSTRACT

Durante el siglo XX, la reintroducción de la noción aristotélica de que la metáfora no es una sofisticación del lenguaje sino un componente fundamental de la comunicación revolucionó el estudio sobre esta. George Lakoff (entre otros) propone que las metáforas cotidianas se forman a partir de patrones llamados “metáforas conceptuales”, Hoyt Alverson describe algunos de estos patrones a través de idiomas y culturas con metáforas que describen el tiempo y la psicóloga Lera Boroditsky incorpora estos hallazgos poniendo a prueba empíricamente la velocidad de procesamiento e incorporación distintas metáforas sobre tiempo, sugiriendo que hay formas de representar el tiempo que se entienden más naturalmente que otras de acuerdo con los esquemas espaciales cognitivos del receptor. Sobre esta línea, el presente estudio busca determinar hasta qué punto las metáforas de tiempo en *Four Quartets* de T.S. Eliot corresponden a patrones metafóricos del habla cotidiana. Para lograr esto se mapeó funcionalmente las implicaciones de los vehículos espaciales de las metáforas de tiempo de los poemas, se identificó si esas metáforas están relacionadas con combinaciones de metáforas conceptuales y se evaluó la compatibilidad de estas con los esquemas espaciales cognitivos más comúnmente encontrados en el idioma inglés. El estudio sugiere que *Four Quartets* representa el tiempo a partir de un sistema primario de metáforas de tiempo que, consistentemente, combina distintas agencias, orientaciones y trayectorias apoyado por metáforas secundarias inconsistentes. Tanto el aspecto horizontal del sistema metafórico primario como las inconsistentes metáforas secundarias corresponden a metáforas conceptuales, mientras que el aspecto vertical del sistema primario no. No obstante, el aspecto vertical de cada poema sí corresponde con metáforas cotidianas en otros idiomas y como serie, los poemas muestran una compatibilidad creciente con los esquemas espaciales cognitivos del angloparlante. Esto nos lleva a afirmar que las metáforas de tiempo en *Four Quartets* corresponden parcial o totalmente con patrones metafóricos del habla cotidiana.

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“Si (como el griego afirma en el Cratilo)
el nombre es arquetipo de la cosa,
en las letras de *rosa* está la rosa
y todo el Nilo en la palabra *Nilo*”.

Jorge Luis Borges, *El Golem*

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INTRODUCTION

Definition of the Topic

Four Quartets by T.S. Eliot is arguably considered the best work of the author and one of the seminal works in poetry about time and eternity. Being such reflective and complicated issues, one would think that the author would have to approach them in an outlandish manner, but cognitive research on the topic of metaphor rather suggests that the means by which people think about time and the way Eliot referred to it might have a common origin. The present work proposes an investigation on the possible relation between time metaphors in *Four Quartets* and the metaphors used in everyday language to talk about the same topic.

An analysis of each time metaphor in *Four Quartets* will be done to map out the way all of them function in relation to space and whether patterns are kept throughout the poems. After this analysis, each metaphor will be examined to determine if there are connections between them and the most common patterns used to represent time in everyday speech. Once the presence or absence of connections has been established, a contrast will be made between what has been found and the cognitive processes that have been related to metaphoric patterns in the past to determine the compatibility between the understanding of time in the poems and the one found in everyday speech.

This three-part process will be taken into consideration to discuss how the poems relate to readers of different backgrounds as well as how these poems might be challenging preconceptions of time that create mental biases about the topic. Finally, these conclusions will be used to propose further questions on the role literature has towards readers in the way literary metaphors relate to those found in any other linguistic endeavor.

Justification

Few poetic productions have approached the topic of our perception of time with more sophistication than *Four Quartets* by T.S. Eliot. The poems revisit challenging ideas on time and eternity that can be found in some of the greatest philosophers in history and resynthesize those ideas; nevertheless, the greatness of the poems lies not just in their subject matter but in the way time is addressed metaphorically. The complex use of spatial objective correlatives Eliot took to approach temporal matters has been noted by researchers such as Marshall McLuhan or Kenneth Paul Kramer among many others; however, the possible implications of this metaphorical approach to time from a cognitive perspective are yet to be thoroughly researched.

The study of metaphor has demonstrated to be one of common interest for many different fields. Throughout history, from Aristotle to the likes of I.A. Richards or Paul de Man, it has been made clear that metaphor is an integral part of language. As such, researching the way metaphors work is not only relevant to literary studies and the humanities but to all language-related disciplines. To understand the way people create metaphors, whether these are recurrent metaphors that derive from what George Lakoff and Mark Johnson called “conceptual metaphors” or can be considered novel, and which metaphors are better or worse suited for their purpose are issues that could amplify the understanding of any linguistic discipline.

Furthermore, in recent time the field of metaphor has suggested that there might be a link between the metaphoric way in which people talk about abstract concepts and the way they think and understand these concepts. For the concept of time in particular, various investigations by Lera Boroditsky have pointed out that people of various languages use a set number of conceptual metaphors to refer to temporality in terms of space, and that the conceptual metaphors they use and how they use them broaden or limit the way they think of

time itself. This does not mean that language determines the way a person thinks about time absolutely, as the research by Boroditsky demonstrates that people whose language does not often use a particular form of a conceptual metaphor can be trained in its use with much more ease than in the use of a random metaphor about it because its mental “schema” is still present. If this were the case, the importance of literature and literary study would be put under a new light, as the way a text guides readers’ understanding of different concepts through a sophisticated use of metaphor may also train them to think about those concepts in ways seldom used in everyday language.

Mapping out functionally the way Eliot uses time metaphors in *Four Quartets*, identifying whether they correspond to conceptual metaphors that are found in everyday speech, and evaluating the compatibility these metaphors hold to the usual cognitive schemas found in the English language can go a long way into understanding the poems better, but that would not be the only benefit that can be obtained through this investigation. To go into *Four Quartets* with the aim of determining how their spatial objective correlatives work in terms of metaphor is enlightening in the terms of understanding the poems and why they continue to inspire so many people, but it would also yield relevant information into the roots of those metaphors and how they manage to continue to inspire people of different backgrounds and ages.

Methodology

Three steps are required in order to properly assess the possible relation between time metaphors in *Four Quartets* and everyday language. It is first necessary to map out the way the metaphors function in terms of space and mobility. Second, the existence or absence of a connection between the conceptual metaphors that serve as blueprints for the metaphors found in everyday language and those in the poem has to be identified. Finally, an evaluation

of the way the metaphors studied relate to common or uncommon cognitive schemas to think about time is required to assess how much the poems lend themselves to be read. These three steps would enlighten the way we understand the poem, relate it to everyday language, and establish how strong this relation is.

To study the relation between everyday metaphors and those found in *Four Quartets* would first require a thorough “mapping out” of the metaphors used by Eliot in the poems. This process would imply analyzing the horizontal and vertical vehicles used in each one, determining what they imply about the understanding of time, and checking if there is a prevailing relation between them throughout the four poems. The end result would be a systematic study of all time metaphors used in *Four Quartets* taking into account: what each of them imply about the understanding of the perception of time, if there are constant patterns for each quartet, and whether there are constant patterns in the representation of time between time metaphors in all of the poems.

Once this work has been achieved, the following step to determine the relation between time metaphors in *Four Quartets* and everyday speech would be to identify whether a relation with a conceptual metaphor can be found in the metaphors studied. Following this, it would be necessary to establish which conceptual metaphors about time are present in the metaphors of the poems, if any. What this would accomplish is to identify if there is a link between everyday speech and the metaphors used in the *Four Quartets* and how many different conceptual metaphors could be mixed in Eliot’s interpretation about the perception of time. To know if the conceptual metaphors found are commonly or seldom used in the English language is valuable information about the accessibility the poems provide for the reader.

The third step would be to evaluate how the spatial vehicles that Eliot uses in his “psychological landscapes” (McLuhan 240) function in relation to the cognitive schemas

Boroditsky found for the understanding of time in English or in other languages. Doing this would reveal a lot in terms of the simplicity or complexity the reading of the poem presupposes, as the combination of many different schemas imply the combined use of a number of mental processes for its understanding. Moreover, if the poem shows evidence for schemas seldom used in the English language (vertical metaphors about time, for instance) it would effectively be challenging the reader to broaden his or her notions of time. This demand, on the other hand, would also mean that the poem would be training the reader into the use of uncommon time metaphors which would, in turn, train the reader to widen the notions of time he or she handles.

Once the information of how time metaphors work in the poem is obtained, if they are related to the building blocks of everyday metaphors, and what evidence of mental schemas can be found to be working in the poems, a valuable analysis can be made of the relation between the metaphors T.S. Eliot used in his work and the metaphors we ourselves use every day to understand the passing of time. To find a link between the two would connect some of the most sophisticated poetry ever written with the way people think across cultures and time barriers is to find in literature a common ground where humans can truly be said understand each other. On the other hand, it could also prove the importance of reading *Four Quartets* in order to be better equipped to think about time, to broaden our view of it, or to avoid the biases humans have when referring to the issue.

General Objective

- To determine the extent to which time metaphors in *Four Quartets* correspond to metaphoric patterns found in everyday speech.

Specific Objectives

- To map out functionally the implications of the spatial vehicles found in time metaphors in *Four Quartets*.
- To identify if time metaphors in *Four Quartets* are related to combinations of conceptual metaphors.
- To evaluate the compatibility between time metaphors in *Four Quartets* and the cognitive spatial schemas most commonly found in the English language.

CHAPTER 1

T.S. Eliot

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born in St. Louis, Missouri on September 26, 1888. Ancestrally, though, he hailed from Massachusetts (which his grandfather, Reverend William Greenleaf Eliot left for St. Louis in 1834) and from East Coker, Somerset (which his forebear Andrew Eliot left for Massachusetts in 1670.) This migration was enacted backwards by Eliot and significantly influenced the composition of *Four Quartets*. It probably first stoked his curiosity in 1896, with his father's building of a summer house in Gloucester, Massachusetts where Thomas spent his summers.

T.S. Eliot was the last of the six surviving children of Henry Ware Eliot, a successful businessman, and Charlotte Champs Stearns, a social worker and poet. The influence of Eliot's mother in his life was notable. He was, in fact, named after his maternal grandfather, Thomas Stearns. His mother's love for literature was an important outlet for young Tom, since he was born with a double inguinal hernia that prevented him from participating in physical activities with other children. He composed his first poem, four verses about the sadness of having to start school again every Monday morning, when he was only nine years old.

His formative years showcase tension between his pursuit of academia and poetry. He attended Smith Academy in St. Louis until his graduation in 1905, and it was in this institute where he first published his poetry in the *Smith Academy Record*. From Smith Academy, Eliot moved on for a preparatory year to Milton Academy in Massachusetts and then to Harvard University, where he studied comparative literature and Western Philosophy. He continued to publish poetry in *The Harvard Advocate*, a periodical which he himself edited. After three years, rather than the usual four, he obtained his bachelor's degree in 1909 and an M.A. in 1910. He followed this with a visit to the Sorbonne where he continued to study

philosophy and was deeply affected by Henri Bergson's lectures. During this visit, he completed "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," which would not be published until 1915. In 1911 he traveled back to Harvard where he studied Sanskrit and Indic philosophy. Around this period, in 1913, Eliot met Emily Hale, a lifelong friend and perhaps romantic interest about whom much is speculated. He earned a one-year scholarship for Merton College, Oxford in 1914. Before Oxford, he planned to take a summer programme in Marburg, Germany, but the breakout of World War I thwarted this plan. In Oxford, he began his doctoral dissertation on F.H. Bradley (which he would complete in 1916 but did not publicly defend,) but life in the university town did not stimulate him, which prompted in him several visits to London where he met Ezra Pound.

Meeting Ezra Pound marks the tipping point in Eliot's life which steered him from a career of scholarly pursuit to one of poetry. This is the beginning of what Kenneth Paul Kramer calls Eliot's "Middle Years" (1915-1944), by far his most productive in terms of literature. It was Pound who deemed Eliot as "worth watching" and introduced him to everyone in the London poetry scene. Ezra Pound was also instrumental in the publication of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, a Chicago periodical of which he served as overseas editor, in the month of June, 1915.

On the 26th of that very month Eliot marries Vivienne Haigh-Wood. Much has been speculated about Thomas and Vivienne's marriage. What can be confirmed is that they got married after knowing one another very briefly, neither told their parents about the wedding (according to Carole Seymour-Jones, Vivienne's family was opposed to her marrying and having children at all), and that Vivienne's several physical and mental health problems tormented Eliot until her death in an asylum in 1947. London's literary and intellectual establishment at the time, well-acquainted with the couple, were highly critical of Haigh-

Wood. For example, this is how Virginia Woolf described Haigh-Wood in her diary on November 8, 1930:

Oh —Vivienne! Was there ever such a torture since life began! —to bear her on one’s shoulders, biting, wriggling, raving, scratching, unwholesome, powdered, insane, yet sane to the point of insanity, reading his letters, thrusting herself on us, coming in wavering trembling . . . This bag of ferrets is what Tom wears round his neck. (331)

Critical voices have risen, however, in defense of Vivienne Haigh-Wood in more recent times. Carole Seymour-Jones, for instance, implies that Vivienne’s condition worsened due to Eliot’s misogyny and secret homosexuality in *Painted Shadow: The Life of Vivienne Eliot, First Wife of T.S. Eliot*. Michael Hastings is also critical in the representation of Eliot he made in his play *Tom & Viv*, which portrays Eliot as less than caring while his wife was in poor health. There appears to be consensus in the fact that Eliot married Vivienne when he was an immature twenty-six-year-old, stimulated by her extroversion, deceiving family wealth and artistic connections on her father’s side, and the prospect of staying in England and write poetry rather than go back to Harvard and pursue the academic career that his parents expected of him. It is also generally accepted that Vivienne was an important influence in Eliot’s celebrated poem “The Waste Land.”

During this time Eliot taught at Highgate Junior School for four terms, lectured for extension courses at Oxford and London Universities, and took a position at the Colonial and Foreign Department of Lloyds Bank while overseeing the publication of *Prufrock and Other Observations* in London and working as assistant editor of *The Egotist*. He did not return to the United States after the end of World War I or for his father’s death in 1919. It was a time of intense literary production that saw the publication of “Gerontion” in 1919 and *The Sacred Wood* and “Selected Poems” in 1920. It could be argued that this period culminated either

with Eliot's nervous breakdown in 1921 or with the publication of "The Waste Land" in *The Criterion* (a literary magazine created and edited by Eliot himself) in 1922, which earned him the Dial Award that same year and a lot of praise ever since.

Due to this literary success, the following years brought considerable lifestyle changes to Eliot. His poetry writing slowed down, and he joined the Board of Directors of Faber and Gwyer Publishers (later Faber & Faber) in 1925. The crucial year, however, would be 1927, when he was baptized into the Church of England in June and became a naturalized British citizen in November. This also reactivated his writing with a decidedly more religious tone, publishing "Journey of the Magi" in August of that year and his long poem "Ash-Wednesday" in 1930.

Meanwhile, Eliot's family life was in turmoil. His mother, Charlotte Champe Eliot, died in 1929; Eliot had not seen her in almost fifteen years. His marriage with Vivienne was also scandalously unhappy by this point. Vivienne did not support him in his new religion and her mental state only deteriorated. Eliot left her in 1932 to lecture in Harvard with the intention of permanently separating from her. He actively avoided her on his return to England, around the same time he visited Burnt Norton with the aforementioned Emily Hale. He saw Vivienne one last time at a Book Fair in London on November 18, 1935, where she arrived carrying her dog, Polly, three of his books, and wearing a British Union of Fascists uniform, a black beret, and a black cape. According to Seymour-Jones, she asked him, "Will you come back with me?" and he replied, "I cannot talk to you now," then left with someone else (547-548). She was committed to the Northumberland House mental hospital in 1938 and remained there until her death in 1947. Despite still being legally married to her, Eliot did not visit her once.

In 1935, Eliot expected to move from being primarily a poet to a playwright and published *Murder in the Cathedral* on that year. Nevertheless, from an edited-out soliloquy

of one of the characters of this play, Eliot wrote “Burnt Norton” and included it as the last poem of his *Collected Poems 1909-1935*, which was published in 1936. Eliot visited the Medieval Church at Little Gidding on that same year and East Coker on the following year. These experiences would influence his forced return to poetry, as his dramatic aspirations were somewhat thwarted by the breakout of World War II, which Kenneth Paul Kramer remarks coincided with Vivienne’s final breakdown.

The war was a particularly productive time for Eliot, although the conservative tone of his ideas was controversial. In 1939 he published three lectures under the title *The Idea of a Christian Society*, the play *The Family Reunion*, and the collection of poems *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats*, which would later be turned into a very successful Broadway musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber. He followed this with the publication of “East Coker” in 1940 and “The Dry Salvages” in 1941, which both received immediate attention. Helen Gardner notes how “Little Gidding” was the most complicated for Eliot to write in this series of four, but it was published nonetheless in 1942, and the whole collection under the title *Four Quartets* in 1943. Eliot considered these poems the best of his career.

Eliot enjoyed fame and success after the end of World War II in 1945 and the death of Vivienne in 1947. In 1948, he received the Nobel Prize for Literature, as well as the Order of Merit from King George VI and an honorary degree from Harvard University. This time, however, produced no poetry, with Eliot steering once again towards drama, literary criticism, and philosophy. Personally, Eliot had a very public relationship from 1938 to 1957 with Mary Trevelyan (who intended to marry him, according to her memoirs,) and shared a house with famed critic and friend John Davy Hayward from 1946 to 1957. Both relationships were strained when Eliot married his secretary at Faber & Faber, Esmé Valerie Fletcher, in a secret ceremony. Eliot was 68 at the time; Valerie was 30. The relationship lasted until Eliot’s death in 1965, two years after visiting New York with Valerie and less

than a year after finally publishing the research on F.H. Bradley which had brought him to England back in 1914. His ashes were interred in St. Michael's parish church at East Coker.

String Quartets

T.S. Eliot affirmed the title *Four Quartets* was meant as a musical reference to Ludwig van Beethoven's string quartets. A "string quartet" refers to a composition of chamber music written for two violins, a viola, and a cello. In his book *The String Quartet: A History*, Paul Griffiths writes that searching for the origin of the string quartet is ". . . as vain as to search for the origins of man, and for similar reasons" (7). His point stems from the fact that, as Zillah Theresa Holdcroft contextualizes, though the string quartet is usually considered a development in XVI and XVII century chamber music, earlier examples of the configuration are easily found, such as certain sonatas by Allesandro Scarlatti (1659-1725) designated "per due violini, violetta, e violin-cello" or chamber work by Gregorio Allegri composed for "duoi violini, alto e basso di viola" (9). Rather than tracing the first composition for four string instruments, Holdcroft proposes that "[t]o appreciate the full achievement reached in the *genre* of the string quartet by the Classical Viennese composers—in particular Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven—it is necessary to have a brief look at the music itself, from the early part of the 18th century" (10).

Holdcroft attributes the development of the string quartet from the trio-sonata (the dominant chamber composition made up of two melody instruments such as violins, flutes, or oboes, and a harpsichord) to the introduction of the "quartet sonata" in Northern Germany on the principles of the trio-sonata and the popularity of "a more 'democratic' part writing" (11) that coincided with the harpsichord falling out of favor. Cellos were introduced to take the place of the harpsichord, but their parts were conceived "on terms with the other solo instruments" (11), making their introductions more of a development than a substitution. These changes, even in an environment where trio-sonatas continued to flourish, led to

“idiomatic string writing, incorporating double-stops and *pizzicato*, [which] challenged the versatility of these compositions as they could not comfortably continue to wear the all-purpose label—‘to be played or sung’” (11) but gave the “quartet sonata” for strings a more defined identity. Though Holdcroft believes that the compositions of Franz Xaver Richter “looked ahead to the quartet writing practices of the Classical period,” she believes it was left to Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven “to turn the transitional chamber music of the *divertimenti* into the pure concept of the *genre*” (11). While the intentional development of the string quartet by Josef Haydn can and has been contested, Holdcroft fully credits him for identifying the unique possibilities of its execution, which would later be optimized by Mozart and Beethoven, with the latter being the only one to explore it in full:

An important compositional development in Haydn’s early quartets was the differentiation made between the requirements for orchestral players and those needed for a small string group. The emphasis on intimacy and transparency, initiated by Haydn, and later extended by Mozart and Beethoven, transformed the early experimental pieces of the *genre* into works of the highest standard consistent with completeness in the Viennese Classical period. This they did by recognizing the resources contained within the emotional and structural elements of such designs as 1st-movement-sonata-form, and by developing them, within the constraints of the *genre*, to an unequalled level of complexity. To many the Classical Viennese repertory represents the highest peak achieved in Chamber music, when composers wholly in tune with its ideals arguably entrusted their finest thoughts to the String Quartet. Yet the music of Haydn and Mozart in particular was, to a certain extent, dependent on the narrow limits of the tastes of polite circles. The political, philosophical and sociological developments at the end of the 18th century saw the uprising of ‘man’ whose

broadening of thought brought, amongst other liberties, a new vigorous expression in art and literature. Beethoven was the first great composer to whom the limitless field of unconventional human emotion was opened up, and his temperament was ready for the opportunity to express this musically. In this sense, his later works became the prototype of 'modern' music, as he was the first exponent to expand, to the utmost, the liberty of expression and the breaking of all boundaries imposed on musical compositions of the period. (12)

With all of this in mind, several similarities become evident between Beethoven's approach to string quartets and Eliot's execution of *Four Quartets*. Both emphasize intimacy and transparency, both set out from a 1st-movement exposition that is developed within constraints found in that very movement, both aspire to integrate sociological and philosophical dimensions to the human experience and attempt to integrate a wide range of emotions with equal weightiness. Furthermore, Beethoven's String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, Op. 132 shares the five-movement structure found in all *Four Quartets*. This last relation appears validated by a letter Eliot wrote to Stephen Spender four years before writing the first of the four poems: "I have the A minor Quartet on the gramophone, and find it quite inexhaustible to study . . . ; I should like to get something of that into verse before I die" (Tate 54). Eliot, however, abstained from commenting on the relation between his poems and Beethoven's string quartets beyond very broad terms that left one with the idea that the connection was not very profound. Marjorie Perloff quotes a 1946 letter Eliot saying:

There is no suggestion that my *Four Quartets* are intended for four voices or indeed for any voice except the author's, as most lyrical poetry is. As soon as the author has a different voice in mind than his own the poem becomes to that extent dramatic. I meant simply chamber music with distinct themes and movements. (69-70)

This leads Perloff to conclude that “although Eliot later told interviewers that he ‘had particularly in mind the late quartets of Beethoven,’ and that he wanted to get into poetry the sense of ‘reconciliation and relief after immense suffering’ that he admired in these quartets, ‘there wasn’t,’ as he told his brother Henry, ‘that much of a parallel’” (70).

Nevertheless, literary critics have found a number of further connections between string quartets and *Four Quartets* beyond Eliot’s affirmation about his poems. F.O. Matthiessen was the first to formally study the poems in terms of “movements” rather than “parts,” as Eliot referred to them in development. This effort that was followed by Hugh Kenner in *The Invisible Poet*, which tried to explain the movements of each poem in *Four Quartets* thematically and found them more similar to Bela Bartok’s String Quartets no. 2-6 than to Beethoven’s no. 15. In *The Art of T.S. Eliot*, Helen Gardner went a step further, by being the first to study the poem’s verse structure. By incorporating the purpose of different stress-patterned lines in the series, Gardner’s asseverations on the thematic and functional implications of each movement and poem added an extra layer of depth to the critical study of the musicality of *Four Quartets*. Moreover, Grover Smith even labeled the movements of each of the poems as “allegro,” “andante,” “minuet,” “scherzo,” and “rondo,” but the dubious thematical connections between these names and the movements of each poem are probably the reason why this designation was not picked up by other critics. More recently, Aakanksha Virkar-Yates and Marjorie Perloff have drawn on this kind of literary criticism to argue for the poems’ contribution to Schopenhauerian aesthetics and concrete poetry, respectively. The validity of these claims, however, can only be assessed in the light of the poems as themselves presented below.

Four Quartets

Four Quartets is a series of poems written by T.S. Eliot between the years 1935 and 1942. These poems were grouped together by Eliot around the idea of a musical analogy: just

like a string quartet makes a new whole out of the participation of each individual instrument, Eliot wrote to John Hayward in August of 1942 that *Four Quartets* are supposed to suggest “the notion of making a poem by weaving in together three or four superficially unrelated themes: the ‘poem’ being the degree of success in making a new whole out of them” (Gardner 26). Each of the four poems reflects on three or four ideas from the reflective vantage point of one of the four elements: “Burnt Norton,” first published as the closing work of Eliot’s *Collected Poems 1909-1935* in April of 1936, meditates around the concept of air; “East Coker,” first published as a supplement to the *New English Weekly* in March of 1940, meditates around the concept of earth; “The Dry Salvages,” first published as a supplement to the *New English Weekly* in February of 1941, meditates around the concept of water; and “Little Gidding,” first published as a supplement to the *New English Weekly* in October of 1942, meditates around the concept of fire. Even though they were not originally published or even conceived together, as Eliot himself recognized that he had not thought of making a group of four poems until he was writing “East Coker” (Gardner, *Composition* 18), they deal with similar issues in an increasingly intense way, creating together what is arguably his best work. In her thorough and now fundamental work on the composition of the *Four Quartets*, Helen Gardner mentions:

[In his interview with Donald Hall for the *Paris Review*,] Eliot assented to his interviewer’s asking him whether he felt the *Four Quartets* was his ‘best work’, adding ‘I’d like to feel that they get better as they go on. The Second is better than the first, the third is better than the second, and the fourth is the best of all.’

(4)

As such, *Four Quartets*, being the crown jewel of the astounding literary legacy of T.S. Eliot, is of the utmost importance for literary studies and deserve, thematically, very close attention.

T.S. Eliot took inspiration from the string quartets by Ludwig van Beethoven (probably String Quartet No. 15 in A minor and Große Fugue for String Quartet especially, since they share the characteristic five-movement structure) in the composition of his *Four Quartets*. Eliot himself expands on this debt in his lecture *The Music of Poetry*, and F.O. Matthiessen and Helen Gardner studied the specifics of how this musical inspiration permeates *Four Quartets*. In her 1949 essay “The Music of *Four Quartets*”, Gardner maintains that “each poem is structurally a poetic equivalent of the classical symphony, or quartet, or sonata, as distinct from the suite” and that, hence, “[e]ach poem contains what are best described as five ‘movements’, each with its own inner necessary structure” (120). Aside from pointing this out, the critic was also exhaustive in specifying the common structural and thematic characteristics each movement has throughout the poem, coming up with very interesting results. Considering this, the five parts of each quartet will be referred further as “movements,” and the metaphoric patterns found will be put into context with the structural and thematic patterns of Gardner.

The first poem in *Four Quartets* was published in 1936 as part of T.S. Eliot’s *Collected Poems 1909-1935*, at a time when Eliot was attempting to make the transition from poetry into drama. Helen Gardner notes in *Composition of Four Quartets* how “[t]he opening paragraph of *Burnt Norton*, except for minor alterations in wording, was originally written as a comment from the Second Priest after the Second Tempter” (39). The style of the poet had clearly taken a shift and was received with mixed comments, from enthusiastic but confessedly confused remarks by D.W. Harding who mentions that the poem “makes no statement” to the disappointment of George Orwell with the Christian line of the poem when he writes that “[i]n theory, it is possible to be an orthodox religious believer without being intellectually crippled in the process; but it is far from easy” (85).

The peculiarity of the poem with respect to the earlier writing of T.S. Eliot is akin to the drastic changes that had been taking place in the life of the poet. In a way, “Burnt Norton” is the culmination of a transition period in the life of Eliot which would not lead into peace, but into World War II. Helen Gardner wrote:

In October 1932 Eliot left England for six months in order to deliver the Charles Eliot Norton lectures at his old university, Harvard, and the Page-Barbour lectures at the University of Virginia. He had not visited the United States since 1915, when he had gone over for a brief visit to tell his parents of his marriage and his decision to settle in England. He said good-bye to his wife at Southampton, and while he was in America instructed his solicitor to begin proceedings for a legal separation. . . . It was a time of painful reflection on what had been and on what might have been, of memories intertwined with the scenes of his childhood and young manhood. It was a time for taking up old contacts and old friendships. It was also a time when the future was uncertain and had somehow to be built on the failure of the past. (*Composition* 31-32)

This mood would clearly permeate the poem. It would also be permeated by his conversion. Eliot was baptized in the Anglo-Catholic church in 1927 (with his wife absent from the ritual) and, upon his return to England in 1933, he pursued to develop his faith. For example, he joined the Society of the Sacred Mission, an Anglican religious community dedicated to theological education, in September 1933, and he would continue to attend throughout the composition of “Burnt Norton.” (Gardner, *Composition* 38)

“East Coker,” the second in the newly conceived series, was published on Good Friday, 1940, nearly five years after the composition of “Burnt Norton.” According to Gardner, the composition of the poem must have been done at a high speed, as “little more than a fortnight . . . elapsed between Eliot’s telling [John] Hayward he had drafted the first

two parts and his sending him the completed draft” (*Composition* 18). After having set poetry aside to pursue his interest in playwriting and Christian activism, the endeavor of following “Burnt Norton” was received with surprise by Eliot’s circle of friends as well as himself, who is quoted by John Hayward in February, 1940 to have written that “[‘East Coker’] may be quite worthless, because most of it looks to me like an imitation of myself” (Gardner, *Composition* 16-17). Many reasons can be speculated as having influenced Eliot to focus on poetry once again and, particularly, on the structure he created for “Burnt Norton.” Kenneth Paul Kramer suspects the foreboding anxiety Eliot must have felt that war was imminent after the Chamberlain-Hitler pact in September of 1938 and the German invasion of Poland one year later to have been a major factor (65). After publishing *The Family Reunion* on March 21st, 1939 (one year and one day before “East Coker”), a play that encompasses a normal world and a spiritual one, Eliot found himself discontinuing both his playwright work and *Criterion*, the literary review he edited, and signing up as an air raid warden. One could also speculate that the interment of his ex-wife Vivienne in a mental hospital in August 1938, along with Eliot reaching his fifties, could have influenced his priorities. Two facts, nonetheless, can be established with certainty. First, that it was during the composition of “East Coker” that Eliot conceived of the idea of four quartets that meditated around the four elements and the four seasons, as Eliot himself “stated more than once” (Gardner, *Composition* 18). Second, that the advent of war, the sacramental idea of marriage, a connection to one’s family, and the arrival at middle age are all themes that play an important part in “East Coker.”

“The Dry Salvages” was also written at high speed, as Eliot was already discussing it in correspondence with John Hayward by January 4th, 1941 (Gardner, *Composition* 19.) It had been thoroughly corrected for publication by the end of the month and first published on February 27th, 1941, less than a year after the publication of “East Coker.” It is a most

nostalgic and personal poem in the midst of World War II. While “East Coker” pivots around the search for an ancestral home, “The Dry Salvages” draws deeply from Eliot’s American homes and experiences to cope with the outcome of the Battle of Britain. He particularly drew from his Indian studies at Harvard (around three decades earlier) to summon an Arjuna who hesitates about taking his place in the cousin war between Pandavas and Kauravas. In *The Composition of Four Quartets*, Helen Gardner quotes Hindu scholar B.P.N. Sinha’s interpretation that Eliot draws the concept of Karma-Yoga, disinterested action, as an answer to this reluctance (56), spoken by Krishna in the third movement, but also by the sea and the river in the first, and requested from the Virgin Mary in the fourth.

This has both personal and national connotations. While the United States would not join the war officially until the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941 (almost a year after the composition of the poem,) the American attitude towards the war was far from nonchalant. President Franklyn Delano Roosevelt had already signed the Selective Training and Service Act on September 16th, 1940 (the first “peace-time” draft in US history) despite the reluctance of a Congress that had, nonetheless, already agreed to “Cash and Carry” arm sales with Great Britain. Like most British citizens, Eliot must have longed for the inclusion of his native country in the fight against an openly aggressive Germany, but not without the reluctance of one who could as easily have been stranded in Marburg as in Oxford in the previous war, and who knew the stakes for a homeland that, at the time of his departure, had a smaller military than most European countries. In the face of the most destructive war in human history, Eliot’s voice is that of both a hesitating Arjuna and a resolute Krishna of his Harvard days. It is a voice looking for the eternal at the expectation of dramatic changes.

“Little Gidding,” the last of the series, took a lot more out of Eliot than the previous quartets. While “Burnt Norton” seems to have grown organically from *Murder in the Cathedral*, and “East Coker” and “The Dry Salvages” quickly followed one another making

seamless intertextual connections with each other, “Little Gidding” took two years (one of almost complete hiatus) to be written and published.

There were many reasons for this delay. First, Eliot made himself very busy in this period with church engagements, lecturing, and the odd combination of both, as in the lectures he imparted in Sweden on behalf of the British Council in the hope to achieve an organized opposition to Hitler through the Swedish Church (*Composition 20*). This hectic schedule led to a second possible reason for the delay of “Little Gidding,” which is the fact that, due to exhaustion and aging, Eliot was constantly sick at the time. Furthermore, Eliot submitted himself to several tooth extractions and subsequent dental plate installations between 1941 and 1942 (*Composition 20*). These discomforts, added to the ones expected from wartime England and a bombed London, explain the possible third reason for the delay: during those two years, Eliot suffered from severe existential dread and despair on the notion of poetry. As he wrote to Martin Browne on October 20, 1942:

It is one thing to see what was best worth one's while doing, in a distant retrospect: but in the midst of what is going on now, it is hard, when you sit down at a desk, to feel confident that morning after morning spent fiddling with words and rhythms is a justified activity –especially as there is never any certainty that the whole thing won't have to be scrapped. And on the other hand, external or public activity is more of a drug than is this solitary toil which often seems so pointless. (Gardner, *Composition 21*)

All this prompted Eliot at several times to abandon “Little Gidding” altogether. The poems still did not have a joint identity and they could perfectly stand as a trilogy. Hayward explains in a letter to Frank Vigor Morley in October, 1941: “[Eliot's] chief fear was that he was simply repeating himself and so running the risk of producing an elegant parody of the earlier poems in the group” (Gardner, *Composition 25*). This anxiety was already present in

the composition of “East Coker” and “The Dry Salvages,” as it is made patent on lines 133 and 96 of each poem, respectively. It was, however, much more overwhelming for “Little Gidding” because, Gardner observes, “[i]t had to gather up the earlier [quartets] and be the crown and conclusion of the series.” (*Composition 21*) Eliot was painfully aware of this when he wrote Hayward on the submission of his second draft: “[e]ven if this is better than the first version (which I assume you still have by you) it may not be good enough, and if it is not good enough (minor improvements, of course, apart) then I fear the poem must simply be allowed to disintegrate.” (Gardner, *Composition 25*) Fortunately, by September 1942, significant progress had been made on the poem, which was sent for printing in the *New English Weekly* in the same month. Word alterations, nonetheless, continued to take place until its publication on October 15th, 1942. It was to be his last published poem.

Eliot was quite set by 1942 to name the series of poems as “quartets,” but the name he had in mind at first was “Kensington Quartets” due to the personal significance that area had in his life during the composition of all four poems. His friends, Hayward and Morley, were content with “quartets,” but Hayward thought “Kensington” would be misleading. As such, the series was finally published in America as *Four Quartets* on May 11, 1943 and in London until October 31st, 1944.

Critical Work

T.S. Eliot’s poetry gathered the attention of literary critics from very early on in his career. “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” his first published poem, received significant praise since its release in 1915, and his name had already been included in *New Bearings in English Poetry* by renowned critic F.R. Leavis, by 1932, alongside Ezra Pound and Gerald Manley Hopkins. Each individual poem from *Four Quartets* received considerable attention on their individual releases, like D.W. Harding’s 1936 “A Newly Created Concept” on

“Burnt Norton” that states that the poem offers a novel way of approaching meaning in poetry (which would make it a precursor of post-modern poetry,) or James Johnson Sweeney’s 1941 ““East Coker’: A Reading,” a thorough review (later expanded, annotated, and historically grounded in 1944 by Curtis Bradford) that addresses “East Coker,” part by part, in a refreshingly sober manner, giving equal weightiness to Eliot’s Christian, Classic, and British influences (approach which would later affect positively the work of the likes of Gardner, Stead, Traversi, Quinn, or Kramer.)

However, it is of special note to mention a debate on “Little Gidding” that took place in *Scrutiny* magazine in 1943 (the year after the publication of the poem) between D.W. Harding, R.N. Higinbotham, and F.R. Leavis, which anthologizer Bernard Bergonzi (whose work is very helpful to understanding the early reception of *Four Quartets*) gathers under the title: ““Little Gidding’: A disagreement in *Scrutiny*.” It started with Harding’s publication of “We Have Not Reached Conclusion,” where he shares his view that “Little Gidding” is a great triumph for poetry in general and for Eliot in particular, who moved in *Four Quartets* from using intellectual materials emotionally to using them intellectually. Higinbotham published a rebuttal to this view entitled “Objections to a Review of ‘Little Gidding’”, where he, based on Harding’s point, argued that Eliot leaned unsuccessfully on the more intellectual message of *Four Quartets*, whose successes were emotional rehashes of his earlier poetry rather than the variations he incorporated into his poetic style. In light of this, F.R. Leavis published his own article, which is more a defense of Harding and an attack on Higinbotham than a comment on *Four Quartets*. It, however, did manage to blur the line between the intellectual and emotional material about which the other critics argued (introducing the necessity of psychological and philosophical perspectives on the literary criticism of the four poems) and to argue that many peoples’ negative outlook on *Four Quartets* had more to do with the attitude they believe poetry should have than with what the poems actually do. This

insight into the disagreement between Harding and Higinbotham pinpoints a bias in the reception of *Four Quartets* that has been, sadly, relevant until the present day.

From their individual and later joined release, *Four Quartets* has been judged more because of its inherent Christian and conservative ideology than on their aesthetic merit. This bias caused peculiar effects in the critical work concerning the poems. In 1956, Donald Davie wrote:

I find it very surprising that all readers seem to either accept or reject the *Four Quartets* as a whole –and not yet really surprising, since the cleavage comes plainly not along any line of literary fact, but is fragrantly ideological; the religiously inclined applaud the *Quartets*, the more or less militantly secular and ‘humanist’ decry them. As simple as that. (153)

Actually, this statement was true of Eliot’s work since his baptism into the Church of England and subsequent publication of “Ash Wednesday” in 1927, about eight years before the composition of “Burnt Norton”. As Donald Gallup points out, Ezra Pound, Eliot’s sponsor into the London poetry scene (who was substantial in the publication of “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”) decried Eliot’s newfound religiosity in his “caustic” couplet: “In any case, let us lament the psychosis / Of all those who abandon the Muses for Moses.” The publication of *Four Quartets*, due to the poems’ undeniable sophistication and complexity, stoked the fire of ideological conflict within a Modernist literary movement that had traditionally identified as countercultural, and tended to object to conservatism and institutionalized religion.

Short and sharp negative reviews of the poems that echoed Higinbotham’s complaints were common during the 1940s, which made little to no attempt to hide their bias against Eliot’s Christian and conservative tone. Representative of these could be the article entitled “Mr T.S. Eliot’s Confession,” published in the *Times Literary Supplement* in September of

1940, which argued that Eliot was a detractor of poetry and that *Four Quartets* is a sort of excuse for his lack of development as a poet, which achieves to identify the tension of the poems with poetry itself as a testament of time's passing and a route to the eternal. Another, perhaps, more famous example of this trend is George Orwell's "T.S. Eliot," that characterizes *Four Quartets* as a "melancholy of faith and the earlier [poems as] a glowing despair." (83) For Orwell, *Four Quartets* are less memorable poems, and their keynote is half-hearted resignation. In his own words:

[T]he negative Pétainism which turns its eyes to the past, accepts defeat, writes off earthly happiness as impossible, mumbles about prayer and repentance and thinks it a spiritual advance to see life as 'a pattern of living worms in the guts of the women in Canterbury' –that, surely, is the least hopeful road a poet could take. (87)

At the same time, longer and perhaps more explicative criticism was produced about *Four Quartets* that was just as transparent about its positive bias. In "The *Four Quartets* Reconsidered" of 1948, R.W. Flint argues that the poems can only be truly grasped by people with Christian faith, and calls Eliot a prophet to oppose Jean-Paul Sartre's brand of existentialism. Flint's work could be considered an extreme example, but even more sober work like F.O. Mathiessen's "The 'Quartets'" published in 1943 (later reprinted in 1947 as *The Achievement of T.S. Eliot*,) Raymond Preston's 1948 '*Four Quartets*' *Rehearsed*, or the collection of early essays by Helen Gardner entitled *The Art of T.S. Eliot* published in 1949 are prone to suspicion because of their authors' marked taste for studying work that is conservative and Christian. Namely, Mathiessen's thorough review of the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Preston's other interest being Chaucer, and Helen Gardner's other great dedication being to John Donne's *Holy Sonnets* raise questions about their objectivity.

The work of these three is, nonetheless, very noteworthy, as it established most of the norms that would be adopted in later criticism of *Four Quartets*. F.O. Matthiessen created a critical framework to study *Four Quartets* in musical terms, which would be later picked up by most scholars (on both sides of the bias) and fully developed, finally, by Helen Gardner. As for content, Matthiessen argued that “whereas Eliot’s earlier poetry was difficult in form, his later work is difficult in thought” (102). This assessment should be taken with a grain of salt, as Jorge Luis Borges himself pointed in his article “‘The Achievement of T.S. Eliot’ de F.O. Matthiessen” to the previously mentioned bias when he writes that “[Matthiessen] is less interested in Thomas Eliot the man than Eliot’s ideas, and the ideas less than the form he gives them” (“[e]l hombre Tomás Eliot le interesa menos que las ideas de Eliot, y las ideas menos que la forma que éste les da”; *my trans.*; 146). Raymond Preston, on the other hand, published what can be described as the first analytic and progressive set of notes on *Four Quartets*. Preston’s insights on the themes and narrative progression of the individual poems would be very often quoted and picked up in later criticism, but Preston’s tone makes them seem almost devotional poems, undermining his claim to objectivity. For example, Preston concludes his analysis by stating that “to understand *Four Quartets* we need to live with them, and to even live by them” (64). Also, Helen Gardner’s 1949 collection of essays based on her Oxford lectures of the previous year illuminates on Eliot’s use of music, drama, and the seasons as pillars for *Four Quartets*. This work is probably the most influential done in the 1940s, taking Leavis’ and Matthiessen’s ideas to their logical conclusion and setting the stage for her later work, which will be addressed below.

The following decades would enforce the ideological bias previously noted. Poet Karl Shapiro argued in his article “Poetic Bankruptcy” that Eliot had traded poetry for abstract metaphysics in his *Four Quartets*, which was a clear sign of his depletion as a poet. This is very representative of the negative bias towards *Four Quartets*, which was mostly dismissive

characterizing them as a step back from “The Waste Land.” This caused the non-religious interest in the poems to dwindle in the following decades. Nonetheless, three important exceptions to this pattern are the work of Donald Davie, Hugh Kenner, and C.K. Stead, which are just as thorough as their more conservative counterparts, but with a sharp wit against Eliot’s Christian tone after World War I. Davie argues that *Four Quartets* is best understood in the context of post-symbolist American poetry rather than post-Victorian British poetry. He views the poems as technically derivative of Whitman (though philosophically opposite) and mostly a progressive parody of themselves, a fear that Eliot shared, as noted before. Hugh Kenner makes a very insightful take on the overall pattern of *Four Quartets* but is highly critical of the fourth movement of each, which he considers a satirical false resolution of each poem. Kenner also expands this idea to “The Dry Salvages,” which he believes serves as the fourth movement of the grand pattern and, as such, is a satirical production meant to be understood as a false resolution of the work. Finally, C.K. Stead delineates the function of each section of every quartet (clearly avoiding Gardner’s ideas and her and Matthiessen’s musical nomenclature) to argue that the poems’ rigidity was meant to allow Eliot a more conscious voice in *Four Quartets* than he had in “The Waste Land,” but Eliot failed to insert it. Many lines in the poems themselves (lines 174-175 of East Coker, for instance) suggest that Eliot may have agreed with that argument.

Particularly Christian scholars, on the other hand, created a critical niche environment for *Four Quartets* during the fifties and sixties leading up to our age. The fact that T.S. Eliot was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature (which he himself described in his banquet speech as a validation of his status at the time as a “symbol . . . of the significance of poetry”) stoked in these scholars interest in *Four Quartets* and their place in the history of poetry, although with varying degrees of distasteful ideological overtones. To list some examples, Martin McLuhan wrote a mostly sober short article in 1951 about the symbolic and

psychological role that landscape plays in each of the quartets, which proved a very valuable contribution for further study on the poems. Morris Weitz' 1952 article "Time as a Mode of Salvation" (mostly focused on "Burnt Norton") argued that *Four Quartets*' notion of time is not Heraclitan but one of Neo-platonic immanence and pushed forward the idea that Eliot's poetry has always been religious. A. Alvarez' "A Meditative Poet" views *Four Quartets* as "*The Waste Land* refined, matured and judged with the confidence of standards" (241), from an Eliot that has become a "meditative poet," even though Alvarez argues that his Christianity is only coincidental. William Lynch's "Dissociation in Time" makes a profoundly Christian reading of *Four Quartets* in which he proposes that both the flux of time and the timeless in the poems are facets of God. And David Perkins contextualized the rose-garden episode of "Burnt Norton" as the world of childish fantasy redeemed by religious commitment. None of these investigations are without worth, but their blatant ideological agenda casts doubt on their arguments and discouraged non-religious critics to build on their ideas.

T.S. Eliot's death in 1965 stoked interest in all of his poetry, and this was true also for *Four Quartets* within the niche environment already described. On the occasion of the death of the poet, for instance, Denis Donoghue tried a "new reading" of the poems where he also addressed Kenner's and Davie's complaints on the whole of the work, and on "The Dry Salvages" in particular. His obvious Christian agenda and disregard of Gardner's and Matthiessen's previous work made Donoghue's attempts seem lackluster, but his incursion into issues of multiple narrative voices in *Four Quartets* are, nonetheless, surprisingly insightful. The most significant contribution, however, appears in 1978, when Helen Gardner published *The Composition of Four Quartets* as the culmination of decades of work. It organizes, with the help of direct sources like John Hayward and Valerie Eliot, along with letters, interviews, and early drafts of the poems, the process of composing *Four Quartets*. It

has become the definite source for the structure and development of the poems as well as a profound insight into the context of their composition. Much more recently, scholar of religion Kenneth Paul Kramer launched a similar analysis in his 2007 book *Redeeming Time*. It makes thorough and profound use of all the most important critical work done on *Four Quartets* to unveil Eliot's "unusual apprehension of time" (179), but within a context of "interspiritual practices" (179) that are not within the scope or concern of literary criticism.

This critical work is very valuable, but its bias towards conservatism became less and less palatable to the field of literary criticism in the later stages of the XX century. Less biased work during the second half of the century was produced, however, in studies that focused on Eliot's whole career in poetry rather than *Four Quartets* in particular. Derek Traversi's 1971's *T.S. Eliot: The Longer Poems* is an exceptional work that does not sacrifice rigor in the study of *Four Quartets* while grounding them in the context of Eliot's other poetry and English literature in general. Traversi decries how *Four Quartets* should not be read as devotional poetry, but as what it is: poetry. From this perspective, Traversi addresses the poems from a refreshingly vast literary perspective, which denounces harshly the poetical limitations of "The Dry Salvages" but claims "Little Gidding" is Eliot's last important achievement as a poet. Nancy Duvall Hargrove's *Landscape as Symbol in the Poetry of T.S. Eliot* from 1978 greatly expanded McLuhan's ideas about the role of landscape in the four poems, making it particularly valuable for this investigation. Nancy K. Gish's *Time in the Poetry of T.S. Eliot*, published in 1981, is another notable book whose emphasis on time is of special interest to the study at hand. Gish makes full use of *Four Quartets*' previous critical work, specially from Gardner's and Stead's, in order to draw the poems' notions of time and timeless reality from its structural pattern. She sides with Stead in believing *Four Quartets*' ideas were won at the expense of emotion, but her analysis seems superficial or "watered-

down” when compared to Kenneth Paul Kramer’s, who also explored time in the poems. Gish’s work, however, has the advantage of being thoroughly literary.

Because of the poems’ high profile and famous difficulty, a number of guides have been made to address them in the spirit of James Johnson Sweeney’s or Raymond Preston’s attempts. Of note are Maire A. Quinn’s *Notes on Four Quartets* and Servotte and Grene’s *Annotations to T.S. Eliot’s Four Quartets*. Both make very competent use of the previous work on the poems to make notes that are better informed than Preston’s or Johnson Sweeney’s, but they work mostly on an introductory level. It is of note that a very slight level of heightened specificity can be found in Servotte and Grene’s work, despite being published twenty-five years later than Quinn’s. This highlights the fact that the critical work on *Four Quartets* has apparently reached a plateau given the immediate and intense attention the poems received by some of the most accomplished literary critics of the time.

As it has been argued, a review of the literature on *Four Quartets* is marked by an ideological bias first, and a number of aesthetic realizations that seem secondary despite the fact that the product being analyzed are four poems and not a political treatise or religious dogma. Nonetheless, aesthetic consensuses have been agreed upon. From the early analyses of the forties to date, critics agree that the poems are technically complex in their employing an amalgamation of old and modern poetic styles, as well as thematically complex in their approaching the dawning and development of World War II through difficult philosophies and mysticisms of the past. Because of this, it has always been clear that the poems are historically relevant as one of the closing chapters of the modernist movement, which would be followed by a postmodernity where the combination of modern ideas with old-time mysticism is far less flammable.

Critical work on *Four Quartets* has probably become a little stagnant, nonetheless, due to the intense attention it gathered upon release, the outstandingly thorough analyses

made in the following decades to its publication, and the change in literary focus that came afterwards. This is not to say that there is not anything else to study about the poems. The studies by Aakanksha Virkar-Yates, Edward Upton, and Marjorie Perloff are examples of the continued interest in *Four Quartets*. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that those studies do not attempt to study the poems *per se* but use them to comment on the issues of Buddhism, Schopenhauerian aesthetics, and concrete poetry, respectively. The present study addresses *Four Quartets* in a similar fashion.

While the questions of what the poems are, what they do, and how they came about have been thoroughly researched, little analysis has been given to how they approach their ideas in the larger scope of cognition and metaphor. The poems, drawing on old and new techniques to wield old ideas in order to cope with very modern problems, have a timelessness about them that is extraordinarily interesting from a cognitive perspective. How *Four Quartets* integrates techniques and themes of vastly different ages into a cohesive whole could point at how people's ideas about time and timelessness are integrated metaphorically to begin with, which has not been addressed to date (even in works like Kramer's or Gish's that focus on Eliot's concept of time,) and is the primary objective of this study.

Theoretical Framework

In essence, *Four Quartets* is made up of four very intimate spiritual reflections on the personal experience of time and eternity. Kenneth Paul Kramer argues that the poetry of T.S. Eliot, after his conversion to the Anglican Church in 1927, is characterized by a "mix of atemporal moments of ecstasy with moments of temporal horror" (7). This is certainly true for *Four Quartets*, where reflections on a spiritual "logos" are conceived as responsive to ideas of time. The tone of all *Four Quartets* is set in the first ten lines of "Burnt Norton,"

which “frame not only ‘Burnt Norton’ but the entire *Four Quartets* in the context of time and timelessness” (Kramer 33), stating:

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.
What might have been is an abstraction
Remaining a perpetual possibility
Only in a world of speculation.
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present. (1-10)

These lines should be reminiscent on St. Augustine of Hippo’s own reflection on time and eternity in his *Confessions*:

For what is time? Who can readily and briefly explain this? . . . If no one asks me, I know; if I wish to explain it to one that asketh, I know not; yet I say boldly that I know, that if nothing passed away, time past were not; and if nothing were coming, a time to come were not; and if nothing were, time present were not . . . But the present, should it always be present, and never pass into time past, verily should not be time, but eternity. (166-167)

This reflection, in turn, should bring one back to the dialogue with *Timaeus* by Plato, which establishes that time is “a moving image of eternity.” (27) For that matter, it should also bring one forward from Plato into *Ethics* by Baruch Spinoza, which establishes that “[i]n so far as the mind sees things in their eternal aspect, it participates in eternity.” (175) The fact of the matter is that these reflections on time and eternity are plenty in both philosophy and

literature, eastern and western, ancient and current. However, what gives special beauty to the reflections by Eliot on time and eternity is not so much what he is stating, but how he does it.

According to Marshall McLuhan, the prime innovation of Eliot to modernist poetry is what McLuhan calls “psychological landscape” (239). That is, Eliot’s “objective correlative” or physical expression of the poet’s state of mind “becomes the places and things which utter themselves” (240). The treatment Eliot gives to time is always done through an examination of specific spaces, which give each “quartet” its title. Author Nancy Duvall Hargrove goes further into making a topic of the reflections by Eliot in *Four Quartets* by stating specific landscapes for each of his main psychological states.

What can be interpreted from this approach of time through space? Essentially, the use of such objective correlative is a matter of metaphor. Time and timelessness as ideas are “born across” (“metaphora” in Latin, which itself comes from the Greek “μεταφορά” which means “to transfer”) through particular images of space. In the spirit of the investigation of the particular symbolism that Eliot uses in *Four Quartets* between landscapes and psychological states by Duvall Hargrove, it would yield interesting results to analyze the metaphorical patterns that Eliot uses to approach time and eternity. Sophisticated as they are, would we recognize these patterns in the way we are used to talk and think about time in our everyday lives? To answer this would imply categorizing and classifying time-space metaphors in *Four Quartets* in comparison to our usual notions of time, which requires a deeper discussion of the study of metaphor.

The notion of metaphor is deceptively simple. Because it is such a staple of speech, its definition becomes instinctive to many, and so its particularities, needed for its study, are lost. For instance, let us take the following three examples as an illustration. A grade schooler might define metaphor basely as a comparison between two objects. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines it, more specifically, as “the figure of speech in which a name or

descriptive term is transferred to some object different from, but analogous to, that which it is properly applicable; an instance of this, a metaphorical expression” (1781). Author Salman Rushdie defined metaphor, in a more florid manner, as “a sort of migration, the migration of ideas into images” (278). None of these definitions is incorrect, and yet, all of them fall short when pinning down the all-encompassing role that metaphor has in language, not to mention the metaphoric patterns which could orient the understanding of the meditations on time in the poems.

Aristotle provides the oldest sources available to attempt to organize metaphor into patterns in his *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*. In *Poetics*, a work dedicated to the excellence of poetry paying special attention to tragedy, the author defines metaphor as “the application of an alien name by transference either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or by analogy, that is, proportion.” (41) Aristotle amplified the scope of this basic classification by also including the study of metaphor into his *Rhetoric*, dedicated not to poetry or drama but to the elaboration of persuasive speeches. This movement is of importance, as it shifts the study of metaphor from aesthetics into everyday life. The shift implied studying metaphor as something we live by, a basic device of language. Aristotle affirms that “[i]n the language of prose, besides the regular and proper terms for things, metaphorical terms only can be used with advantage. This we gather from the fact that two classes of terms, the proper or regular and the metaphorical—these and no others—are used by everybody in conversation” (122). This change in the study of metaphor was quite ahead of its time, as the later works of Paul de Man or George Lakoff will validate, but the classification of only four kinds of metaphor to be understood within Aristotelian logic would later be found lacking. Assimilating different figures of speech within metaphor is a very synthetic idea, but insufficient analysis of the fine details of what goes into the connections of the phenomenon opened the door for extensive posterior study.

Quintilian followed the lead of Aristotle as far as the study of metaphor and is usually considered his philosophical successor in the field. He maintained the idea of metaphor as a basic device of speech as well as the four-fold structure of Aristotle, but took a step away from Aristotelian logic into a more compatible nomenclature by classifying metaphors by shifts of animation. His four categories are: animate-animate, inanimate-inanimate, animate-inanimate, and inanimate-animate. This change in categorization clarifies something that had been left blurred by Aristotle: the fact that there are two parts to a metaphor and that it is the shift between the nature of these parts that is crucial to the study of the phenomenon.

Despite this improvement, Quintilian, focused primarily on the fourth category (animation of the inanimate), did not make a thorough analysis of metaphor by pricing clarity for oration over diversity. He did understand metaphor as a basic linguistic phenomenon, but he professed implicit differences between the poor metaphors of simple people and high metaphors for formal rhetoric. This differentiation set the standard by which metaphor would be studied for years, as Quintilian became the foremost authority in the categorization of metaphor for centuries. Furthermore, XVIII century “Enlightenment” held a deep disregard for figurative language, favoring the use of “literal speech” which hindered research in metaphor. As Liselotte Gumpel affirmed, “the approach to metaphor remained basically unaffected in the millennia that lead from antiquity into the present” (57). This can be made clear through the example of one of the highest names in English literature and literary criticism: Dr. Samuel Johnson. James Boswell quotes Johnson in the XVII century stating that “metaphorical expression is a great excellence in style, when it is used with propriety, for it gives you two ideas for the price of one” (343). This definition clearly maintains the aforementioned notion by the Classics of metaphor as a phenomenon consisting of two parts as well as their regard for a higher and a lower use of metaphor.

In the early XIX century, however, Pierre Fontanier improved on the categories by Quintilian after centuries where the classification of metaphor was largely left as it was. Fontanier added depth to the four categories set by Quintilian by including notions of concreteness or abstraction to some of them. So, even though he left categories like animate-animate or inanimate-animate largely untouched, he described the particularities of animate-inanimate metaphors where a physical animated attribute is granted to a physical inanimate idea. He also improved on the description of inanimate-inanimate metaphors where there is a shift between an abstract idea and a physical image or the attribution of moral states to an abstract, inanimate idea.

Another interesting development is achieved by famed Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelly in his “Defence of Poetry” of 1821, where he stated that:

[L]anguage is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before apprehended relations of things and perpetuates their apprehension, until words, which represent them, become, through time, signs for portions or classes of thought instead of pictures of integral thoughts. (676)

In this excerpt, Shelley does not only acknowledge metaphor as an integral phenomenon within language, but he also affirms that metaphor is a means by which we apprehend the relations between objects and incorporates those relations in the way we think about our surroundings. Moreover, he anticipates the idea that all words might themselves be forgotten metaphors that have lost their imaginary connections because of their constant use. In this assessment, Shelley will be the most important precursor to the theories of metaphor to be developed after the Victorian Era.

The XX century saw an immense leap in the field of metaphor. In 1931, *Meaning and Change of Meaning* by Gustaf Stern, in its eleventh chapter, truly exhausted the old categories of animation and inanimation, but perhaps the most relevant leap into modern

metaphor studies came in the lectures delivered by philosopher I.A. Richards at Bryn Mawr College in 1936. Building on classic notions as well as the contributions of Eighteenth and XIX century thinkers, Richards argued decisively on the fundamental role of metaphor in language against notions of refinement such as those by Aristotle or Quintilian, as well as organizing its study. Richards challenged Aristotle's idea in *Poetics* that "the greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor [;] [t]his alone cannot be imparted to another: it is the mark of genius, for to make good metaphors implies an eye for resemblances" (47) by arguing that:

[W]e all live, and speak, only through our eye for resemblances. Without it we should perish early. Though some have better eyes than other, the differences between them are in degree only and may be remedied, certainly in some measure, as other differences are, by the right kinds of teaching and study. (89-90)

Richards supported the notions of Shelley by stating that "[t]hought is metaphoric and proceeds by comparison [and so] [w]e must translate more of our skill into discussable science. Reflect better upon what we do already so cleverly. Raise our implicit recognitions into explicit distinctions" (94-95). In order to do this, Richards coined the terms "tenor" and "vehicle" to refer to the two halves of a metaphor. While this step might seem small, it made an enormous difference in the field. As Richards himself argued:

[T]he whole task is to compare the different relations which, in different cases, these two members of a metaphor hold to one another, and we are confused at the start if we do not know which of the two we are talking about. At present we have only some clumsy descriptive phrases with which to separate them. 'The original idea' and 'the borrowed one'; 'what is really being said or thought of' and 'what it is compared to'; 'the underlying idea' and 'what it resembles' or,

still more confusing, simply ‘the meaning’ and ‘the metaphor’ or ‘the idea’ and ‘its image.’ (96)

Finally, Richards also laid the groundwork for the posterior linguistic study of metaphor by amplifying the possibilities of study between literal speech (which he believed to be rare) and metaphoric speech. He states:

We are accustomed to distinguish between taking an utterance literally and taking it metaphorically or anagogically, but, at the simplest, there are at least four possible modes of interpretation to be considered, not two. And the kinds of believing that will be appropriate will as a rule be different. We can extract the tenor and believe that as a statement; or extract the vehicle; or, taking tenor and vehicle together, contemplate for acceptance or rejection some statement about their relations, or we can accept or refuse the direction which together they would give to our living. (134-135)

Two branches of thought will support the conclusions of I.A. Richards throughout the XX century and take the field to where it currently stands: the poststructuralist approach and the cognitive approach. Though both branches are contemporary and their ideas on metaphor are very similar, the conclusions they draw from those ideas and the objectives they set for themselves afterwards differ greatly.

Poststructuralism rises in the 1960s when a group of mostly French thinkers challenge the structuralist approach to linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure. Characteristic of poststructuralism is their focus on written language (which they do not believe to be derivative of oral language,) a disregard of scientific methodology, and a confrontational drive. This last drive can be appreciated as both Barthes’ overcoming of structuralism or Derrida’s deconstruction derive from a rejection of Raymond Picard’s take on linguistics and Rousseau’s notions on language, respectively. The main contributor to the field of metaphor

from poststructuralism is Belgium-born theorist Paul de Man who, true to their peers, arrived at his theory on metaphor from his challenge of the notions on language of Enlightenment thinker John Locke, as contrasted to the thought of Rousseau, Kant, and Nietzsche in his 1978 essay “The Epistemology of Metaphor.” Paul de Man affirms that “the free use of ordinary language is carried, like the child, by wild figuration which will make a mockery of the most authoritarian academy [,]” (19) and so “[a]ll philosophy is condemned, to the extent that it is dependent upon figuration, to be literary and, as the depository of this very problem, all literature is to some extent philosophical.” (30) Furthermore, de Man moves into the psychology of the phenomenon by stating that:

Being and identity are the results of a resemblance which is not in things but posited by an act of the mind which, as such, can only be verbal. And since to be verbal, in this context, means to allow substitutions based on illusory resemblances (the determining illusion being that of a shared negativity) then mind, or subject, is the central metaphor, the metaphor of metaphors. (25)

In this excerpt, de Man is affirming that the mind is metaphorical in both function and structure, which makes the study of metaphor a necessity for any incursion in rhetoric or philosophy. In de Man’s own words: “one may wonder whether the metaphors illustrate a cognition or if the cognition is not perhaps shaped by the metaphors.” (16)

Like Richards, Paul de Man can be credited with affirming that all language is figurative and that metaphor appears to be a necessary component of thought itself. One must wonder, then, why the work of Paul de Man completely overlooks the contributions of I.A. Richards or those of his own cognitivist contemporaries which will be discussed below. One could speculate that de Man was unaware of the work being done on metaphor by these others, which would not be unthinkable as the field, like previously stated, had been left mostly untouched for centuries. Nevertheless, speculation aside, it is safe to assume that de

Man would have rejected I.A. Richards' desire of trying to make the field of metaphor more compatible with scientific study, which was also the aim of the theorists who held a cognitive approach. This positioning is crucial in understanding the difference between the work being currently done by poststructuralists and that of cognitivists. Poststructuralists take the facts that language is metaphoric by nature and that the mind works metaphorically as a base to do work in deconstruction, perpetually challenging fixed meanings in language and thus achieving plurality. As will be explained, the cognitive approach to metaphor has focused more on the patterns that appear in the use of it. In other words, while poststructuralists focus on validating the differences that underlie the use of metaphor, cognitivists will argue for the ways in which all people use metaphors similarly.

Hungarian linguist Stephen Ullmann spearheads the development of the research of metaphor from a cognitive perspective by creating a different categorization from those done before in his 1962 *Semantics*. These categories (anthropomorphism, from concrete to abstract transference, objects into people, and synesthesia) were both simpler and more adaptable than those of their predecessors as they took shape from the object of study rather than adapting the object to a particular structure. This move marks a definite change from an ancient philosophy-oriented categorization into a more scientifically oriented one. Smith, Pollio, and Pitts (1981) take inspiration from this and make an analysis of 300 years of United States prose and poetry hoping to find patterns as those proposed by Stern and Ullman. They found a significant prevalence of Ullman's second category (transference of concrete characteristics into the abstract,) which led them to conclude that American literature of that period was fulfilling more of an explicative role. Years later, Yu (2003) made a similar study of Chinese literature in which he instead discovered prevalence of synesthesia (the fourth category in the work of Ullman,) which led him to believe that an explicative role was also being fulfilled in his sample, but in terms more sensorial than comparative.

The relevance of these studies is enhanced when taken along the concept of conceptual metaphors, as developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in 1980 in their seminal book *Metaphors We Live By*. In it, they claim that “most of our normal conceptual system is metaphorically structured; that is, most concepts are partially understood in terms of other concepts” (56). This assertion begs the questions that drive both the poststructuralist and the cognitive approaches to metaphor: are there any concepts at all that are understood directly, without metaphor? And, if not, how can we understand anything at all? Lakoff and Johnson answer these questions by arguing that there are a number of systematic correlations between sharper and foggier mental images which form what they call “conceptual metaphors,” recipes or patterns from which any number of particular metaphors can be formed. For example, spatial and perceptual concepts (such as UP-DOWN, IN-OUT, FRONT-BACK, LIGHT-DARK, WARM-COLD, etc.) are much more sharply delineated in our minds than, say, our emotional concepts, even though emotional experience is just as basic for human beings as spatial or perceptual experience. The contraposition between happiness and sadness seems to be much foggier than that between up and down. Nonetheless, a series of systematic correlations (conceptual metaphors) between emotions and spatial orientations can be traced in many languages which bridge the gap in understanding between the two fields. The conceptual metaphor HAPPY IS UP could be brought up for this particular example, which is a blueprint that gives way to expressions such as “things are looking up,” “I’m feeling down today,” or “thinking about home always gives me a lift.” This example, which Lakoff and Johnson quote as an “orientational metaphor,” is just one of the many conceptual metaphors, of increasing number through recombination and cohesion, that can be traced across languages, times, and cultures. This has made the research of conceptual metaphor one of brimming and constant experimentation and analysis worldwide. This is a thread of thought that, even today, feeds the analysis of

metaphorical development of psychologists such as Dedre Gentner and Raymond Gibbs, the study of patterns of time metaphors of Lera Boroditsky, or even one's own analysis of the correlations between magical occurrences and conceptual metaphors.

The course in the study of metaphor, from its different perspectives, seems to be making clear that metaphor is a basic and constant occurrence in everyday language. A pertinent question is: how is this to be applied to the literary study of time metaphors in *Four Quartets*? Furthermore, which perspective favors the study of said metaphors in light of this? Because the objective of this investigation is to analyze whether there are patterns of metaphor in *Four Quartets* and, if so, whether they hold a direct relation to our everyday use of metaphor or not, the cognitive approach has advantages over the poststructuralist approach. While the cultural and temporal particularities of the construction of the poems are, no doubt, very relevant and have an influence in the metaphorical constructions in them, the aim of this research needs to acknowledge the possibility of similarities existing between the poems and other uses of metaphor across times and cultures. This demands the use of a cognitive approach that can associate the poems in question with metaphorical construction at its most basic state by building up from research that spans areas outside the humanities.

In addition to this, the constant structure of each quartet has interesting implications when taken together with other research. The repetitive patterns and constant use of “unitive metaphors” (Kramer 23) have been pointed out constantly in the criticism of the poems and by Eliot himself. This repetition suggests an explicative use of metaphor, which would make *Four Quartets* fit the findings of Smith, Polio, and Pitts for American poetry of the time, which in turn would fit the second category Ullman proposes of metaphoric use. The content of the unitive metaphors also generates questions worth looking into, as their orientational characteristics with regards to time (“At the still point in the turning world” (62) or “Fare forward, travellers! Not escaping from the past / Into different lives, or into the future” (137-

138) to name just a couple from “Burnt Norton” and “The Dry Salvages,” respectively) could coincide with the observations of Lakoff and Johnson on the confluence of conceptual metaphors when addressing the issue. Lakoff and Johnson mostly did so by observing that, in English everyday speech, there are two contradictory organizations of time around the conceptual metaphor TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT. One of them places, metaphorically, the future as something that is in front of us and the past behind (examples of this could be found in expressions such as “in the weeks ahead of us...” for future and “that’s all behind us now” for past.) The other places the future behind and the past in front (examples could be “in the following weeks...” for future and “in the preceding weeks...” for past.) What further complicates this issue is that Lakoff and Johnson point out that these “apparently contradictory metaphors can mix with no ill effect, as in ‘We’re looking *ahead* to the *following* weeks’” (41). This co-existing organization, in regards to the topic at hand, begs the question of whether the time metaphors in the *Four Quartets* correspond to conceptual metaphors or not. If they do, the question of whether they are consistent throughout or mix different organizations of conceptual metaphors also comes up.

Lakoff and Johnson did not go further into the issue of co-existing organizations of time metaphors, as their work did not intend to provide in-depth analysis of any one conceptual metaphor but just to point out their pervading role in everyday speech. Because of this, they did not recognize how much further multiple conceptual metaphors mix into the way people speak about time. Lera Boroditsky has done in-depth research into time metaphors and found that both organizations suggested by Lakoff and Johnson, horizontal in nature, correspond to different mental processes through a series of clever experiments repeated under several conditions in her 2000 article in *Cognition*. In it, she describes the metaphors Lakoff and Johnson pointed out as “ego-moving” when “the ‘ego’ or the observer’s context progresses along the time-line toward the future” (5) and “time-moving”

when “events are moving from the future to the past” (5), finding evidence that their use corresponds to different mental systems or, as she calls them, schemas. In other words, Boroditsky discovered that “ego-moving” and “time-moving” metaphors are done as separate mental processes rather than one encompassing both. To further complicate the matter, she also found evidence later on for other schemas for the use of vertical conceptual metaphors to understand time in both English and Mandarin speakers, with a stronger prevalence in Mandarin (but definite traces in English) in her 2001 article in *Cognitive Psychology*. She repeated these experiments in samples of Greek-speaking, Hebrew-speaking, Kuuk Thaayorre-speaking, and Mian-speaking people, as she reports in her 2010 articles published with Daniel Casasanto and Olga Fotakopoulou, Orly Fuhrman, and Alice Gaby; and her 2012 article with Sebastian Feden, respectively.

Boroditsky found that, while cultural differences can be appreciated in the way these peoples think and speak about time, the same conceptual metaphors (both horizontal and vertical) take place throughout the languages. This conclusion could suggest that the time metaphors that Eliot uses in *Four Quartets* might correspond with deep-seated cognitive patterns across languages, which would attest to their powerful reception between cultures. The use of a spatial objective correlative by Eliot, as described by McLuhan, might fit the same basic conceptual metaphors that regular people use in everyday speech in all the world, but proving this correspondence would require to map out functionally the vertical and horizontal aspects of the metaphors used and the possible conceptual or novel metaphors that are behind them. This analysis would also be useful to determine if the metaphors found in the poems correspond mostly to cognitive schemas for the description of time that are common or rare in the English language.

Proving this connection through an in-depth analysis of the temporal metaphors present in the *Four Quartets* would indicate a tendency to stereotypical means of expression,

but studying the psychology behind this stereotypical means could reveal a lot about their fitness. Research points out that metaphor is a basic linguistic device, but it also leads to the question of whether stereotypical metaphors enrich or impoverish the literary quality of a text. Gerard Steen has pointed out that readers tend to regard metaphors as qualitatively different depending on the context in which they are used, finding literary metaphors to be more original, less clear, and less communicatively conventional to have higher positive value, and to be less committed to moral positions than they do metaphors from non-literary sources. In other words, readers tend to price literary metaphor on the grounds of novelty rather than communication. This appreciation, however, might be misguided. Psychologist Raymond Gibbs problematizes this view by proposing:

[T]he particular mechanism proposed to explain how metaphorical expressions are understood will depend on whether a verbal metaphor instantiates preexisting metaphorical knowledge or actually creates some novel mapping between different conceptual domains. Verbal metaphors based on preexisting metaphorical knowledge are not necessarily mundane or conventional, for many novel metaphors also reflect metaphorical concepts that form a significant part of our everyday cognition. (262)

If Gibbs is correct, the perception of novelty in metaphor might be deceiving, as it only masks general cognitive patterns in its production. The work of Dedre Gentner appears to support this claim since her “structure-mapping theory” proposes that metaphors are established by a one-to-one correspondence between tenor and vehicle but are naturally followed by systematic parallel relations which lead metaphors connected by a higher order of constricting links to be preferred over metaphors with an equal number of independent matches. If correct, this theory by Gentner would point to the perceived novelty in “literary metaphor” to be rooted in deeper or shallower cognitive metaphorical systems, which would

in turn support the theories proposed by Lakoff and Boroditsky on conceptual metaphor, but in the field of literature rather than everyday linguistics and cognition, respectively. Testing the very sophisticated time metaphors of *Four Quartets* in the light of these theories would be highly relevant in both our understanding of how we read *Four Quartets* as well as how *Four Quartets* reads us.

CHAPTER 2

“Burnt Norton”

The title of the poem comes from a state Eliot visited on the recommendation of Mrs. Carroll Perkins in 1935 according to the research of Helen Gardner. Gardner also explains that the place is called “Burnt Norton” because of a tragic story that occurred in the 1740s. Sir William Keyte, a wealthy landowner that had abandoned his wife to take on a mistress and live in debauchery, spent much of his fortune in the construction of an opulent state with lavish gardens. After he became infatuated with a dairy maid, his mistress and children left him. After a week of drinking, his new mistress also left him, and he set fire to the mansion and was burnt alive. Nothing but the reputation of the property justifies the name, as nothing survived the fire. As for the place as Eliot knew it in 1935:

It is far from easy to find, and is approached by a long private road and over a cattle-grid. Passing behind the house, which like the garden overlooks the valley, one comes into a place where nothing can be heard but a bird-song. Leaning over the balustrade, one looks down over a steep wooden slope. Near the house, overlooking the garden, is a huge tree with ‘figured leaves’ on which, as Eliot did, one can watch the light play. Passing through the rose-garden, down some steps, one comes upon a clipped hedge surrounding a large expanse of grass. Coming out of this, through a gap in the hedge, one finds oneself standing above a grassy bank and looking down on a big rectangular drained pool, ‘dry concrete, brown-edged.’ Behind it is a smaller semi-circular drained pool, with a pediment in the middle where perhaps there once stood a statue and from which a fountain may have played. Beyond the grass in which the pools are set there is a path sloping up through trees to a yew alley running the upper length of the garden, chill and cold, where no birds sing. (Gardner, *Composition* 37-38)

T.S. Eliot introduced “Burnt Norton” (or, arguably, all four quartets, as will be discussed in the next section) with fragments 2 and 60 from Heraclitus, which he decided to maintain untranslated in the original Greek. These fragments roughly translate to “Although the Logos is common to all, the majority live as though by a wisdom of their own” and “The way up and the way down are one and the same” (Traversi 91). Kenneth Paul Kramer argues that the first fragment alludes to the first and second movements of the poem and the second fragment alludes to the third and fourth movements of the poem; the fifth movement will try to integrate both (29). Although there is merit to this interpretation, as there are clearly metaphors of contention in the first two movements and vertical exploration of the perception of time in the second two, one can identify the influence of both fragments throughout the poem. If one considers the poems, as Helen Gardner does, as “meditations upon existence in time” (“Music” 125), it would be reasonable to assume that the “Logos” from fragment 2 and the “way” from fragment 60 would work in this context as the perception humans have of time. If this is so, the first of the fragments would nourish the occasions in which time is construed metaphorically as either substance or container and the second fragment would nourish the occasions in which time is construed vertically. Hence, instances such as “And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,” (36) in the first movement or “Ascend to summer in the tree” (55) in the second movement could also be alluding to the second fragment, as instances such as “Filled with fancies and empty of meaning” (102) in the third movement and “At the still point of the turning world” (136) in the fourth movement could also be alluding to the first fragment.

The first movement of “Burnt Norton” appears distinctively challenging to a first reader of the *Four Quartets* as it is introduced by a very abstract exploration of the perception of time followed by a complex metaphor around a rose-garden that allows the reader little contextual support. David Perkins points out that this section is left obscure on purpose to let

the reader experience a childlike fantasy world (257). Although Perkin's theory that will be discussed below, the inherent difficulties the first movement beg for a more in-depth analysis of its structure.

Helen Gardner points out that:

The first movement suggests at once a musical analogy. In each poem it contains statement and counter-statement, or two contrasted but related themes, like the first and second subjects of a movement in strict sonata form. . . . The first movement of 'Burnt Norton' shows a similar division into two statements. Here the contrast is between abstract speculation and an experience in a garden, a meditation on consciousness and a presentation of consciousness. ("Music" 120)

Expanding on this comment, it is possible to establish a clear division between the first ten lines of the poem and the last three (44-46), which meditate abstractly on time, and the image of the rose-garden in lines 11-43, which illustrate the meditation through very specific means particular to this quartet. Nonetheless, it can be added that this thematic division is not represented structurally, as the movement is kept undivided in one stanza. Although meditation and illustration echo one another, for argument's sake, it is convenient to first consider them separately.

The meditation that starts and ends the first movement does away with the common notion that time past and time future are separate categories that have a permanent small overlap in what is understood as time present. By jamming present, past, and future together in one point, Eliot re-conceptualizes past and future (at least partially,) assigning most of them to the categories of "what might have been" and "what has been" (9). "What might have been" takes the place of what we usually understand as future, with the exception that it does not hide the univocal nature of time future. In short, in order for future to be time instead of

possibility, it needs to “have been” instead of just “might have been,” which mixes it with the past. In Eliot’s words, all future that is not merged with present and past in the “what has been” is “an abstraction / Remaining a perpetual possibility / Only in a world of speculation” (7-8). If “what might have been” is a world of speculation, “what has been” would be a world of recollection that would also be an abstraction save for that part that we could identify as the past, also univocal and overlapping present and future time. It is interesting to note that the overlap that exists, linguistically, between “what might have been” and “what has been” is the present perfect verb tense. This choice of verbal tense is very harmonious with the possibility of all time being “eternally present,” as stated in the fourth line of the movement. One should also notice that the word “present” in lines 2, 4, 10, and 46 of this movement is polysemous, as it can mean both a state of time and the antonym of the word “absent.”

To one studying metaphor, it is clear that, even in this abstract meditation on time, the temporal is addressed metaphorically. The possibility of the word “present” to be understood as the opposite of “absent” (2, 4, 10, 46), the description of future as being “contained” (3), “what might have been” existing “in a world” (8), and the idea that “what might have been” and “what has been” “point” (10) in a direction suggest the idea of time as something that can contain or be contained. This is coherent with two conceptual metaphors Lakoff and Johnson suggested: TIME IS A SUBSTANCE (66-7) and TIME IS A CONTAINER (148), which Gentner, Imai, and Boroditsky mention as one of Lakoff and colleagues’ main metaphors for time. (560)

The illustration, on the other hand, exchanges the abstraction of the meditation for a number of obscure images. Hugh Kenner reads this obscurity, not as a wall meant to reject readers, but as an ambiguity meant to invite the reader into a particular mood. In his words, “[m]any small things draw the mind forward through this verse. The syntax beckons just a little ahead of our attention, never delivering over everything to some resonant line on which

we can come to rest” (169). As a first approach toward understanding the illustration and its metaphoric implications on time; however, one should start by sketching the narrative that is presented and interpreting its obscure elements for the sake of orientation and agency. Even though that implies a complicated analysis, understanding the moment in the rose-garden in the first movement opens up the direct reinterpretation of that same moment in the second and fourth movements and its indirect dramatization in the third.

There is a transition between the meditation previously discussed and actual experience in the rose-garden between line 11 and half of line 17, which was broken by the author himself. From the second part of line 17 to line 22, the reader is invited by a bird to follow voices in a garden that exists “[t]hrough the first gate” (20) and “[i]nto our first world” (22). The reader is warned, however, of the deceptiveness of the “thrush” (22). Lines 23 through 43 have the reader experience the rose-garden moment proper, which occurs in the “autumn heat” (25) and sees the bird responding to the “unheard music” (27) of “unseen” (28) children who inhabit the roses of the garden (29, 39). The children, who are taken as “guests” (30), accompany the reader into a box circle to look into a drained pool. The pool is slowly filled with “water out of sunlight” (35) which makes a “lotos” (36) rise quietly from it, and the reader is meant to notice that his or her unbodied companions from the roses are reflected in the pool. After this moment, a cloud passes and the pool is empty, which cues the bird guide to invite the reader to leave the rose-garden, as “human kind / Cannot bear very much reality.” (42-43)

Many critics, such as Perkins (257), Kenner (169), Kramer (38), or Servotte and Grene (14), have suggested that the key to understanding this illustration lies in the mention of “our first world,” (22) as implying childhood. The text seems to validate this theory, as lines 75-76 of the poem, in the second movement, use the expression “both a new world / And the old” to mean future and past. If the “old” world is the past, it is conceivable for the

“first world” to imply infancy. All the elements that make up the episode in the rose-garden take on a new dimension with this in mind. Perkins remarks that “the garden itself –with its gate and box circle suggesting a seclusion and privacy that deepens as the dry pool is approached, with its bird that can speak, its unbodied companions and irrational excitement– suggests the child world of fantasy.” (258)

This theory sheds light into the purpose of the obscurity of the passage; nevertheless, further analysis of the particular elements is required to do a proper examination of how the illustration portrays time metaphorically. The guiding bird can be easily associated with the kingfisher in the fourth movement, which has often been associated with Christ by critics such as Kramer (57), and the “[m]en and bits of paper” which are “whirled by the cold wind / that blows before and after time” (104-105) in the third movement, described as characteristic of “this *twittering* world,” (113) respectively. The thrush guides the reader towards the drained pool and the “lotos” (36) as well as toward the roses of the garden inhabited by the children. This bird leads the reader into seemingly opposed flowers, which will be associated with the temporal and the timeless.

The rose is a recurrent symbol throughout the quartets that is key when analyzing what the poem describes as “the moment in the rose-garden.” (85) Like many symbols in these poems, the meaning of the rose will have very different tones throughout the quartets. Eliot himself is quoted by Helen Gardner from an interview done by Bonamy Dobrée as saying that there are “actually three roses: the sensuous rose, the sociopolitical (always capitalized) Rose, and the spiritual rose; and the three must in some way be identified as one.” (137) Considering the fact that the roses of the garden are not capitalized and that they are also opposed to the lotos, it would appear unlikely that the roses in the first movement of “Burnt Norton” are either the sociopolitical ones or the spiritual ones. It appears likely, however, that they are fulfilling a sensuous role, which would echo their role here with the

“sensual” (97) that needs to be emptied through deprivation in the third movement.

Moreover, it is possible to affirm that the roses are mental products, as the rose-garden is equated to the mind through an explicit metaphor in lines 11 to 15:

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.

In short, footfalls echo into the rose-garden as the words echo in the mind of the reader.

Another important trait is that the passage into the garden is marked by going down towards a door that leads to the rose-garden. It is only for explaining this simile that the narrative voice sees fit to break the general first person plural that characterizes the movement into a first person singular narrator speaking directly to the reader. This change in narration, marked by a line break, will continue until “I don’t know” in line 17. After this, the narration goes back to first person plural, which reveals that the reader is not alone through this mental rose-garden. The rose-garden is made between the mind of the reader and the words of the narrator, which make up the poem and echo in it. But even if we take that these roses are sensuous mental constructions, the exact identity of these constructions is still not disclosed. David Perkins suggested that “throughout the *Four Quartets*, roses are associated with love, though that love changes its meaning or object in the course of the poem” (255). Sensuous, mental love seems to be the very definition of fancy, which would make the roses in the first movement echo those “Distracted from distraction by distraction / Filled with fancies and empty of meaning” (101) in the third movement. Kenneth Paul Kramer, on the other hand, associates the rose with “earthly existence” (42) through an intricate analysis of the similarities between “Burnt Norton” and Dante Alighieri’s *Purgatorio*, which would bear

a similar interpretation as one would with the association Perkins does between roses and love. Kenner, on yet another interpretation, acknowledges the mental properties of the section and simply associates roses with “what might have been,” an idea that fits both fancies and the speculation of earthly existence as opposed to the spiritual existence that the lotos will offer.

The lotos rises from a drained pool that appears to go through a sort of transfiguration in which it “was filled with water out of sunlight” (35). It appears to be the epiphany of the first movement, happening in the center of the rose-garden toward which “we” were led by a bird. When one takes into consideration the graduate studies Eliot pursued in Harvard from 1911-1914 on the topics of Sanskrit and Indic philosophy, it becomes very tempting to assume that the inclusion of the lotos is meant as an item of Eastern enlightenment to contrast the sensuous and illusory symbol of the Western rose. Kramer points to the lotos “as both the Hindu true self (*atman*) and the Buddhist absolute emptiness (*shunyata*)” (41). Servotte and Grene (14), as well as David Perkins (255), suggest an alternative, interpreting the lotos as the legendary flower from Book IX of Homer’s *Odyssey* that would make the consumer forget his home. Despite the fact that neither Perkins nor Servotte and Grene give any textual backing to their interpretation, this theory will be favored here because of textual evidence found in the word itself.

A close reading of “Burnt Norton” will point to the strange spelling of the word “lotos” (36), only mentioned once in the *Four Quartets*. The correct spelling of the word in English (as presented in all major dictionaries) is “lotus,” the “u” in the end pointing to the Latin origin of the word. It had been so for centuries before Eliot wrote “Burnt Norton,” which would suggest that this spelling is a conscious choice rather than a mistake. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, in its entry for the word “lotus” (1667), reveals that there is a customary dichotomy in the spelling of that word depending on whether one means by it

Odysseus' legendary plant or any number of actual plants. This dichotomy dates as far back as the XVI century. The former definition of the word, used when meaning the mythical plant, is typical in the world of high literature and is typically spelled with an "o" at the end to better suit the Greek "λωτός" found in Homer's *Odyssey*. Some examples of this use mentioned in OED are *The Boke Named the Governour* by Thomas Elyot in 1541, *Virgil's Gnat* by Edmund Spenser from 1591, Robert Le Grys' translation of *Argenis* by John Barclay from 1628, Alexander Pope's translation of Homer's *Odyssey* from 1725, and *The Lotos-Eaters* by Alfred Lord Tennyson from 1832. The later definition, used when talking about the actual plant that English speakers also use to refer to the Oriental symbol, favors the more recent Latin spelling and can be found used thus in a number of works dating as far back as those that spelled it with an "o": *Herbal* by William Turner in 1551, *Systema Agriculture* by John Worlidge from 1681, or *An Introduction to Botany* by James Lee in 1760. Taken as the mythical plant, the meaning of the lotos fits perfectly against the sensuous roses that are alluded to by "[t]he deception of the thrush" (22), for the mythological lotos was to make Odysseus or his men forget their *home*; a concept that, in their case as well as in Eliot's personal abandonment of wife and country at the time of the composition of the poem, encompasses both past and future.

The textual support these interpretations hold, as well as the internal consistency they have within the illustration and the external consistency they have with the rest of the poem, make them a consistently solid way to map the time metaphors at work in the first movement of the poem. When taken together with the influences that Eliot acknowledged for the poem in his interview with John Lehmann in 1953 as well as in a letter to John Hayward dated August 5, 1941, both reported by Gardner (*Composition* 39), the interpretations appear to find confirmation. Eliot mentioned Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Rudyard Kipling's short story "They," and Elizabeth Barret Browning's poem "The Last Bower." All

three of these (novel, short story, and poem) take place in rose-gardens that have fantastical elements to them. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* deals with Alice having a mental adventure (dream) going down a rabbit hole which takes her to a hall that has a small door leading to a lovely rose-garden she will eventually reach, near the climax of the novel. "They" by Kipling depicts a man who has discovered a rose-garden that also has strangely shaped yews that hide the laughter of children that, apparently, are taken care of by a blind woman. It is later revealed that the children are not really there, except for the supernatural longing of the blind woman who summons children lost to life. In the interpretation of Helen Gardner, they are "both 'what might have been' and 'what has been,' appearing to those who have lost their children in a house of a blind woman who has never born a child" (*Composition* 39). "The Last Bower" by Elizabeth Barret Browning, finally, seems to be the most influential, both to Eliot and Kipling. The poem deals with a young poet that finds, through the singing of a very specific bird, an idyllic bower with a linden, a hawthorn, and a number of red and white roses that come to represent later, for her, all the goodness that was lost in childhood. On a deeper level, however, her experience in the bower is also a spiritual one around the notion of time. Once the singing of the bird is gone, the narrative voice reports: "In the song, I think, and by it, / Mystic Presences of power / Had up-snatched me to the Timeless, then returned me to the Hour." (XLIV. 3-5)

As one can see, these sources (though not final for an interpretation, being extra-textual) can bring certain elements into a new light. The lines from the transition into the garden, "Down the passage which we did not take / Toward the door we never opened / into the rose-garden" (Eliot 13-15), when associated with *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, deepen the meta-textual nature of the reported echoes. While "we" did not take the passage or open the door, Alice did. The "leaves [that] were full of children, / Hidden excitedly, containing laughter" (Eliot 41-42), although "unseen" (28) and "unheard" (27), and mostly

identified simply as “they” (23, 30, 31, 38), deepen their identity as “what might have been” and “what has been” when read together with Kipling’s “They.” The guidance of the bird and the “deception of the thrush” (Eliot 22) into finding the empty pool of the lotos “which is always present” (Eliot 46) echo in the mind of the reader even more when taken together with “The Last Bower.”

Once all these factors have been taken into consideration, it is possible to clearly draw the time metaphors at work in the illustration of the first movement of the poem. The transition from meditation into illustration has a metaphor in which the narrative voice and the reader go “Down the passage” (12) into the rose-garden which stands for “our first world” (22) of childhood. This metaphor implies both downwards directionality towards the past and agency on the part of the reader, making it a combination of Lakoff and Johnson’s conceptual metaphors TIME IS A SUBSTANCE (66) and a logical extension of THE FUTURE IS UP (108, 113-114). If both are taken together, the metaphor fits the findings of Boroditsky as a vertical ego-moving metaphor, albeit an unusual one. Vertical time metaphors are uncommon in English but common in Mandarin. Boroditsky found that the vertical schema of time metaphors, however, must be dormant in the English language since, as she reports in her article “Metaphoric Structuring: Understanding Time Through Spatial Metaphors,”: “English speakers who were briefly trained to talk about time using vertical metaphors produced results that were statistically indistinguishable from Mandarin speakers.” (24) Nevertheless, in another article (“Does Language Shape Thought?: Mandarin and English Speakers’ Conceptions of Time”), it is specified that vertical time metaphors tend to be gravitational. In Mandarin, for example, “[t]he spatial morphemes *shàng* (‘up’) and *xià* (‘down’) are frequently used to talk about the order of events, weeks, months, semesters, and more. Earlier events are said to be *shàng* or ‘up’ and later events are said to be *xià* or ‘down.’” (5) As such, this ego-moving metaphor is peculiar as its time orientation is reversed.

This metaphor is followed by the rose-garden episode, in which the narrative voice and reader move through a garden of “what might have been,” “what has been,” and that pool that will concentrate all time. This metaphor also implies agency from the reader, but it is not vertical. It is horizontal, in a circular pattern that allows the children in the roses to be reflected in the drained pool while filled with water out of sunlight. This metaphor is similar to the previous metaphor discussed, with the difference from linear verticality into circular horizontality. Hence, the metaphor also fits the findings of Boroditsky as a horizontal ego-moving metaphor.

Finally, the first movement of “Burnt Norton” offers one other time metaphor in the rising of the lotos. This perennial present in which the roses filled with “what has been” and “what might have been” are reflected is something that rises, implying verticality. Nevertheless, no agency on the part of the reader or the narrative voice can be attributed to it. Rather than the reader moving toward time, this metaphor has time rising toward the reader. This is congruent with Lakoff’s conceptual metaphor TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT (109) as well as Lera Boroditsky’s findings as a vertical time-moving metaphor.

The second movement of the poem is far more argumentative than illustrative even though it does present a number of images to be analyzed in order to map the whole of its functionality. Helen Gardner contextualizes it in relation to all other second movements of the *Four Quartets* when she mentions:

The second movement is constructed on the opposite principle of a single subject handled in two boldly contrasted ways. . . . The movement opens with a highly poetical lyric passage, in traditional metrical form: irregularly rhyming octosyllabics in ‘Burnt Norton’[.] This is followed immediately by an extremely colloquial passage, in which the idea which had been treated in metaphor and symbol in the first half of the movement is expanded and developed in a

conversational manner. In 'Burnt Norton,' the highly obscure, richly symbolic presentation of the 'flux of life' perceived as a unity of consciousness, turns to a bare statement in philosophic language of the relation of stillness and movement, past, present and future. At the close there is a return to imagery, when after the abstract discussion three concrete moments are mentioned.

("Music" 121)

It should be added that these divisions pointed out by Gardner are, in the second movement, also divided structurally in separate sections. The first fifteen lines (47-61) are the above mentioned "highly lyrical passage," which shifts the focus of the poem from the mental argumentation of the first movement to issues of the body and of the stars.

The passage begins by mentioning garlic and sapphires clotting "the bedded axle-tree" (47), which are usually regarded as stand-ins for the union of "mundane and celestial phenomena" (Kenner 174), which the whole passage is going to explore. Garlic, a bulbous plant that grows underground and is one of the oldest food resources of humanity, can be associated to the earth as sapphires, blue gems so often associated with stars that some of their variants are known as "star sapphires," can be associated to the sky. Their point in common is the "axle-tree" (48) which works as a polysemous metaphor that yields interesting images to the construction of the experience of time exposed in the poem. The axle-tree is taken for an actual tree, the Nordic Yggdrasil for Kenner (174) or the Christian Tree of Life for Kramer (46), in lines 55-61, uniting earth and sky vertically. Nonetheless, it will also be taken as the axle-tree of a wheel, "the fixed bar or beam of wood on the rounded ends of which opposite wheels of a carriage revolve" (OED 150), in the succeeding lines. (62-69) This metaphor, conjoined with the previous one, adds a horizontal dimension to time. It clots the moving wheel on which the people of the poem revolve, creating a rest from time similar

to the one found in the drained pool of the rose-garden and allowing the image of “the still point of the turning world” (62), one of the most memorable images of “Burnt Norton.”

Following its introduction, garlic, a stand in for the earthly, will be mostly understood in its role of food, since lines 49-53 focus on the “dance” (52) that takes place bodily. Sapphires, in their turn, will be finally translated as stars that figure the same dance that takes place in the human body. This image is very reminiscent of the notion of the Unmoved Mover as appears in Book Lambda of *Metaphysics* by Aristotle. It implies that all movement originates in the stars revolving around God, an unmoved mover. The stars revolve around him because of the love that it inspires in them. The movement of the stars, in their turn, inspires the movement of everything else. Kenner comments on this when he relates this passage to the women of Canterbury in *Murder in the Cathedral*, who learn that “what is woven on the loom of fate is woven also in their veins and brains.” (174) The connection between the corporeal and the celestial has an effect on time in the poem, as it brings about a connection in two “reconciliations” from time, one “below inveterate scars” (50) and one “among the stars” (61). The later will be expanded in the poem in vertical terms while the former in horizontal terms.

One final issue that is crucial to note about this metaphor in order to analyze how it represents time is found from lines 55-61 of “Burnt Norton”:

Ascend to summer in the tree
We move above the moving tree
In light upon the figured leaf
And hear upon the sodden floor
Below, the boarhound and the boar
Pursue their pattern as before
But reconciled among the stars.

The word “summer” is key since it is used in this section as someplace to which one can ascend. A close reading will bring back the fact that the episode in the rose-garden takes place in “autumn” (25), which would make the ascension of the tree drive us back in time. This is emphasized as the passage diminishes movement with higher altitude, which finally brings to non-action the pursuit of the boarhound and the boar, identified by Servotte and Grene as the Herakles constellation (15). This metaphor implies an upwards directionality towards the past and agency on the part of the reader and the narrative voice: “We move above the moving tree” (56). This image fits the findings of Boroditsky as a vertical ego-moving metaphor which, this time, coincides with the gravitational orientation manifested in metaphoric patterns in Mandarin and dormant in English.

The second section of the second movement, described by Gardner as a “bare statement in philosophic language,” (“Music” 121) explores the metaphor of the “still point of the turning world.” (62) The still point should be read as the axle-tree in the context of a wheel. The world turns around the still point which, like an axle-tree in a carriage, remains unmoving. As the poem makes clear that this “still point” is “[w]here past and future are gathered” (65). It can be assumed that the movement refers to the passing of time. The spatial treatment of this reasoning is clear in lines like “I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say where. / And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time” (68-69). However, no agency from any person is attributed in this instance. The narrative voice and the reader are addressed in the quoted lines, but no action or control is mentioned to either access the still point or, by opposition, make the world turn. That inability would make this reasoning one that is conducted through a time-moving metaphor, horizontal this time.

Moreover, as cited above, the figure which the poem uses to illustrate the point stems from the contention metaphor found in the meditation of the first movement: “[w]here past and future are gathered” (65), with past and future taken as substances contained in the still

point of the turning world. The fact that Eliot chose a time-moving metaphor for this section is harmonious as an expansion on the lotos episode, which was previously identified as the element where past and future are gathered. In short, the metaphors found in the second section of the second movement correspond to a horizontal time-moving metaphor that contains an instance of Lakoff's conceptual metaphor TIME IS A SUBSTANCE (66).

The third and last section of the second movement celebrates what comes of the still point: "freedom," (70) "release," (71) "completion," (77) "resolution" (78) of life in time, and metaphorically brings back two characteristics which were missing from the previous section: verticality and a modicum of agency. The reflection of the still point of the turning world turns inwards into the body, as in "the enchainment of past and future / Woven in the weakness of the changing body, / Protects mankind from heaven and damnation / Which flesh cannot endure" (79-82). The enchainment of past and future is woven in the body. The passive voice suggests inaction. Nevertheless, the poem states clearly that this is achieved "By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving" (73) that causes "*Erhebung* [elevation] without motion" (74). While the previous stanza, as well as the episode from the rose-garden, had the reader passively receiving instances of timelessness, the third stanza of the second movement awards people who are immersed in time a bit of power to escape its consequences. This power is what is referred to in line 83 as "a little consciousness," which allows one "not to be in time" (84), though "only in time" can it be attained. "Only through time time is conquered." (89) This reasoning grants the person agency to elevate him or herself from time, in which the self is contained. Kenner identifies this sense with memory, "which occurs in time [and] is our weapon against time." (175) Kramer takes this idea further saying that "[m]emory –moving both backward into the past and forward into the present– is now introduced as an agency for retrieving redemptive moments from unliberated temporality." (51) In terms of metaphor, this is a vertical ego-moving metaphor similar to the

one found in the first section of the movement, that also implies a contention of the self in time, corresponding to Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor TIME IS A CONTAINER (148).

The third movement of "Burnt Norton" takes the images developed in the first two movements, and its implied metaphoric mechanism, and re-dramatizes them in a negative, but complementary, manner. This is consistent with the comments made by Gardner on what the third movement of each of the quartets does:

In the third movement one is less conscious of musical analogies. The third movement is the core of each poem, out of which reconciliation grows: it is an exploration with a twist of the ideas of the first two movements. At the end of this centre movements . . . the ear is prepared for the lyric fourth movement. ("Music" 121)

This movement is divided into two sections that maintain a similar rhythm, but put forward very different ideas. The first echoes darkly the "deception of the thrush" (22) in the rose-garden from the first movement in its sensuous and illusory nature and the turning of the wheel in the second movement in that is represented in a circular, horizontal trajectory. From lines 90-113, critics agree, Eliot switches the illuminated and rural environment of the first two movements for the dim and urban trajectory of an underground train. This interpretation is backed textually, by the research done by Helen Gardner in *Composition of Four Quartets*, as well as by Eliot himself in a letter to his brother (Gardner 86). What is fascinating about this, however, is not so much to place the third movement as to interpret what Marshall McLuhan calls the "symbolic landscape" (239) implied by it.

The first big change one notices in the first stanza of the third movement is that Eliot switches the now familiar "time past and time future" for "time before and time after" (91). This denomination seems both more immediate and trivial, which fits perfectly with the first

description of the train as “a place of disaffection” (90). The poem then moves on to describe the dim light of the place as neither daylight nor darkness, which also allows the reader a better understanding of what light and darkness represent spiritually in the poem:

Time before and time after
In a dim light: neither daylight
Investing form with lucid stillness
Turning shadow into transient beauty
With slow rotation suggesting permanence
Nor darkness to purify the soul
Emptying the sensual with depravation
Cleansing affection from the temporal. (91-98)

Hugh Kenner takes this passage to be a parody of the images that have been presented before. By turning these lines from negative to positive, he asserts that, in this scene, “[t]here is rotation, but it does not suggest permanence; there is darkness, purifying nothing; there is light, but it invests nothing with lucid stillness; there is a systematic parody of the wheel’s movement and the point’s fixity” (176).

The subject that fails to either invest daylight or darkness in the previously quoted passage is time itself: “Time before and time after” (91). No agency over time is granted to those in this “place of disaffection” (90), who are in fact “ridden” (100) by time. The description of the effect of this intervention makes the passivity of those in the tube clear, as the focus of the poem changes from the role of time over these people into the air of this place. This section of “Burnt Norton” is the one that reflects on air at its most physical. Here, air is not so much the medium for words that Gardner described (126) as it is the “cold wind” (104) that blows “men and bits of paper” (104) “before and after time” (105). Here, air is “[e]ructation of unhealthy souls” that are “Driven on the wind that sweeps the gloomy hills of

London, / Hampstead and Clerkenwell, Campden and Putney, / Highgate, Primrose and Ludgate.” (110-112) The mention of these places in particular is relevant, as they are all known for their graveyards. The comma that follows London is explicative, as a list is then started with pairs of places. Highgate, Hampstead, and Putney (Vale) are the proper names of well-known cemeteries in London, while Clerkenwell, Campden, and Ludgate house the famous cemeteries of St. James, St. Pancras and Islington, and St. Paul, respectively. Primrose is an interesting exception, for the cemetery housed there was never actually built, but there was a very famous plan in the XIX century by Thomas Wilson to build a mortuary Pyramid which would have become the largest deposit for the dead of the country. As can be seen, the meaning of the symbolic landscape in this case is that the tube allowed Eliot to develop the idea of living in time at its most nihilistic: in a false synthesis of light and dark that goes in circles towards the grave.

The horizontal, circular move of the London Tube where people have no agency mirrors darkly the metaphor of the still point of the turning world in the second section of the second movement of the poem in the fact that it reflects its characteristics when dealing with time. There is no agency from the people and there is a clear agency of time, which rides in and through people into the wind that will kill them. It is easily identified as a horizontal time-moving metaphor.

The second stanza offers a drastically different answer for the despair of existence in time, both spiritually as metaphorically. Kenner comments on how light and darkness are not truly reconciled in the flicker of the episode in the tube; “[t]heir actual reconciliation is to be achieved by ‘descending lower,’ into an emptier darkness” (176). Kramer, again, takes this analysis further stating:

The next [section] opens by juxtaposing a redemptive possibility in the midst of more radical darkness Echoing the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius the

Areopagite, Aquinas, and especially St. John of the Cross, the poet introduces the way of darkness (*via negativa*) and proposes that the way up and the way down are, mystically, the same. (53)

The second section of the third movement starts with an imperative sentence that commands the reader to “Descend lower, descend only / Into the world of perpetual solitude, / World not world, but that which is not world” (114-116). This passage is easily associated with “Ascend to summer in the tree” (55) in the second movement, but, again, in a negative way. The next five lines expand into the meaning of this descent into darkness, which corresponds with *The Dark Night of the Soul* of St. John of the Cross, which “leads to the union with God through a three-fold purification: of the senses, of the spirit, and of memory and longing” (Servotte and Grene 18). This path, in the poem, seems less flexible than its light alternative discussed in the second stanza of the second movement. The former is characterized by the “dance” (67) while the later is achieved by the “abstention from movement” (124). Nevertheless, the narrative voice asserts that “This is the one way, and the other / Is the same” (122-123), echoing in content and directionality fragment 60 by Heraclitus from the epigraph and Kramer’s interpretation of St. John of the Cross. To the narrative voice, this descent into darkness is the way to abstain from the alternative of the tube, in which “the world moves / In appetency, on its metalled ways / Of time past and time future” (124-126). The last line of the third movement switches back from “time before and time after” into “time past and time future,” a much clearer denomination to continue to reflect about accessing the timeless, and also brings one back to the meditation that anticipated the episode of the rose-garden, which will be revisited in the lyrical fourth movement.

As for the way time metaphors work in the second section of the third movement, it perfectly complements the workings of the section that precedes it. While the first stanza

worked in horizontal circles where time was clearly the agent and only suggests permanence, the imperative introduction of the second section implies both verticality as agency on the part of the reader to abstain from the ways of time past and time future. This section works through a vertical ego-moving metaphor, which seems an exact opposite of the previous horizontal time-moving metaphor.

The fourth movement of each quartet is always the shortest, and the fourth movement of “Burnt Norton,” with its ten lines, is the shortest of all. It is undivided structurally and thematically. It consists of one sentence, followed by two questions, and concluded by one more sentence. It is perhaps because of this briefness that it gets less critical attention than the other movements, even when its lyrical reinterpretation of the rose-garden revelation is rich and full of power. Kramer does mention the peculiarity that in “the fourth movement of each quartet, the poet’s tone shifts, becomes more liturgical, even devotional. The brief lyrical interlude reflects the basic themes of the first two movements and deepens the spiritual practice related in the third” (56).

The movement begins with the two lines: “Time and the bell have buried the day, / The black cloud carries the sun away.” (127-128) This is immediately reminiscent of the end of the moment in the rose-garden when “a cloud passed, and the pool was empty” (39). However, the stakes seem to be higher now, as time appears to have metaphorically killed the day. A bell is also mentioned, which had not been introduced before. Kramer, nonetheless, remarks on several possibilities to take into consideration about this bell that, along with time, has buried the day:

While the bell’s clanging marks the disappearance of the sun, it would have reminded [Eliot] of its monastic context, where the bell also signals a call to prayer, a call to break out of ordinary time. During the Mass (as Eliot knew it), a bell was rung at the moment when the bread and wine were consecrated and

became the transubstantial body and blood of the risen Christ. A powerful ambiguity emerges: the bell announces the death of the day, (and by implication hastens a necessary *kind* of dying) and yet is accompanied by images of new life and the hope that a sunflower will soon greet the new dawn. (56)

The mention that Kramer makes of the sunflower, however, does not sit well with the succeeding lines of the poem. Between lines 129-134, the narrative voice does mention a sunflower, a clematis, and a yew in a series of questions, but the plants are not expecting the new dawn. The narrative voice wonders, however, whether the sunflower and clematis will turn to us, narrative voice and reader, in the absence of the sun. The yew might be taken to be doing the same as the other two plants, but a different possibility arises here. According to the botanical guide of Fred Hageneder, yews develop aerial roots in order to hold the weight of the tree. This, added to the tradition of planting yews in graveyards as symbols of death and rebirth (not to mention that, being poisonous, they keep wild animals away from cemeteries,) would suggest that the fingers of yew present an instance of death. This use of the yew-tree is quite common in the last three poems of “Ash-Wednesday,” another long poem by Eliot in which he started to probe many of the issues treated in *Four Quartets*. Helen Gardner notices this in “The Music of *Four Quartets*” and also adds a finer interpretation:

The yew-tree, for instance, used many times in the last three poems of *Ash-Wednesday*, occurs only three times in *Four Quartets*, but each time with great and different significance. In the second verse of the lyric in ‘Burnt Norton,’ the ‘chill fingers of yew’ –the touch of death hardly brushing the cheek– give us a vague sense of foreboding[.] (131)

This series of questions marks “us” as inadequate substitutes for the sun, who provides light and is instrumental for humanity to measure the passing of time in days. The union of narrative voice and reader have no control over time or timelessness here. They are no

substitute for the sun, which “is the still point around which the earth turns, and light is concentrated there; it subtly becomes (for Eliot does not name it) a type of the still point where every variety of light inheres, which transient phenomena reflects.” (Kenner 177)

It is striking that the questions are arranged into very peculiar lines in the poem, leading to line 132 to consist only of the word “Chill.” This peculiar metric gives pause, bringing mediation and humility onto the reader, who recognizes the obvious negative to the questions. On this topic, Kenneth Paul Kramer also adds that:

The sense of this interlude is evoked by a single, isolated word –“Chill”– around which sunflower, clematis, and fingers of yew intertwine. The single, monosyllabic sound achieves more than just a linguistic effect. It seizes [the reader’s] spirit. One emerges from the darkness of the preceding section with a double sensation: the cold extinction of death and the delicate warmth of nature’s light. (57)

The implied negative to the two questions posed in the fourth movement is followed by a different answer: “After the kingfisher’s wing / has answered light to light, and is silent, the light is still / at the still point of the turning world.” (134-136) The interpretation of the apparition of the kingfisher has been complicated to critics. Helen Gardner herself, in *Composition of Four Quartets*, points to Eliot getting excited by witnessing an actual kingfisher at the time of the composition of “Burnt Norton” (38-39). George Every (a close friend of Eliot) reported the episode to have happened in a visit to Appleton House in Kelham in the summer of 1935, where “there is a yew in the churchyard . . . and masses of clematis in the rectory garden next to the churchyard by the same stream.” (38) This would offer a solution to the unlikely event of a kingfisher appearing at Burnt Norton, which is remote from water, but it is also anticlimactic for analysis. Gardner reports:

Mr. Every's reminiscence provides another instance of the presence of actual and recent experience in *Four Quartets*. Just as, when asked for the significance of 'autumn,' Eliot replied simply 'it was autumn,' so here he might answer those who look for mystical meanings in the sunflower, clematis, and kingfisher:

'There *was* a clematis; there *was* a kingfisher.' (39)

Nevertheless, authorial intent remains a topic that is unreliable. This is a fact that Gardner knew when she wrote in 1949 that, in the quartets, "sources are completely unimportant" (134). As stated before, the kingfisher is easily associated to the guiding bird from the first movement, which has also been associated to Christ, who made Peter "fisher of men, whose light reflects the divine light." (Kramer 57) Hugh Kenner also makes a divine interpretation of what answers "light to light, and is silent" leaving the light "still / At the still point of the turning world" (135-136), but he turns from the kingfisher and Christianity and focuses on Aristotelian metaphysics and the Unmoved Mover, as he mentions that "[the] brief fourth movements celebrate successively the Unmoved Mover, the redeeming Son, the Virgin, and the Holy Ghost." (183) Michael Spenser, from yet another perspective, suggested that "the light of the kingfisher passage is the light of the illuminative way. The logic behind this is simple. If the darkness of the first lines of this passage represents the night of the senses, light [...] is part of the illuminative way that also involves the yew." (243-244) Whichever interpretation one favors, it is clear that the light with which the kingfisher responds is different from the one of the sun; it is divine light evoked from the memory of the rose-garden. It is an instance of defeating time through time like in the closing of the second movement: "only in time can the moment in the rose-garden . . . / Be remembered" (85-88). This assessment can be supported by the polysemy of the word "still" in line 135, which can mean both "unmoving" and "remaining" at the still point of the turning world.

The still point of the turning world in the last line of the fourth movement brings back the metaphor of the wheel. This should be understood horizontally in contraposition to the ascension through the tree (perhaps the yew, or tree of death and immortality) which is vertical and perpendicular as the axle-tree is to the wheel. The horizontality presented here also has the characteristic of being cyclical (the cycle of night and day) as the other horizontal metaphors before. This is also matched by the same agency that allowed elevation “[b]y a grace of sense, a white light still and unmoving,” (73) in the third stanza of the second movement, making the time metaphor in this episode akin to that vertical ego-moving metaphor focused on memory. However, it is described in horizontal terms in this particular instance.

The fifth movement of the poem is, at once, the most unique and reminiscent of the others. It attempts to reconcile opposites in a new way which, at the same time, incorporates the mechanisms that have already been introduced. About the fifth movement of each quartet, Helen Gardner expands more while pointing out fewer specifics of each poem, as the pattern is more constant. She states:

After the brief lyrical movement, the fifth recapitulates the themes of the poem with personal and topical applications and makes a resolution of the contradictions of the first. It falls into two parts in each poem, but the change is slighter than in the second movement, and it is reversed. Here the colloquial passage comes first, and then, without a feeling of sharp break, for the metre remains fundamentally the same, the base of the line contracts and images return in quick succession. In various ways the last lines echo the beginning of the whole poem or employ images from the other poems in a conclusion of tender gravity, touched at times by a lyric sweetness. (“Music,” 124)

One could only add to that description that the final movement of “Burnt Norton” is especially meta-textual and referential to the construction of the idea of *Four Quartets*.

The fifth movement fits best the interpretation Gardner pointed out of the meaning of air as “the medium of communication” (“Music,” 126). It begins with a strong emphasis on words and music, and how their movement can be done “Only in time” (138), which already brings to mind time as something that can contain. The limitations of words in time is made apparent, as their short lives that, “after speech, reach / Into the silence” (139-140), which matches the limitations found later in “the stillness of the violin,” which can only exist “while the note lasts” (144). These limitations echo the absurdity of the lives in the London Tube, going in circles towards the grave. Nevertheless, it is told to us that, “Only by the form, the pattern,” (140) words or music can also transcend time and reach “The stillness, as a Chinese jar still / Moves perpetually in its stillness” (142-143); a remark that is reminiscent of the ideas of movement from the second section of the second movement. The comparison to a Chinese jar is contrasted by the limitation of music, as quoted before, which only exists briefly in time. It is rather the “co-existence” of words and music that can bring about the stillness: poetry. In his essay, *The Achievement of T.S. Eliot*, F.O. Matthiessen quotes Eliot in an unpublished lecture called “English Letter Writers” saying that he aimed:

To write poetry which should be essentially poetry, with nothing poetic about it, poetry standing naked in its bare bones, or poetry so transparent that we should not see the poetry, but that which we meant to see through the poetry, poetry so transparent that in reading it we are intent on what the poem point at, and not on the poetry, this seems to me the thing to try for. To get beyond poetry, as Beethoven, in his later works, strove to get beyond music. (90)

It would appear that this is exactly what Eliot is attempting in the fifth movement. With “Burnt Norton,” he was attempting to create a poetical equivalent of the string quartets by

Beethoven, perhaps referenced in the mention of the note of the violin, inasmuch a string quartet “composed of three, four, or five movements, can represent stages in a journey, each depicting separate experiences and each reaching fulfillment in its final movement” (Kramer 207). Eliot wrote along these lines to John Hayward on September 2, 1942 when discussing naming these poems “quartets”: “It suggests to me the notion of making a poem by weaving together three or four superficially unrelated themes: the ‘poem’ being the degree of success in making a new whole out of them” (Gardner, *Composition* 26).

There is an interesting combination of metaphors about the co-existence of time in lines 146-148. It reads: “Or say that the end precedes the beginning, / And the end and the beginning were always there / Before the beginning and after the end.” The contention metaphor is still there in line 147, but there is also the inclusion of a horizontal metaphor that pits “beginning” and “end” against one another in lines 146 and 148. The metaphoric implications of this metaphor will be discussed further below, but the textual significance of this comparison goes a long way towards proving the meta-textual nature of the fourth movement.

In “The Music of *Four Quartets*,” Helen Gardner points out that this section, which is strongly devoted to the meaning of words, makes an interesting play with the word “end.” “The word ‘end’ occurs first, by itself, in the opening lines of ‘Burnt Norton’: What might have been and what has been / Point to one *end*, which is always present” (132). This makes “end” precede “beginning,” despite beginning and end maintaining their polar opposites in a poem that, nonetheless, keeps on jamming them together, defying through poetry some of our typical notions of linear time. Gardner continues:

Here ‘end’ has plainly some meaning beyond that of ‘termination,’ but we are not quite certain how much meaning to give it. Even when these two lines are repeated at the end of the first movement, the word ‘end’ remains vague. It is

only in the fifth movement –when the word is linked with ‘beginning,’ in the context of ideas about form and pattern and we have apparently paradoxical statements– that we begin to think of end as meaning ‘completion’ ‘purpose’ or even ‘final cause[.]’ (“Music” 132)

This interpretation seems reinforced by the affirmation of the limitations of words exposed in lines 149 through the middle of 155, where yet another change takes place switching “words” for “The Word” that “in the desert / Is most attacked by voices of temptation” (155-156). The immediate comparison that comes to mind is that of Jesus, the Word of God, in the desert, which in turn brings us back to the kingfisher in the fourth movement and to the guiding bird in the first. The guiding bird finds an interesting reinterpretation here where “the voices of temptation” (156) are “The crying shadow in the funeral dance, / [and] The loud lament of the disconsolate chimera” (157-158), both instances of “what might have been.” Kenneth Paul Kramer also associates “The Word” with “the Logos” from the epigraph, saying that “[t]he Word –both Heraclitian speech-with-meaning rising dialogically from the ‘genuine we’ that is common to all and the incarnation of divine Jesus– is attacked in the parched desert by illusions of the individual’s mind.” (60)

The second stanza of the fifth movement continues this analysis of movement, but does not explore the fixity of words but the nature of love as opposed to desire. This stanza approaches the opposition first in “the figure of the ten stairs” (160), which most critics identify as a spiritual method from poet and mystic St. John of the Cross. Kramer mentions that here: “the poet recalls St. John of the Cross’s ‘figure of the ten stairs,’ or ten rungs, of the mystical ladder of love, representing spiritual ascent in our temporal lives When ascending and descending in ecstasy-and-humiliation, the soul is not caught by desire but perfected by love that is ‘timeless’ and ‘understanding.’” (62) This figure should bring to mind the ascension and descent mentioned in the second and third movements, respectively,

as well as to the epigraph which states that “the way up and the way down are one and the same.”

This stanza finds both love and desire to be paradoxical. Desire, which is always movement, is not desirable in itself. Love, unmoving, is the cause and effect of all movement, and it is also undesiring, except in the aspect of time. This is another instance that suggests the idea of the Unmoved Mover Aristotle proposed, which inspires love in the stars that revolve around it, causing all other movement. This revelation takes the poem back, in line 169, to the shaft of sunlight from the moment in the rose-garden, along with the dust, the children, and the laughter, and finally leaves the reader wondering about the waste of time that stretches before and after.

The fifth movement of “Burnt Norton” offers three time-space metaphors. The first one appears in lines 138 and 147 and assumes that TIME IS A CONTAINER in which words move. This metaphor is quite familiar now in the poem, but in this instance it is mixed with another metaphor depicted in line 146, which invites to consider that “the end precedes the beginning.” George Lakoff and Mark Turner identify this use of time as being horizontal and awarding time itself the agency. In their words:

When times are considered relative not to us but rather to other times, we use words like “precede” and “follow,” and “before” and “after,” in accordance with the orientation of the times as having their faces to the past (what precedes them) and their backs to their futures (what follows them). Thus, today is the day preceding tomorrow, and the day following tomorrow is two days from now. (44)

As such, this metaphor would be another instance of a horizontal time-moving metaphor, as can also be found in the second and third movement.

Finally, one must consider the figure of the ten stairs. As a spiritual exercise which brings on a revelation, it should be clarified as ego-moving. There is clear agency on the part of the self. It is also, of course, vertical, implying ascension and descent. The figure of the stairs is, also, very convenient, as it encompasses all other vertical ego-moving metaphors with one exception, which will be discussed below.

Once all time metaphors of the poem are considered, a clear pattern of a handful of conceptual metaphors can be found. The summary table below can help to identify this pattern:

Table 1

Summary of Time Metaphors in "Burnt Norton"

MOVEMENT	TIME METAPHORS	LINES
I	A. TIME IS A CONTAINER // TIME IS A SUBSTANCE	1-10, 44-46
	B. VERTICAL EGO-MOVING	12-14
	C. HORIZONTAL EGO-MOVING	17-33, 40-43
	D. VERTICAL TIME-MOVING	34-39
II	E. VERTICAL EGO-MOVING	55-61
	F. HORIZONTAL TIME-MOVING	62-69
	G. TIME IS A SUBSTANCE	65
	H. VERTICAL EGO-MOVING	73-74
	I. TIME IS A CONTAINER	84-85, 89
III	J. HORIZONTAL TIME-MOVING	90-113
	K. VERTICAL EGO-MOVING	114-126
IV	L. HORIZONTAL EGO-MOVING	134-136
V	M. TIME IS A CONTAINER	138, 147
	N. HORIZONTAL TIME-MOVING	146
	O. VERTICAL EGO-MOVING	160

There is a majority of vertical ego-moving metaphors followed by horizontal time-moving metaphors. This distribution makes sense with the overall thematic of the poem, as it seems to contrast through orientation the effects of time affecting people with the possibilities people have of accessing the timeless. Nonetheless, the choice of orientation demands explanation. Could the same effect have been achieved through the use of a majority of

horizontal ego-moving metaphors followed by vertical time-moving metaphors? It is unlikely, as there are benefits the poem exploits from these particular orientations.

Life in time, throughout the poem, is denounced as absurd and cyclical. The figures of the London Tube or the wheel come to mind. Horizontal metaphors of time helped Eliot exploit this absurdity, as our horizontal experience of the world offers no clear beginning or end. It allows indefinite movement, whose lack of orientation can bring existential terror. In the poem, one may also notice that the metaphors are given circularity. Not so with vertical metaphors as, if they behave in the pattern found by Boroditsky in Mandarin and English, follow a clear gravitational direction. The ascension back in time along and beyond the axle-tree makes perfect sense as an extension of that vertical metaphoric system, since the past would be up. Moreover, acceleration would diminish as proximity to the point of origin is reached, finally achieving a point of zero movement where, in the poem, the boarhound and the boar are reconciled into inaction among the stars. This effect works in the opposite direction as well, when timelessness is also achieved through descent. In a gravitational metaphoric system, descent would precipitate the moving object, but it would finally also take it to a final destination of zero movement. This is the still point of the turning world, which implies a necessary vertical perpendicularity to the metaphor of the wheel.

Metaphors of time as a substance and time as a container are also common. In the first and last movements of the poem, this is done in abstract discussion when no movement is implied. Nevertheless, there are two instances that combine this type of metaphor with time-moving metaphors. The first one is the one in line 65, in which time as a substance is associated with the axle-tree of the wheel. The second one is located in lines 84-85 and 89. In this case, the containing properties of time are discussed negatively. Consciousness, which is illustrated vertically, allows the conscious not to be in time. These instances suggest that the metaphors that use time as a substance or as a container, when related to time-moving

metaphors in the poem, are associated with a vertical orientation and disassociated with a horizontal orientation. That pattern fits perfectly with the figure of the ten stairs by St. John of the Cross, in which both ascension or descent allow one to access the timeless.

While these patterns do tell of a metaphoric system at play in the poem, that system is not without its anomalies. There are two instances of horizontal ego-moving metaphors, one instance of a vertical time-moving metaphor, and one vertical time-moving metaphor in the first movement that do not work in the gravitational orientation one would predict. These anomalies, nonetheless, need to be interpreted to discover whether they are actually working within the metaphoric system or they mix in different systems, a possibility that Lakoff and Johnson mentioned when dealing with time metaphors, as quoted before.

One of the horizontal ego-moving metaphors and the vertical time-moving metaphors work together in the episode of the rose-garden. The narrative voice and the reader move horizontally around the rose-garden until reaching the drained pool from which the lotos of absolute present rises. This episode from the first movement appears to work in the opposite way of agency as the system of the rest of the movements. There is, however, a possible explanation for this break, and it has to do with the episode dealing with childhood. There is an idyllic quality to this episode before the black cloud blocked the sunlight that drained the pool which could be construed as an innocence lost. A separation from the timeless out of which the rest of the poem will explore the horrors of living in time. This interpretation would make sense if one were to think of the rose-garden, also, as the Garden of Eden. It is not uncommon to take this reading, which Servotte and Grene (14), Kramer (38), or Kenner (169) have not overlooked. The rose-garden as a childhood/Eden from which one is separated from the timeless into time would create a metaphoric loss of Paradise, making the subsequent use of vertical ego-moving metaphors and horizontal time-moving metaphors all work within the same metaphoric system.

The same can be said in the case of the other horizontal ego-moving metaphor, found in lines 144-146 in the fourth movement, but the framework of this is less speculative and more referential. The effect that the light of the kingfisher has had on the poetic voice of the poem to achieve timelessness through memory is explained in horizontal terms, but it works in conjunction with the axle-tree of the metaphor of the wheel. As such, while the effects of timelessness are felt horizontally, they are still working on the perpendicular verticality that allows the metaphor, which validates the metaphoric system in this instance as well.

That is not so, however, with the vertical ego-moving metaphor that is presented in a non-gravitational way in line 12 of the first movement. While, as mentioned before, Lakoff and Johnson did report the existence of the conceptual metaphor THE FUTURE IS UP, which by opposition allows past to be down, Boroditsky's much more thorough research finds it uncommon, and that a unified metaphoric system cannot have the past being both up and down. One could conceive that this one, being the only odd metaphor in an otherwise consistent metaphoric system, is the product of an extra-textual reference. The inclusion of this line as a referent to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* would place this passage down not as going down to childhood, but going down into one's *subconscious*, the very setting of the oneiric adventures of Alice. One should be clear, nonetheless, that this does not imply that the inclusion of this metaphor does not go against the grain of the metaphoric system that was identified, but only provides a possible explanation for its inclusion.

Nevertheless, there is a pattern. Throughout the poem there are two episodes which deal with time through circular and horizontal images: one which is ego-moving and another which is time-moving. In the metaphoric centers of these circular instances of time there is an axis that extends both upwards into the past and downwards into the future, but both ends are capped with a point of timelessness. This verticality is hinted in the first movement through

an upward, vertical time-moving metaphor, but after that the poem switches agency of this axis into ego-moving metaphors which, in a way, illustrate the figure of the ten stairs.

“East Coker”

With a vaster framework of three extra poems to develop the ideas first explored in “Burnt Norton,” Eliot was able to rely on a subtler approach to his meditations on the temporal and the timeless. While the issue of time is still central to the poem, it is approached in less obvious ways than it was in “Burnt Norton,” moving the central representation of the issue from vertical and horizontal metaphors to other vehicles that were also explored in the previous quartet in a secondary fashion. Light and darkness, stillness and movement, and fever and chill take over as the polar opposites of the flux explored in “Burnt Norton” in the opposition of up and down. Because of this, “East Coker” is less prone to be represented geometrically than “Burnt Norton,” even though the flux works in the same way. This also makes “East Coker” less abundant in time-space metaphors than “Burnt Norton,” but a close reading of the poem will reveal that these metaphors are still paramount in its composition. This interpretation can be found in opposite ends of the lifelong analysis Helen Gardner made of the poems. In 1949, she described “East Coker” as a poem that deals with both the “theme of the time of the years and the seasons, the rhythm of birth, growth and death... [and] the experience of being outside time, of time having stopped” (“Music” 120-121). Almost thirty years after having written that, she reinstated it in *Composition of the Four Quartets*, saying that: “*East Coker* is concerned with solar time, the cycle of the seasons; with biological time, the short span between birth and death; and with historic time, the passage of the centuries, the long process of the rise and decay of the works of man”. (42)

After its publication in March, 1940, “East Coker” received immediate academic attention. The supplement where it was published in the *New English Weekly* “had to be

reprinted in May and June, and in September [before] the poem was published in pamphlet form by Faber and Faber at the price of one shilling” (Gardner, *Composition* 17). The reaction from academic sources was immediate and mostly positive, although not without its detractions. Already in September of 1940, G.W. Stonier mentioned that the poem had “examples of both success and failure” (411), in the way it appropriates well-known passages. James Johnson Sweeney, who published a most complete guide into the literary references of the poem in the year following its publication, characterized the review Stonier wrote as “generally sympathetic” (36) but ultimately lacking precision “with Eliot’s allusive technique” (37). While the poem, nonetheless, might have accumulated more detractors that maintained their negative view of “Burnt Norton,” like George Orwell, these probably cast their opinion on the *Four Quartets* as a whole rather than on “East Coker” in particular.

The title of the poem refers to a village in Somerset, not far from Yeovil. It is reported to be very beautiful and Eliot does use the physical description of the place in the poem as an objective correlative for his ideas, but the main significance of the place derives from its common history with Eliot. Gardner writes:

It was from East Coker that the distant ancestor of the Eliot family, Andrew Eliot, left England around 1669 in search for religious freedom in the New World. In its churchyard Eliot saw ‘old stones that cannot be deciphered’, marking the graves of those who may have been his long-dead and forgotten ancestors. In a field nearby, as the Ordnance Survey map shows, there is an ancient dancing circle, a place where generations of men and women, who for centuries had tilled the ground and tended their beasts, danced together at midsummer to the ‘weak pipe and little drum’. (*Composition* 42)

Interestingly, it is in that church (Saint Michael’s) in East Coker where the ashes of T.S. Eliot are interred today. Kramer adds to the description of the village:

The road to East Coker is situated in the midst of a lush countryside in Somerset, west of London and not far from Stonehenge The village itself is comprised of one main road and several dozen thatch-roofed cottages. On a hill that overlooks the village houses sits St. Michael's Church, from which the Eliot family records can be traced. (66-67)

As previously stated, the structure of "East Coker" is very similar to that of "Burnt Norton." Each movement, while not necessarily the same in divisions, metric, or rhyme, fits the same pattern already stated in the previous chapter from "The Music of *Four Quartets*" by Helen Gardner. The first movement suggests a musical analogy that contrasts related themes, the second movement is constructed on the opposite principle of a single subject handled in two very different ways, the third movement is an exploration of the ideas of the first two movements with a twist, the fourth movement is a spiritual lyric that addresses the heart of the matter, and the fifth movement recapitulates the themes of the poem with personal applications that make a resolution of previous contradictions through poetic means.

There is wide discussion of whether the Greek epigraphs that precede "Burnt Norton" should also be associated with "East Coker." Thematically, they appear to be relevant for both, especially in the second, third, and fifth movements of both poems. Their publication history adds to the discussion, as they were not always positioned under the title of "Burnt Norton," as is the case with most contemporary editions. Helen Gardner explains:

The Greek epigraphs were omitted when *Burnt Norton* was published in pamphlet form. In *Four Quartets* they appear on the reverse of the table of Contents, as if they were epigraphs to all four poems. In *The Complete Poems and Plays* (New York, 1952) and *Collected Poems 1909-1962* they appear, as in the draft, below the title of *Burnt Norton*. (*Composition* 82)

Together with this, one should also consider that, by this point, “East Coker” was already conceived a part of a thematic whole that would complement “Burnt Norton” and the other two poems still to be written. Because of this, the epigraphs will be considered as thematically relevant to the analysis of each individual poem, as well as to *Four Quartets* as a whole.

The consideration Eliot denounced that in “East Coker” he might have been imitating himself does not stand alone. Helen Gardner acknowledges that the poem “at times seems to follow its model too closely” (*Composition* 41). Even though the first movement of “Burnt Norton” appears to be structurally unified, it is thematically divided, as mentioned before, in three parts: an abstract exploration of time in lines 1-10, a complex metaphor with little contextual support to illustrate this exploration in lines 11-43, and a sum-up that ties in to the first exploration in lines 44-46. The first movement of “East Coker” follows the same pattern, but with clear divisions to distinguish the parts and a definite change of tone that is enforced through several small changes.

The poem begins with a reversal of the motto Mary Stuart stated on her martyrdom: “en ma fin est mon commencement,” in my end is my beginning. When Eliot starts the poem by stating that “In my beginning is my end” (1), he forces the reader to associate the very beginning of the poem with its ending. This will be reversed in the last line which states: “In my end is my beginning” (209), although the version found in line one is more common, present also in line 14, and hinted in line 50. There is a very deliberate use of the word “end” here, which may sound familiar from its use in lines 9-10 of “Burnt Norton”: “What might have been and what has been / Point to one end, which is always present.” This is also observed in lines 146-148: “Or say that the end precedes the beginning, / And that the end and the beginning were always there / Before the beginning and after the end.” With the first line of the poem, Eliot appears to make the end even more clearly present at the beginning of

“East Coker.” Helen Gardner, however, considers that the emphasis should not be put on “end” in “East Coker,” but in “beginning”:

In ‘East Coker’, the opening inversion of Mary Stuart’s motto throws the stress on the word ‘beginning’ and the whole poem ends with the word. If in ‘Burnt Norton’ it is ‘end’ we are thinking of, the word ‘beginning’ seems used mainly to give meaning to ‘end’, in ‘East Coker’ the opposite is true. It is a poem about ‘beginning’. (“Music” 131-132)

When one reaches the second part of the first movement and realizes the strong theme of family beginnings in the poem, this consideration by Gardner acquires much merit.

Nevertheless, it is questionable if this interpretation should be applied to the whole of the poem. What can be said for certain is that the use of the sentence in the first line and its reversal in the last line give the poem an idea of circularity. This technique is not unheard of amongst Modernist authors of the time: James Joyce makes a similar attempt to begin and end *Finnegans Wake*. While “Burnt Norton” united all time in its opening meditation, “East Coker” creates an idea of an unforgiving cyclical time starting in its first line. Kenneth Paul Kramer argues:

Whereas in *Burnt Norton* the contemplative poet begins by ruminating on the simultaneity of timelessness and the flux of time, here the poet turns his attention to the seemingly purposeless, repetitive cycle of birth and death, creation and destruction. Nothing endures; everything changes. (70)

This first sentence also introduces a first-person singular perspective from the narrative voice which will be complemented in the next part by a second-person receiver of the action. This may strike the reader as familiar considering lines 14-17 of “Burnt Norton,” with the important difference that “East Coker” never united these two into the unified first-person plural that dominated the first of the quartets. In “East Coker,” there is a very clear

first-person singular narrator that rhetorically projects a second-person persona that represents the meditative and experiential situations the narrative voice is talking about. Since the first-person singular narrator is taking the full role of the emitter here, the reader (receptor) is forced into this position of identification with the narrative voice. As Kramer explains: “[i]t is easy to imagine yourself—indeed, the poet encourages readers to do just that by addressing us with ‘you’—standing on one side of the narrow road in the shadows of a fragrant afternoon” (73). Or, as Curtis Bradford puts it: “[a]t any rate we are in somebody’s mind, the poem is in first person” (59). This characteristic, while maintaining the complicity that exists between reader and narrative voice in “Burnt Norton,” switches the comfortable escort position that the first-person plural conveys for a mostly lonely, personal position as the object of the projections of the narrator. This technique was later taken up and famously developed by Nobel-Prize winner Gao Xingjian in his novels *Soul Mountain* and *One Man’s Bible*.

After this introductory first sentence, the idea of cyclical time is developed further in a reflection of the “rise and fall” (2) of houses through time and the set existence of time for this rising and falling. The poet contextualizes this in a very literal understanding of houses, mentioning their “stone” and “timber” (5), their “pane[s]” (11) and “wainscot[s]” (12), and their quality of being built (5, 9) or able to “crumble” (2). But reading this reflection on the rise and fall of houses as particular only to literal houses would be a mistake. The meditation of the first movement also mentions that “[h]ouses live and die” (9), which could hint the reader to understand “house” as “family,” an interpretation which will be validated by the text later on. It can also be understood, if one takes into consideration that the title of the poem refers to the ancestral home of the author, as another type of “house.”

Stonier had already mentioned the frequent “use of quotation, by which [Eliot] often imparts a nostalgic flavor to his verse” (411), but Eliot also resorts to clear imitation to

achieve this effect. One such instance can be found in the meditation of the first movement, particularly on lines 9-13, which state:

Houses live and die: there is a time for building
And a time for living and for generation
And a time for the wind to break the loosened pane
And to shake the wainscot where the field-mouse trots
And to shake the tattered arras woven with a silent motto.

This bears a distinct resemblance to a famous passage from Ecclesiastes which has echoes across the whole of “East Coker.” The book of Ecclesiastes, also known as Qoheleth, is traditionally attributed to the legendary King Solomon, as the book is introduced as “[t]he words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem” (*New International Version*, Eccles. 1.1). The famous passage reads thus:

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,

a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace. (*NIV, Eccles. 3.18*)

This imitation bears the poem a biblical tone that gives it both the “nostalgic flavor” mentioned by Stonier as well as a particular kind of spiritual authority. As mentioned before, Eliot did the same technique in “Burnt Norton” with a reinterpretation of the meditation of time St. Augustine included in his *Confessions*, yet another instance which proves the structural relation between the sections of the first movement.

This first section does not seem to use any metaphors for time, but the mention of the houses “rise and fall” (2) and the statement that “there is a time” (9) beg closer inspection. The verticality with which the cyclical fate of houses is described could be construed as a vertical metaphor to estate the effect of time over them. This interpretation, however, requires the assumption of time conducting the houses, described in a literal way, upwards or downwards, rather than the simpler interpretation that the houses literally stand and fall down. Nevertheless, in the context of the poem as a continuation of “Burnt Norton,” this assumption does not seem farfetched. The mention of time in line 9, however, does clearly mention time as something that is “there,” an object with a spatial presence. This is most likely just a reproduction of the everyday speech with which Ecclesiastes was translated, which in turn Eliot imitated for effect in this section, rather than a conscious part of the metaphoric system that Eliot constructed for the poem. However, from the perspective of conceptual metaphor, everyday metaphors should not be excluded or assumed irrelevant because they might be used unconsciously. As such, the time metaphor on line 9 should be taken into account for the analysis of an instance of the conceptual metaphor TIME IS A SUBSTANCE (Lakoff and Johnson 66-67).

The second section of the first movement, an illustration of the meditation of the first thirteen lines, also bears a striking resemblance to its counterpart in “Burnt Norton.” It begins by restating “In my beginning is my end” (14), connecting both sections and marking a trend in the poem. From lines 14-23, the poem introduces a description of the lane that leads to East Coker on a summer afternoon where the projected character (in second-person, hence involving the reader) leans and waits for the approaching darkness. It is curious to notice how in this description the character is mostly passive, and it is the light which acts on the field and the lane itself which “insists on the direction / Into the village.” (18-19)

Line 22 has a stand-alone sentence that is of importance: “The dahlias sleep in the empty silence.” Dahlias are a genus of perennial flowers that appear dead through the cold months of the year only to bloom back in summer from their rootstock. The dahlias are, hence, foreshadowing the dancers from the past who will reemerge in the lines to come.

Line 23 is broken after an imperative sentence that appears to be telling the character to “Wait for the early owl.” The fact that Eliot cut line 23 draws attention to this command, which can be read in several ways. Firstly, it could just be telling the character/reader to wait until night falls, which is essential to the rest of the action and harmonizes with the posterior reflections drawn from St. John of the Cross’ *Dark Night of the Soul*. The deliberate use of owl, however, hints at a symbolic use. The owl is often associated with Greek mythology as the bird of Athena, goddess of wisdom. This would make “[w]ait for the early owl,” an invitation to wait for the revelation to come in the following lines. The owl, however, is also commonly interpreted as an omen of death, according to Roman tradition. An instance of this can be found in *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare, where an early owl is a portent of the early death of Caesar: “And yesterday the bird of night did sit / Even at noonday upon the market place / Hooting and shrieking” (1.3.26-28). The Mayan goddess of death Ah Puch was also often represented as a skeletal figure with the head of an owl, and it

also used owls as messengers of death (Mesa 52). From this myth comes the expression “cuando el tecolote canta, el indio muere” (literally, when the owl sings, the indian dies), still common in northern Central American and Southern Mexico. These interpretations of the owl will also find validation in the poem, both as a reflection by the narrative voice of being in midlife (89) and on the foreboding notion of having been living between one world war and another (173). Moreover, this double interpretation of the owl as both wisdom and death finds echoes in other important symbols like the mythical Tree of Knowledge from the book of Genesis or darkness in St. John of the Cross.

The break in line 23 also marks a crucial change in setting: night falls. While the first part of line 23 takes place in an afternoon where “the sultry light / Is absorbed, not refracted, by grey stone” (20-21), the second part of line 23 takes place “On a Summer midnight” (25) in the same open field. The switch from light to dark will expose a polar opposite to the rose-garden episode in “Burnt Norton” that, however, captures the same essential truth, which echoes fragments 2 and 60 by Heraclitus.

The second section of the first movement reiterates and increases the use of the second-person protagonist, but still as witness of the action rather than actor. While there is only one mention of “you” (17) before the night falls in line 23, after night falls “you” is used three times in the two lines that follow: “In that open field / If you do not come too close, if you do not come too close, / On a Summer midnight, you can hear the music . . .” (24-25). According to Kramer, this three-time repetition serves the purpose of “inviting the readers into the common *logos*” (73).

An interesting anomaly can be found in the edition of *Four Quartets* in Eliot’s *The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950*, which is not present in the original publication in *The New English Weekly* or in the pamphlet first published by Faber & Faber. In line 25, time is described as a “Summer midnight.” Different from the first publications, the later one has the

season capitalized. This capitalization would not be necessary in the English language, and no season is capitalized in either “Burnt Norton” (see lines 25 or 35) or “East Coker” (see lines 52 and 53.) The use of the word “Summer” as a proper noun rather than a common noun could be an instance of *antonomasia*; a kind of metonymy that capitalizes the particular in order to represent the archetypal. The connection the poem has to summer has long been established. Hugh Kenner makes a correspondence that estates that “[t]he poems concern themselves in turn with early summer, late summer, autumn, and winter” (183), respectively. Kristian Smidt supports this association with the slight difference that “*Burnt Norton* then had to stand for spring in sequence, though its imagery was perhaps more summery” (Gardner, *Composition* 18). But the question still stands as to what the archetypal concept of Summer refers. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “summer” as “[t]he second and warmest season of the year, coming between spring and autumn; . . . in popular use comprising in the northern hemisphere the period from mid-May to mid-August” (3150). It is the season at the middle of the year and traditionally associated in England with fertility, as in the Celtic celebration of Beltane (the bloom of the hawthorn in mid-May) which marked the appropriate time of the year for marriage (Hagender 71). Summer as an idea appears related to the middle of the way, to revelry and fertility, to warmth, and to a change in life. All of these are important topics for “East Coker.”

The second section of the first movement goes on to describe a midnight dance around a bonfire that celebrates a marriage. Dance had already been a relevant image in “Burnt Norton,” albeit very flexible in nature. It takes place “along the artery” (52), “at the still point” (63), where “There would be no dance, and there is only the dance” (67), and finally as a “funeral dance” (157). The “dance” is opposed to “stillness” to represent the alternative spiritual paths that could lead one to the timeless. It stands for movement in a

vaster sense. The dancing in “East Coker” appears more grounded in a conventional understanding of the term, and it serves as the center of the action in the first movement.

The dance itself seems like a ghostly apparition from the past. It materializes at midnight, first in sound in lines 25-26 hearing “the weak pipe and the little drum” (26) and then in sight from line 27-46 seeing “them dancing around the bonfire” (27). In lines 29-33, Eliot switches the narration to Tudor English, which produces a feeling in the reading of being dragged back in time as the apparition takes stage. From nightfall to the apparition, the section reads:

In that open field

If you do not come too close, if you do not come too close,

On a Summer midnight, you can hear the music

Of the weak pipe and the little drum

And see them dancing around the bonfire

The association of man and woman

In dausinge, signifying matrimonie—

A dignified and commodious sacrament.

Two and two, necessarye coniunction,

Holding eche other by the hand or the arm

Whiche betokeneth concorde. (23-33)

This technique was criticized harshly by G.W. Stonier in the year “East Coker” was published. He believed “the Elizabethan spelling impart[ed] no flavor [to the poem] save perhaps one of pedantry” (411). This, in turn, was refuted by James Johnson Sweeney, who found the passage to coincide with chapter XXI of “The First Boke” of Sir Thomas Elyot’s *The Boke Named the Governour* from 1531:

It is diligently to be noted that the associatinge of man and woman in daunsing, they bothe obseruinge one nombre and tyme in their meuynges, was nat begonne without a speciall consideration, as well for the *necessarye conjunction* of those *two persones*, as for the intimation of sondry vertues, whiche be by them represented. And for as moche as *by the association of a man and a woman in daunsing* may be signified *matrimonie*, I coulde in declarynge *the dignitie and commoditie of that sacrament* make intiere volumes... In euery daunse, of a most auncient custome, there daunseth to gether a man and a woman, *holding eche other by the hande or the arme, whiche betokeneth concorde*. (Johnson Sweeney 38)

By including this section from Sir Thomas Elyot, T.S. (Thomas Stearns) Eliot is effectively projecting himself, through us in the second-person narration, back into a previous version of himself. Though Sir Thomas Elyot did not come from East Coker, they did share an ancestor in the village by the name of Simon Elyot, and Kenneth Paul Kramer remarks that “[a]mong Eliot’s ancestral line, T.S. Eliot identified most with Sir Thomas Elyot, the Tudor moralist” (68). Johnson Sweeney clearly delineates the relation and its significance to the poem when he writes:

Sir Thomas Elyot was an ardent monarchist, a scholar deeply influenced by the writings of such continental humanists as Pico della Mirandola and Erasmus, and a thorough churchman—at one time intimate of Sir Thomas More, but always a loyal adherent to the Church of his sovereign. We are at once struck by the link between Sir Thomas Elyot’s interests and T.S. Eliot’s famous declaration of faith as a ‘Classicist in literature, royalist in politics and anglo-catholic in religion’ which appeared in his 1928 preface to *For Lancelot Andrews* We now see the picture beginning to arrange itself: a twentieth-

century Eliot, who feels he has certain spiritual links with a Tudor Elyot, communing with himself in the dark spring following the outbreak of the second world war within little more than two decades. (Johnson Sweeney 38-39)

Moreover, Eliot probably identified his own search of the sacramental within everyday practices in the previous excerpt by Elyot. This is addressed by Kramer when commenting the interest Eliot found in the study of marital rituals in *The Golden Bough* by Sir James George Frazer: “Eliot, though, was less interested in Frazer’s analysis of these rituals as ‘homeopathic or imitative magic,’ than he was in their sacramentality, that all reality is potentially the bearer of divine grace” (74). This seems corroborated by a letter written by Eliot to John Hayward in response to the comments by Herbert Read on the second draft of the poem: “It looks as if *daunsinge* and not *matrimonie* was the sacrament.” (Gardner, *Composition* 99)

The fact that Eliot used direct quotation to add to the effect of the poem can be appreciated in this instance, but this episode could also be referential. The poet reported that the episode “may have been influenced by recollections of ‘Germelshausen’” (Gardner, *Composition* 43). “Germelshausen” is a short story by Friedrich Gerstäcker about a town by the same title that, by Papal interdict, is forbidden from either living or dying. Once every hundred years the town would resume its revelries for one day only to sink later again under the earth.

The rest of line 33 until the end of the second section in line 46 goes on to describe the dance and contextualize the relevance that the poet finds in it. It is a circular dance around a bonfire, full of laughter, and in which the dancing shoes make contact with the ground that hosts those that came before. According to line 39, the dancing is “[k]eeping time,” which in turn “keep[s] the rhythm” (40) of their “living seasons” (41). This brings the section back to another imitation of Eccles. 3:1-8 that closes the second section of the first movement

contraposing the dancing of the time of coupling with the inevitability of death and oneness with the earth. It is relevant on this point to notice the coupling that exists between line 45 which mentions “[f]eet rising and falling” with the previously mentioned “rise and fall” of houses in line 2. The notion of “[k]eeping time” (39) through this rising and falling will be fleshed out in the poem in the first section of the second movement.

As previously mentioned, the dance in the second section of the first movement seems a dark version of its counterpart from “Burnt Norton.” Both host a circular movement around a center of light: a dry pool filled with water out of sunlight in “Burnt Norton” and a bonfire at midnight in “East Coker.” Both episodes admit the reader and narrative voice into a dreamlike landscape populated by unreal, laughing creatures out of time: the children in “Burnt Norton” (what might have been) and the wedding party (what has been) in “East Coker.” Both episodes can even be described as going back “[t]hrough the first gate, [i]nto our first world” (BN20-21): back through personal history onto childhood in “Burnt Norton” and back through family history into the ancestral home of the poet in “East Coker.” Rose-garden and midnight-dance episodes are reinterpretations of one technique that starts each quartet exemplifying an abstract meditation into similar experiences of going back to the very beginnings of time.

Despite that they are both dealing with the temporal in their wider structure, the first movement of “Burnt Norton” is full of time metaphors while the first movement “East Coker” so far can only be said to refer to time in two instances: the one already mentioned from lines 9-13 and the idea of “[k]eeping time” in line 39. Commonplace as this metaphor might be, it treats time as something that can be kept, which would make it another instance of TIME IS A SUBSTANCE (66-67) as reported by Lakoff and Johnson. Nevertheless, there are issues set through this movement that will give context to time metaphors hidden further in the poem.

The first movement closes in lines 47-50 with the breaking of the night spell that allowed the midnight dance. The issue of circular time, dealt through meditation, illustration, and the recurrent motto that begins the previous two sections, is concentrated in these four lines:

Dawn points, and another day
Prepares for heat and silence. Out at sea the dawn wind
Wrinkles and slides. I am here
Or there, or elsewhere. In my beginning. (47-50)

An immediate impression refers the reader, both thematically and literally, to the closing of the last section of "Song of Myself" by Walt Whitman:

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,
If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.
You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nonetheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.
Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you. (9-16)

Harold Bloom has long pinpointed the relation between the poetry of T.S. Eliot and that of Walt Whitman, particularly in the "[e]legies for the self" (266). Further than this, however, the mention of the sea in line 48, which will reappear at the very end of the poem in lines 208-209, could be already pointing to "The Dry Salvages," a theory that Gardner entertained and will be commented further. If this is the case, the relation Bloom addressed between Whitman and Eliot becomes even more relevant. "East Coker" would be referencing the end

of “Song of Myself” in anticipation of “The Dry Salvages” which is famously connected to “As I Ebb’d with the Ocean of Life” by Whitman (Bloom 266).

By structure, the second movement is divided into four parts. The first two sections correspond to what Gardner pinpoints for the second movement of each quartet as “a single subject handled in two boldly contrasted ways” (“Music” 121). The first is a conventional lyric passage that was identified by Gardner as an altered sestina and the second is “an extremely colloquial passage . . . in which the idea which had been treated in metaphor and symbol in the first [section] of the movement is expanded and developed in a conversational manner” (“Music” 121). The last two sections are one line each and correspond the first two sections of the first movement: “The houses are all gone under the sea. // The dancers are all gone under the hill.” (99-100) These images are built up from the mood of the second section of the second movement, and in context can be said to be part of a wider metaphoric system about time.

The first section of the second movement of “East Coker” bears both structural and thematic resemblances to its counterpart in “Burnt Norton.” Many of the same rhyming words are used in both, but while “Burnt Norton” employs rhyming octosyllabics in fifteen lines, “East Coker” organizes said irregularly rhyming octosyllabics in seventeen lines. Thematically, it is remarkable that both first sections of the second movement of the quartets share images of seasons, ground, and stars with a marked vertical organization that, upon close inspection, organizes ideas about time. In “Burnt Norton,” garlic, sapphires, and bodily functions in the mud were connected to the constellated stars through the axle-tree: both the image of the center of the wheel and an actual tree which, ascended, would regress one in time and, finally, away from the temporal. “East Coker” will also establish a verticality at this point that will connect the seasons in its first three lines (51-53) with the flowers of the ground in its next four lines (54-57) and the constellated stars in the four lines after that (58-

61). Nonetheless, this is not achieved in “East Coker” through the ascent of the axle-tree that takes one to the past, but by the descent that unites their future in destruction as explained in the last six lines of the section (62-67).

The mention of the seasons at the beginning of the second movement has long been interpreted as metaphoric. “What is the late November doing / With the disturbance of the spring / And creatures of the summer heat” (51-53) is taken by James Johnson Sweeney as a reference to fifty-two year old Eliot wondering about his connection to the first world of childhood in “Burnt Norton” and the matrimonial dancers of “East Coker.” In his words: “So what has the present day to do with these hopes of a younger time? Eliot asks himself in the opening lines of the second [movement]” (43). The analogy of human life through the four seasons, spring for youth, summer for adulthood, autumn for old-age, and winter for death, has been a staple in poetry for centuries. One famous representation could be “The Human Seasons” by John Keats. This analogy of the progress of human life through the seasons in Eliot is not a representation of time itself, but it will lend itself through imagery to a wider time structure.

Lines 54-57 extend the metaphor of the seasons by remarking that the ground hosts death, a topic already explored in lines 8 and 46 of the first movement. This time, however, death is represented by the snow of winter, in keeping with the analogy of the seasons with the ages of a human. The imagery is clearly vertical and very carefully chosen: “And snowdrops writhing under feet / And hollyhocks that aim too high / Red into grey and tumble down / Late roses filled with early snow?” The first of these lines brings back to mind the dancers who danced over the ground where their ancestors lie buried. The second and third lines are interesting because of the allusion to the hollyhock: a biennial plant of the *alcea* genus that has two blooming periods in succeeding summers. The first one is conservative, after which the plant enters a dormant state in the colder months, followed by a second and

bigger blooming in which the stem bolts, “aim[s] too high” (55), to “tumble down” (56) in the later months and die. This allusion should be kept in mind also for the topic of the period between wars explored in the fifth movement. Finally, line 57, the fourth line of this group, brings back two images: that of the rose explored thoroughly in the poem as a sensuous and spiritual symbol (Servotte and Grene 14) and the “early snow,” which takes one back to line 23 to the “early owl,” another image of death.

Lines 58-61 explore again the reconciliation “among the stars” (61) in “Burnt Norton” with dramatically different results. In “East Coker,” there is impermanence in the “constellated wars” (60). Helen Gardner remarks that the line “Scorpion fights against the Sun” (61) refers to the fact that “[t]he sun is in Scorpio from 24 October to 20 November, when it has begun its declination” (101). This is very relevant if taken as a continued analogy of “the late November” of line 51 to the old age of the poet. In the first draft, line 61 was followed by another reference to the constellations: “—The Archer’s Bow and Taurus’ ire—” (Gardner, *Composition* 101). This line can be enlightening when taking into account that Scorpio continues to decline as the sun moves to the next zodiac sign: Sagittarius, the Archer. Taurus, on the other hand, is the zodiacal opposite to Scorpio. While Scorpio sees the transition from autumn to winter, Taurus sees the transition from spring to summer. In these lines, the original draft clearly made a reinterpretation of the analogy of seasons as human ages treated in lines 51-53. Part of it, however, was sacrificed to enhance the topic of the decay of Scorpio from autumn to winter, which taken together with the analogy of seasons brings the reader back to the “[l]ate roses filled with early snow” (57) and the poet waiting “for the early owl” (23).

As mentioned before, seasons, flowers, and stars are connected in the last lines of the first section of the second movement, not by the upward movement through the axle-tree of “Burnt Norton,” but by a downward movement into the earth of “East Coker.” The fact that

these lines should be taken as a time metaphor becomes clear when the poem states: “Until the Sun and moon go down” (62). This clearly cannot be taken as a plain description of the future, but as a figured idea of the future end of the Sun and Moon which will eventually “bring / The world to that destructive fire / Which burns before the ice-cap reigns.” (65-67) The mention of the Leonids in line 63, a prolific meteor shower that occurs in the late November, reaffirms the idea of the expectation of death by the narrative voice, dealt so often throughout this section.

James Johnson Sweeney proposes a complementary interpretation of the seasons in this section, not as an analogy for the ages of a human but as the ages of humanity. Johnson Sweeney proposes to understand the age in which Elyot wrote as the summer of humanity and the age in which Eliot wrote as the autumn. Elyot would embody the humanity of Taurus that welcomes summer and Eliot would embody the humanity of Scorpio that fades toward winter: “[i]n spite of Sir Thomas Elyot’s enthusiasm, zeal and optimism, things did not work out as they were expected to. The autumn of civilization did not bring the serenity and calm that was expected” (Johnson Sweeney 43). Hindsight partially validates this point of view in consideration of the horrors of World War II. The second section of the second movement will amplify on this line of reasoning.

The first section of the second movement of “East Coker” appears also a darker version of the first section of the second movement of “Burnt Norton,” situation akin to that explained about the second sections of the first movements. In both cases, the seasons, the products of the ground, and the stars are connected in a vertical time flux, but in “Burnt Norton” they connect through ascent towards the past and onto timelessness while in “East Coker” they connect through descent toward the future and onto timelessness. When both sections of the poem are taken together, they, like their previous movements, are beautiful

illustrations of the fragment in the epigraph by Heraclitus: “the way up and the way down are one and the same.”

While the first section of the second movement is not obvious in its representation of time, closer inspection shows that it is clearly representing the passage through time of objects that range from flowers to stars (which are also representations of the poet) through a vertical metaphor. Showing a negative consistency with the same section of the second movement in “Burnt Norton,” the movement toward the future is represented gravitationally. The future is down. This example is then consistent with the findings of Boroditsky in her study of vertical time metaphors in both English and Mandarin mentioned previously: “Metaphoric Structuring: Understanding Time Through Spatial Metaphors.” This would sort this instance as a vertical ego-moving metaphor.

The second section of the second movement undermines the high artistry of the first, stating boldly in a stand-alone sentence in line 71 that “[t]he poetry does not matter.” This turn against the poetical is typical of the fifth movement of each quartet. The early appearance of uneasiness towards the medium of expression itself is particular to “East Coker.” Kenneth Paul Kramer argues:

The outright concern about poetic language, at least about the kind just read, which typically does not surface until the end of each quartet, appears early in *East Coker*. As he did in [the fifth movement of] *Burnt Norton* . . . , the poet now reflects “the intolerable wrestle / With words and meaning,” words that both strive and fail to adequately articulate the power of the singular Word. (78)

This struggle takes interesting figurative characteristics in lines 73-75: “What was to be the value of the long looked forward, / Long hoped for calm, the autumnal serenity / And wisdom of the age?” On the one hand, the metaphor of the seasons is taken back, and it can be interpreted both personally and socially: personally, the poet despairs at the anticipated

wisdom and serenity that his older years did not bring him, and socially, the narrative voice expresses disdain towards the hopes of moralists like Sir Thomas Elyot in the face of World War II. The first interpretation has been mostly argued by critics such as Helen Gardner (“Music” 122) or Denis Donoghue (217) and the second one by James Johnson Sweeney (43) or Kenneth Paul Kramer (81), but all generally accept that both interpretations should be taken into account. On the other hand, the image of “the long looked forward to” (73) does transmit to the reader a particular view about time. The future is taken as something to be found by looking forward, which can easily be identified as a horizontal metaphor about time. More information is necessary to determine whether it is ego-moving or time-moving, but this is provided in lines 89-93:

In the middle, not only in the middle of the way
But all the way, in a dark wood, in a bramble,
On the edge of a grimpen, where is no secure foothold,
And menaced by monsters, fancy lights,
Risking enchantment.

Whichever interpretation one takes at this point regarding whether it is the poet or humanity that has “long looked forward to,” the agent in the action is the ego, not time. Time is taken as a way and the agent of the action moves through it, which would make this a horizontal ego-moving time metaphor.

Two clear allusions are easily perceived in this section. The first allusion is to the beginning of Dante’s *Inferno* in the *Divine Comedy*: “Midway along the journey of our life / I woke to find myself in a dark wood, / for I had wandered off from the straight path” (1-3). To associate lines 89-90 of “East Coker” with these lines from Dante appears to validate the interpretation of “the middle of the way” (89) as the vehicle of a time metaphor. The second allusion is for the word “grimpen” in line 91. Helen Gardner explains:

It seems strange, at first sight, that Hayward did not call Eliot's attention to the word 'grimpen' in line 91, which was not, at this time, in any dictionary and puzzled many of the poem's first readers. The *Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary, A-G (1972)* gives 'grimpen. [Etym. uncertain] ? A marshy area'. It cites as the first use Conan Doyle, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902): 'Life has become like that great Grimpen Mire, with little green patches everywhere into which one may sink and with no guide to point the track.' The second citation is from *East Coker. (Composition 103)*

This being the case, the allusion to Conan Doyle would also support the interpretation that the way in lines 89-93 is working as a vehicle for a time metaphor through which the ego of the poem moves.

This section also brings the vehicle of darkness into focus. Darkness, which will be central in the third movement of "East Coker" as it was in "Burnt Norton," is associated here with uncertainty through the conceptual metaphor KNOWING IS SEEING (Lakoff and Turner 48), as can be appreciated in lines 75-81:

Had they deceived us
Or deceived themselves, the quiet-voiced elders,
Bequeathing us merely a receipt for deceit?
The serenity only a deliberate hebetude,
The wisdom only the knowledge of dead secrets
Useless in the darkness into which they peered
Or from which they turned their eyes.

Taken along with lines 89-93 quoted above, this metaphor portrays a familiar theme in the form of a paradox: one is either engaged in the ignorance brought by darkness or tempted by

the deceitful truths of “fancy lights” (93). Truths “derived from experience” (83) that have “[a]t best, only a limited value” (82).

The second section of the second movement ends on a reflection “of the wisdom of old men, [or] rather of their folly” (94), which further supports the interpretation of the ego moving through time as the middle-aged poet. This realization, however, should not lead one to discard the interpretation of the ego moving through time as that of humanity, for that alternative will be validated further into the poem. Line 95 will do a triple repetition of the word “fear,” which appears in the poem to be the obstacle that could not be surmounted in order to attain the “wisdom of humility” (98). This will be further explored in the third movement.

As mentioned previously, the other two sections of the second movement bring back the two main images of the first movement: “The houses are all gone under the sea. // The dancers are all gone under the hill” (99-100). The core word that is repeated in these lines is “under,” and it acquires a deeper meaning when one has incorporated the knowledge of the metaphoric system at play in this section: if down leads to the unavoidable future, to be under is to be beyond time. Not the spiritual ascent developed in “Burnt Norton,” but in the inevitable downfall of everything in the world. As such, it should be taken as a vertical time-moving metaphor.

The third movement, as previously quoted from Gardner, “is the core of each poem, out of which reconciliation grows: it is an exploration with a twist of the ideas of the first two movements” (“Music” 123). Considering it the “core” might be an exaggeration, as Gardner would later quote Eliot assigning the “heart of the matter” somewhere else only to later reject the idea. In a letter to Anne Ridler, dating from March 1941, Eliot wrote:

I am glad, by the way, that you like part IV [of East Coker], which is in a way the heart of the matter. [...] But the poem as a whole —this five part whole— is

an attempt to weave several quite unrelated strands together in an emotional whole, so that really there isn't any heart of the matter. (Gardner, *Composition* 109)

The core idea notwithstanding, the third movement does work as an exploration with a twist of the ideas of the first two movements which manages to weave quite unrelated strands together in an emotional whole. Moreover, the twist of the third movement is constant throughout the quartets, a turn into the idea of darkness.

It has been mentioned that the image of darkness is more important in "East Coker" than it is in "Burnt Norton." Kramer comments:

Where *Burnt Norton* is filled with illuminating light, *East Coker* unfolds in the shadow of darkness: the darkness of the sky over the field; the darkness of the late November; the darkness into which Eliot's ancestors have peered over him; and the spiritual darkness into which the poet enters especially in the [third] movement. (78)

There is a definite point in the constancy of darkness throughout "East Coker" as a contrast to "Burnt Norton" that has been commented throughout, but it is also clear that both poems have similarities in the dark imagery of the third movement accompanied by other coincidences of metaphor which need to be analyzed.

The poem starts with a reinterpretation of the play "Samson Agonistes" by John Milton, a work that had already influenced Eliot heavily in the writing of his play "Sweeney Agonistes," which was sadly never completed. Milton gives voice to a shaved, blinded, and humiliated Samson who estates: "O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon, / Irrecoverably dark, total Eclipse / Without all hope of day" (80-82). In this passage, Samson experiences what St. John of the Cross would have denominated "the dark night of the soul" and antecedes the final intervention by God in favor of Samson, who allowed him to destroy the

temple of the Philistines along with all his enemies and himself. The version of Milton emphasizes the finality of this destruction rather than the justice of God in it. All of these elements are going to be taken up by Eliot to nurture the third movement of the poem, which starts by stating:

O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark,
The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant,
The captains, merchants, bankers, eminent men of letters,
The generous patrons of art, the statesmen and the rulers,
Distinguished civil servants, chairmen of many committees,
Industrial lords and petty contractors, all go into the dark,
And dark the Sun and Moon, and the Almanach de Gotha
And the Stock Exchange Gazette, the Directory of Directors,
And the cold sense and lost the motive of action. (101-109)

Eliot starts his introduction of the dark by contrasting it with the light of the stars, much developed in the previous movement. The dark is the “vacant interstellar spaces” (102). The dark is the non-existence that, according to the previous movement, is the fate of everyone and everything.

It is possible to relate the duality of light and dark of this movement with the duality of up and down of the previous one through the line: “And dark the Sun and Moon” (107). This line should bring the reader back to where the poem states: “Until the Sun and Moon go down” (62). These mentions to “Sun and Moon” are odd in both sections: in the second movement amid constellations, seasons, and flowers and in the third movement amid professions and newspapers. As such, it is not farfetched to relate through them “dark” and “down.” Another duality will also be related to these two in the form of heat and cold, which are introduced in line 109 but will not be completely developed until the fourth movement.

Just like Samson brought down (spatial metaphor intended) the temple on the Philistines in “Samson Agonistes,” the poem speaks of the ultimate coming down of everything in its society through the use of the “dark.” Kramer remarks that Eliot “includes himself here among the ‘eminent men of letters’ in this somewhat satirical catalogue of those who will die.” (84) “Down” and “dark” will be brought together in lines 110-111, that associate them through the image of a funeral: “And we all go with them, into the silent funeral, / Nobody’s funeral, for there is no one to bury.” It is unclear whether this final statement means that there is no one to put underground or no one to carry out the burial; nonetheless, this ambiguity solidifies the message developed so far. One way or the other, it is clear that all individuals here are moving down to the dark rather than darkness moving down on them, as stated in the first line of this movement: “They all go into the dark” (101). Because of this, one should mark this as a vertical ego-moving time metaphor.

In the face of this involuntary way into darkness, the poetic “I” quiets his soul and lets the dark invade him, “[w]hich shall be the darkness of God” (113). This willing surrender into holy darkness in the face of worldly darkness is reminiscent of “Burnt Norton” as it is of *Dark Night of the Soul*. St. John of the Cross advises: “when thou seest thy desire obscured, thy afflictions arid and constrained, and thy faculties bereft of their capacity for any interior exercise, [to] be not afflicted by this, but rather consider it a great happiness, since God is freeing thee from thyself” (83). It is a means to escape the inevitable dread of time and connect with the eternal. James Johnson Sweeney argues:

To Eliot, . . . the first closing-in of darkness brings promise of a sounder road to truth and enlightenment. . . . The clearing away of material, distracting ambitions, the blacking-out of the ‘fancy lights’, open a way to the poet to return to his beginning —to ‘the starting point of human progress, the intuition of pure being’. (47)

Ronald Schuchard likewise characterizes this darkness when he comments: “nowhere does Eliot describe more vividly the shadow of the dark angel coming upon him than in *East Coker*, but there he waits, at last, not in fear but in stillness, faithfully waiting for the darkness to become the light” (15).

Eliot illustrates this experience of allowing the entrance of darkness via three images: when theater lights are extinguished (113-117), when an underground train stops too long between stations (118-121), and when a patient is put under ether (122). All of these are present in earlier works of Eliot. The theater image is also exploited by Eliot in *Murder in the Cathedral* when the four knights, quite literally, take the stage. The underground train is the main image of the first section of the third movement in “Burnt Norton.” Being put under ether is reminiscent of the beginning of “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” that reads: “Let us go then, you and I, / When the evening is spread out against the sky / Like a patient etherised upon a table” (1-3). It should be noted that the spatial orientation of the metaphors of this movement is not lost in these throwbacks, as verticality is present in the *underground* train (118), where the conversation *rises* before fading into silence (120), or darkness being likened to be put *under* ether (122).

Eliot integrates these old themes of desperation into “East Coker” before launching into his reinterpretation of the dark night of the soul, perhaps as a negative understanding of the redeeming memories in the lines that close “Burnt Norton”:

But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
The moment in the draughty church at smokefall
Be remembered. (85-88)

This is made clear in the transparent reinterpretation of *Dark Night of the Soul* that takes place in the last six lines of the first section of the third movement:

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be the hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
For love would be the love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing. (123-128)

In these lines, the poetic self stops addressing “you” and addresses its own soul into the discipline St. John best describes in *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, where he advises:

[T]o abide attentively and wait lovingly upon God in [a] state of quiet, and to pay no heed either to imagination or its working; for here, as we say, the faculties are at rest, and are working, not actively, but passively, by receiving that which God works in them; and, if they work at times, it is not with violence or with carefully elaborated meditation, but with sweetness of love, moved less by the ability of the soul itself than by God . . . (113-114)

Both St. John and Eliot allude here to what the Catholic Church describes as the theological virtues: faith, hope, and love, which are taken from 1 Cor 13: 13. Both advise to let go of hope and love in order for God to operate them himself. This implies an act of faith which comes from embracing the certainty of nothing, what Eliot described here as “the waiting” (126) or “darkness [that] shall be light” (128).

Kramer also suggests that this exchange between the poet and the soul “is similar, structurally, to Yeats’s poem ‘A Dialogue of Self and Soul’” (86). This comparison is very pertinent; although it would have been more precise to say that they are opposite interpretations of a very similar idea. Both assume a conversation between the self and the soul; however, where Yeats makes the soul require of the self to “Set all [its] mind upon the steep ascent” (2), Eliot’s poetic “I” requests its soul to “be still and let the dark come upon

[it]" (112). Both give the self the final word; nonetheless, where Yeats' self opts for the temporal cyclicity in saying: "I am content to live it all again / And yet again" (57-58), Eliot's self strives for the timeless. Both complain about the "crime" (Yeats 24) and "agony" (Eliot 133) "of death and birth" (Yeats 24; Eliot 133); notwithstanding, where Yeats intends to be delivered through the wandering of the intellect (22), Eliot aspires to transcend it by having the soul "be still, and wait without hope" (123).

A colon precedes the last line of the first section of the third movement of "East Coker." The pause that this punctuation mark creates in the reading of the poem is remarkable, as "[t]he colon is usually the best choice for creating a feeling of anticipation" (Casagrande 62). The inclusion of this punctuation mark forces the reader into waiting for the concluding wisdom the last line of the section will award, mirroring the very waiting that the poem is relating. Cleverly, Eliot uses this colon to illustrate poetically what St. John describes mystically.

The second section of the third movement of "East Coker" starts with a lone sentence that mentions the "Whisper of running streams, and winter lightning" (129). Eliot already had the four-part design of the *Four Quartets* by the time he was writing "East Coker." It is perfectly plausible to assume that these are references to the poems to come: "The Dry Salvages," which meditates on water and begins with a reflection on rivers, and "Little Gidding," which meditates on fire and corresponds, seasonally, to winter.

These allusions to what is to come make the following throwback to "Burnt Norton" all the more powerful. The reference to "[t]he laughter in the garden" (131) and to "wild thyme unseen" (130) are clear baits to return to the first movement of "Burnt Norton," where the word "unseen" (28) was used to refer to the eyebeam of the roses which "were full of children" (40). The fact that "East Coker" mentions these as "echoed ecstasy / Not lost, but requiring, pointing to the agony / Of death and birth" seems to indicate that, although these

moments can “Be remembered” (“Burnt Norton” 88), the practice of remembering them inevitably points one to a reflection that temporal existence is necessarily framed between death and birth. If one adds the fact that “thyme” and “time” are homophones, the danger of redeeming time through memory becomes clear. Time can be wild indeed.

The mention of “the agony of death and birth” is not uncommon to the poetry of Eliot after his conversion in 1927. This idea is central to “The Journey of the Magi,” the first poem he wrote after his conversion, and is central in the rest of the “Ariel Poems” he wrote in the following years. It is also developed in the intermission of *Murder in the Cathedral*, his first complete play. To Kramer, “[w]hat sense this coupling of death and birth makes becomes one of the most important questions addressing the reader” (88). He goes on to interpret it as “the necessity of the soul’s dying and being reborn in the presence of God” (89). This could have been taken from the interpretation of Johnson Sweeney of the passage, which states that:

To recover purity of vision, which must not be regarded as hopelessly lost, we must learn from nature the need of undergoing ‘the agony / Of death and birth’ —that is to say ‘rebirth— a return through the agony of death (near at hand for ‘old men’) to ‘the beginning’, ‘the intuition of pure being’. (49)

This interpretation plays well with what precedes and follows the mention of the agony of death and birth: references to *Dark Night of the Soul*. Regardless of this, the fact that the mention “Of death and birth” is set aside from the rest of line 133 through a break also nudges the reader to the ending of the poem: “In my end is my beginning” (209). This is a reversal of the line that starts the poem: “In my beginning is my end” (1). It is appropriate that this reversal takes place short after the halfway point of the poem has been reached and gives the whole work a feeling of cyclicity that will be illustrated by a subtle shift in imagery from that of the first section of the third movement.

What follows the line break are three lines of internalized criticism on the part of Eliot for repeating himself (which most critics judge harshly) wherein “you” is reintroduced as the interlocutor of the narrator. Kramer comments that:

While the poet clearly attempts to engage readers with his descriptive elaboration of spiritual practice (using the inclusive pronoun “you” seventeen times), Eliot’s words both express and exemplify the poet’s method of repetition, of echoing passages from his own or other writings. (90)

This is followed by what Johnson Sweeney, Bradford, Gardner, Kramer, and Servotte and Grene identify as a re-characterization of a passage that can be found in *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book I, section XIII. Although this is perfectly harmonious with the reflection that was started in the first section of the movement, once the element of cyclicity is introduced in line 133, a horizontal metaphor rather than a vertical one dominates the narrative. It illustrates the experience of time as a “way” through which people move to arrive at instances of higher consciousness:

In order to arrive there,
To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not,
You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.
In order to arrive at what you do not know
You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
In order to possess what you do not possess
You must go by the way of dispossession.
In order to arrive at what you are not
You must go through the way in which you are not.
And what you do not know is the only thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own

And where you are is where you are not. (135-146)

The choice of this imagery, however, appears to be subordinated to the imitation of the passage by St. John, which also uses the same horizontal metaphor. However, it is related to the metaphor of “the middle of the way” in lines 89-90, commented on the second movement, and the one in lines 172-173 in the fifth movement, which will be analyzed below. In the metaphor of lines 135-146, taken as it is, one must acknowledge the shift in which the ego maintains the movement through time, but the orientation of time goes from being vertical to being horizontal. As such, this time metaphor will be understood as horizontal ego-moving.

The lyrical fourth movement is divided into five five-line stanzas with a set rhyme scheme and stable metric in which the first three lines are four feet long, the fourth line is five feet long, and the fifth is six feet long. Kenneth Paul Kramer remarks that “the fourth movement casts Christ’s (and humankind’s) suffering in a seventeenth-century verse form laced with metaphysical wit” (92). This verse form is the rhyme pattern used in St. John of the Cross’ *Dark Night of the Soul*. It is an aesthetic choice that differs greatly from the rest of “East Coker” in general and the darkness of the third movement in particular, but it reaffirms thematically the relation between these works. Helen Gardner believes this to be a choice in musicality that supports the thematic issue of going through the “dark night of the soul” into the revelation that needs to appear. In other words, she believes the constant rhythm and rhyme of the fourth movement is a response to the inconstant struggle of the third one:

In ‘East Coker’ the change of feeling is not represented by a break. The break in the meter occurs after the change of movement records has occurred. The change is one that ‘comes upon the mind’: ‘the darkness shall be light, and the stillness the dancing’. There is a change in rhythm, not a break, from the six-stress line to the four-stress. Then after a pause there comes the ‘bridge

passage', in which we wait for the moment when its 'requiring' is answered by the firm rhythm of the Passion lyric. ("Music" 123-124)

The parts of the lyric are centered around certain images: the first one is centered on a "wounded surgeon" (147), the second one on a "dying nurse" (153), the third one on a "hospital / [e]ndowed by the ruined millionaire" (158), the fourth one on "purgatorial" (165) roses, and the fifth one on the Good Friday Eucharist. There are two main interpretations of the first three images. First, there is the allegorical interpretation by Raymond Preston that identifies the "wounded surgeon" with Christ, the "dying nurse" with the Church, and the "hospital endowed by the ruined millionaire" with the world endowed to humankind by Adam (34). On the other hand, there is the interpretation by Helen Gardner that all three images are "types of Christ, who 'emptied himself' that he might suffer for man's sake and with man." (*Composition* 44) The center of the debate takes place in the image of the "ruined millionaire," who Preston claims was identified as Adam by Eliot himself; however, Gardner finds this interpretation unlikely "on the grounds that to endow a hospital is an act of charity hardly compared with endowing the world with Original Sin." (*Composition* 44) While the interpretation by Gardner is fascinating, having Christ take both feminine and masculine forms, one must admit that the interpretation by Preston has a simplicity that makes it more attractive. The take Gardner makes on the imagery is based on the earliest annotations Eliot made of the poem (in which he crossed out "bankrupt banker" for "bankrupt millionaire") and his admiration for André Gide's *Le Prométhée mal enchaîné*, in which Zeus himself is given the role of banker and millionaire. These are intertextual evidences based on speculation around the unlikelihood of Adam being a ruined millionaire. Nevertheless, Adam can be considered a millionaire based on Gn. 1: 26-28, whose ruin (sin) brings forth death, which is the condition of endowing the world.

The interpretation of Raymond Preston is also more compatible with the fourth section of the fourth movement, which is centered not in the passion of Christ, but that of the poetic “I,” as can be seen in line 164. This section is also the one that develops the fourth dichotomy the poem uses after those of up and down, light and darkness, and stillness and dancing: fever and cold. Servotte and Grene recognized this image from *The Family Reunion* (also by T.S. Eliot) as “awareness of sin and atonement” (30), and Kramer identifies its use as “a pattern that will remain consistent through each of the quartet’s fourth movements [in which] a contradiction leads to a paradox. This dichotomy is introduced in the first section of the fourth movement as the wounded surgeon is said to heal by questioning “the distempered part” (148) which resolves “the enigma of the fever chart” (151). The fourth section, however, develops this dichotomy fully as it states:

The chill ascends from feet to knees,
The fever sings in mental wires.
If to be warmed, then I must freeze
And quake in frigid purgatorial fires
Of which the flame is roses, and the smoke is briars. (162-166)

Using these images of temperature, Eliot achieves a number of things. First, it emphasizes the pathos of both extremes of the dichotomy in a bodily metaphor, which is not perceived in any of the other dichotomies. Second, it concisely fuses the commonality fever and cold share in the idea of purgatory, which goes well with the previously mentioned image of the ten stairs by St. John and fragment 60 by Heraclitus from the epigraphs. Third, it further comments on the “darkness” of not knowing, as Servotte and Grene identify “[t]he chill that ascends from feet to knees” in line 162 as a reference to “Socrates after drinking hemlock in Plato’s *Phaedo*” (30). Finally, it recreates the idea of the rose as the timeless, as Derek Traversi

believed that “the flame of the purgative fires issues in the roses which symbolize eternal life; and the briars wound, but beneath the pain bear the flower of possible redemption” (146).

The fourth movement ends with a reflection that has humanity question whether our own flesh and blood are truly substantial when compared to the Eucharist of Good Friday. This brings back to mind the fact that the poem was published on Good Friday, 1940. However, it also highlights the passion that goes behind that particular communion as, doctrinally, no consecration takes place on Good Friday, day that commemorates the death of Christ.

All of this can be construed as an argument of time and timelessness. The Eucharist is more “substantial flesh and blood” (170) for it takes part of the timeless rather than the time-filled existence of our bodies that was thoroughly condemned in the third movement. This, however, is speculative rather than a direct time metaphor. No time metaphor can be directly identified in the fourth movement of “East Coker,” which is significant in two main respects: one, it speaks of the various parallels to time and the variance of metaphor that Eliot employed once he conceived of the quartets as parts of a series, and two, how the lyrical fourth movement tends not to develop a metaphoric system itself but just employ the vehicles set before.

The fifth movement of the poem, as previously mentioned, “recapitulates the themes of the poem with personal and topical applications and makes a resolution of the contradictions of the first” (Gardner “Music” 124). It is divided into two parts of similar technique that discuss, respectively, the difficulties of poetry in the middle of the way and the necessity to move beyond the beginning and the end in perpetual exploration.

The first section of the fifth movement begins with the words: “So here I am, in the middle way” (172). According to the research by Helen Gardner into the composition of the poem, “[t]he opening was made more conversational [in the third draft] by prefixing ‘So’ to

the abrupt ‘Here’” (*Composition* 111). This apparently slight change achieves a big difference in the mood of the poem that echoes thematically through it. About this opening, Kramer mentions:

It is both candid and intimate; as if, in a relaxed and conversational style, the poet is taking the reader into his confidence. At the same time, his words are only tentatively conclusive; they reiterate the fifth movement’s characteristic unitive reconciliation, underscoring the darkness of the poem with the depression felt as the poet recalls his largely wasted years. (97)

Were it not for the inclusion of the conjunction, the tone with which the poet approached the wasted years and the impossible competition with other poets would be far grimmer, which would undermine the resolution that should come from this movement.

The expression “the middle way” in line 172, along with the expression on the following line “the years of *l’entre deux guerres*”, is also loaded with meaning. As noted by Servotte and Grene, this expression “harks back again to line 89” (30), as it does to the reflection of the way in lines 135-146. The middle way, Kramer suggests, “refers to the period between the wars and to his own biographical age” (97), as Eliot was fifty-two at the time of writing *East Coker*. This is a period in which, as the poem has mentioned before, both the beginning and the end are in mind, making temporal horror all the more present: the end of one’s life as well as all the possible ends that loom through the realization that war is at hand.

With this in mind, the poet despairs at his inability “in making words do his bidding (which he also addressed in [“*Burnt Norton*”] V)” (Servotte and Grene 30). The struggle, however, is intensified between the first and second quartet as:

In *Burnt Norton* the poet struggled with the question of how to arrange words in time-bound patterns that could capture experiences of eternal dimensions. Single

isolated moments of speech and action, with no real before or after, were reified and severed from experience after the fact. In *East Coker*, the question of how to get the better of words (as well as the difficulties along one's spiritual path) is intensified by his awareness that as soon as he speaks, his words are altered in and by time's passing. (Kramer 98)

To deepen the problem further, the poet realizes "that what he is attempting to discover has already been discovered by Dante, Donne, and others —his masters" (Bradford 63).

However, in spite of all of this, the poet discovers in the first section of the fifth movement that "there is no competition— / There is only the fight to recover what has been lost / And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions / That seem unpropitious" ("East Coker" 185-187). Curtis Bradford recognizes this as the attempts of poets to "recover the lost sense of man's spiritual possibilities" (63).

This interpretation gains weightiness in the light of the research Helen Gardner conducted on the composition of the poem. In the second draft (the first one to contain the fifth movement) Eliot included a carbon copy of the first draft in which he scrawled his first jottings for the fifth movement. On the back of page seven, Gardner found:

20 yrs

l'entre 2 guerres

20 yrs. or 600 upwards

Home is where we start from. (Composition 111)

The inclusion of 600 years in the third of these lines suggested to Gardner that "[presumably] Eliot [was] thinking of the centuries of English poetry since its first great master, Chaucer" (*Composition 111*). If this is so, it is clear that Eliot is locating himself not only in "the middle way" between wars and in his individual life but also through the course of English poetry, which constantly finds and loses spiritual revelations with no end of the cycle in sight.

All of this considered, it is clear that “the middle way” of the fifth movement of “East Coker” works as the vehicle for a handful of tenors of time. With any of these interpretations in mind, the metaphor shows an image of an individual traveling through a road between time periods. As such, the metaphor should be seen in the same way as its equivalent in the second (lines 73, 89-90) and third movement (lines 135-146): a horizontal ego-moving time metaphor.

The second section of the fifth movement starts with the sentence “Home is where one starts from” (199). The following reflection on the identity of “Home” deepens the realization explained in the previous paragraph by reconsidering the resolution out of temporal horror of “Burnt Norton” and “East Coker.” The way out of temporal horror of the first of the quartets consists in bringing back an “intense moment / Isolated, with no before and after” (192-193). “East Coker”, instead, opts for the different solution of acknowledging a “lifetime burning in every moment / And not the lifetime of one man only / But of old stones that cannot be deciphered” (194-196). This shows once again the larger scope Eliot had in mind for “East Coker.” While “Burnt Norton” was focused on the lifetime “of one man only,” perceiving “our first world” (“Burnt Norton” 21) as infancy, “East Coker” considers time all the way back to the first known ancestor of the author. Helen Gardner quotes John Hayward being the first to associate the stones of line 196 as an “allusion... to the village churchyard at East Coker, where old gravestones are now indecipherable” (*Composition* 111).

The next three lines, which, as far as the second draft, concluded the poem (*Composition* 111), appear nonetheless to favor the resolution of “Burnt Norton” rather than that of “East Coker.” The lines: “There is a time for the evening under starlight, / A time for the evening under lamplight (The evening with the photograph album)” (196-199) both reinforce the imitation of Eccles. 3:1-8 from the first movement and assume that redemption from time can be achieved through memory. In the words of Curtis Bradford: “There is a

time for experience and a time for the quiet recollection of experience (starlight and photograph album)” (63). This, however, maintains a singular and linear perception of time that has been undermined throughout the poem by the reflection on the larger family history and the circular approximation to time that the poet exercised, mostly, through the alternations between “In my beginning is my end” (1, 14) and “In my end is my beginning” (209).

This paradox is considered in the last ten lines of the poem, which meditate on the nature of love and the role old men have in trying to achieve it. Readdressing the horizontal metaphor from the previous section of the movement, the poet writes:

Love is most nearly itself
When here and now cease to matter.
Old men ought to be explorers
Here and there does not matter[.] (200-203)

It appears clear that, to access love, the poet is not suggesting exploration in a literal spatial sense. For Curtis Bradford, this realization means that:

True love is spiritual, not temporal. Old men (note the return to section II) should be explorers; they must be still (compare *Ash Wednesday*, section IV) and at the same time moving on “Into another intensity / For a further union, a deeper communion” even though it must be through the coldness and emptiness of the contemporary world so movingly described in sections III and IV. (63)

In this exploration of spiritual love, says Kenneth Paul Kramer, “time becomes redeemable as the temporal becomes immersed with the sacred” (100). Time also becomes circular, rather than linear. The poem in general, through the horizontal metaphors found in lines 73, 89-90, 135-146; 172-173; and through the play on “en ma fin est mon commencement” by Mary Stuart in lines 1, 14, 209 reaffirm this notion of time. The fifth movement does it in particular

with the repetition that love is mostly itself when it is freed from the shackles of time (“here and now” from line 201 and “[h]ere and there” from line 203). It becomes clear that, as well as fragment 60 in the epigraphs captures the vertical considerations Eliot used of time, fragment 103 by Heraclitus captures well the horizontal considerations Eliot used of time: “Concerning the circumference of a circle the beginning and end are common.” In this way, there is no leaving “the middle of the way,” the “Home” from which one starts is never left, and the beginning and the end are ever present together. Through this circular and perpetual exploration of time, time loses its horror and allows one to access spiritual timelessness.

Once this resolution is reached, the poem projects the reader beyond “the empty desolation” (207) into “the vast waters / Of the petrel and the porpoise” (208-209) before concluding with the motto by Mary Stuart: “In my end is my beginning” (209). Kramer reads the mention of reaching water as an allegorical invitation into the next poem in the series, the last one Eliot was certain he could write by 1940 (Gardner *Composition* 18). In the words of Kenneth Paul Kramer: “this closing passage points ahead to the ‘vast waters / Of the petrel [Peter] and the porpoise [Christ]’ of *The Dry Salvages*” (100) (the brackets in the previous quote are Kramer’s). A blank space later, however, long enough for one to miss reading what follows it, Mary Stuart’s motto projects one back to the beginning of “East Coker,” as Helen Gardner suggested. Janus-like, the conclusion of the poem points us both ahead towards “The Dry Salvages” and behind towards the beginning of “East Coker.” Once more, the circular shape of this horizontal metaphor is displayed, and it illustrates the nature of the exploration Eliot prescribes to old men. Move behind into the poem or ahead and beyond into another poem that will mirror this one. Once more, as Heraclitus prescribed in fragment 103: “concerning the circumference of a circle the beginning and end are common.”

All of this reflection is clearly done again through the consideration of time as horizontal means in which the poet, old men, and the readers have agency to traverse. As

such, this metaphor is also a horizontal ego-moving time metaphor. The question, however, is whether this metaphor should be considered separate from the one that begun the fifth movement, or both should be considered together. Based on the fact that the point of the second movement is to bring perspective to “the middle way” as common to the beginning and the end, it appears that these lines require one to consider the metaphors together. As such, they will be taken as one horizontal ego-moving metaphor.

Despite “East Coker” being an overall more complicated poem than “Burnt Norton,” the summary table below will show how, with regards to time metaphors, it is far simpler than its predecessor:

Table 2

Summary of Time Metaphors in "East Coker"

MOVEMENT	TIME METAPHORS	LINES
I	A. VERTICAL TIME-MOVING	2
	B. TIME IS A SUBSTANCE	9-13, 39
II	C. VERTICAL EGO-MOVING	62-67
	D. HORIZONTAL EGO-MOVING	73, 89-90
	E. VERTICAL TIME-MOVING	99-100
III	F. VERTICAL EGO-MOVING	110-111
	G. HORIZONTAL EGO-MOVING	135-146
IV	---	---
V	H. HORIZONTAL EGO-MOVING	172-173, 197-203

Not only is “East Coker” less abundant in what can be considered direct time metaphors, showing six instances of these against the fifteen found on “Burnt Norton,” but the variety in metaphor is also far lower. Only two time-moving metaphors are found in “East Coker” as

well as no instances of the conceptual metaphor TIME IS A CONTAINER, which were identified in the first of the quartets. The poem does, however, display an even relation between ego-moving horizontal and vertical metaphors, which was also a feature in “Burnt Norton.” It also retains the gravitational properties identified by Lera Boroditsky in vertical metaphors that were also commented in the analysis of “Burnt Norton.”

These findings can be the result of the combination of several factors. As mentioned before, when Eliot wrote “Burnt Norton,” he had yet to come up with the idea of the other three quartets. It is a possibility that he accommodated a more complicated metaphoric system into just one poem because he was not planning on a larger framework to develop his ideas. Not so by the time he wrote “East Coker.” By 1940, Eliot knew that he would write at least one more quartet, which allows for a more specialized treatment of the issue of time in “East Coker.”

The metaphoric system employed in “East Coker” does mirror part of the metaphoric system from “Burnt Norton.” The vertical metaphors that behave gravitationally are one of the factors the poems have in common, a feature that is quite rare in the English language in general and in English poetry in particular. However, while “Burnt Norton” explored the personal experience of time in both upwards and downwards movement (past and future) through this metaphor, “East Coker” only explored it downwards. It stands to reason that this is a thematic choice that works well with the theme of earth in the poem. What is buried is, poetically, lost to time, reaches the ground that stops the movement through which time is illustrated in this kind of metaphor. Historically, however, the image of the midnight dancers in the first movement reverses does allow upward mobility, as their coming up (out of the ground) also brings a return of time past through history as the previous poem explored the return of the past through memory. In this regard, the image of the dancers takes advantage of the metaphoric system of the previous poem in order to be developed.

Another common aspect can be appreciated in the frequency of time metaphors in each individual movement of the quartets. While “East Coker” is less abundant in time metaphors than “Burnt Norton,” the frequency in which they appear in each individual movement does display a pattern. The lyrical fourth movement in both is the least prone to time metaphors, exploring a previously established one in “Burnt Norton” and none in “East Coker.” The fifth movement does present time metaphors, but they are always previously stated ones as its purpose is to resolve issues put forward in the other movements rather than present new ones. And, while the first movements present elaborate time metaphors in the meditation that precedes the illustration, the second and third movements are the most abundant ones. This is not obvious in the third movement of “Burnt Norton,” where only two time metaphors are present versus the four and five of the previous movements, but the development of the metaphors present takes up most of the extension of the movement. This is also true for “East Coker,” where the two time metaphors explored in the third movement are central and extensive.

A relevant difference between the metaphoric systems underlying the poems, however, is how the poems deal with horizontal time metaphors. Most instances of horizontal metaphors in “Burnt Norton” were time-moving, and the ego-moving variety of these were found to be the exception. Not so in “East Coker,” where there are no time-moving horizontal metaphors and ego-moving horizontal metaphors are the most frequent and developed in the poem. This can also be explained thematically, since horizontal metaphors in “Burnt Norton” were used to explain notions of temporal horror while “East Coker” mostly uses them to illustrate the exploration needed to transcend said horror. In the first quartet, the notion of circular time was meant to bring the ideas of absurdity and desperation. An example of this can be found in the third movement of “Burnt Norton” in the underground train that goes in circles towards cemeteries. “East Coker,” which aims to transcend the horrors of time of the

individual and present a wider spectrum, embraces the circularity of time as a feature that permits the perpetual exploration that allows one to find “lifetime[s] burning in every moment” (194). This is not so, however, for the dancers described by Sir Thomas Elyot in the first movement, which are presented just as absurd as the passengers of the train in “Burnt Norton.” Only the way described by Thomas Stearns Eliot presents a redeemed time in which the beginning and the end of the circle are all part of “the middle of the way.”

It is possible to see a similar metaphoric structure in “East Coker” as the one presented in “Burnt Norton,” although it is simpler. The vertical axis exists in “East Coker,” but it limits its effect of transcending time downwards. Like in “Burnt Norton,” where there are two instances of circular time explored in the episode of the rose-garden and the episode of the underground train, “East Coker” presents two instances of circular time: the midnight-dancers that ascend from the ground to the past and the middle of the way of Eliot which finds redemption from time in the exploration of its circularity. Hence, the second of these horizontal and circular instances enjoys a possibility to transcend time that the previous three (two from “Burnt Norton” and one from this poem) did not have.

“The Dry Salvages”

The third poem in the series exploits one great overarching metaphor to fulfill its purpose: life is a river that washes into a sea that represents primordial time and death. Because of this, most of the time metaphors in the poem work following Lakoff and Johnson’s conceptual metaphor TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT (42). As a philosophical and spiritual contrast to the sea of death, Eliot centered his meditation on a promontory off Cape Ann, Massachusetts known as the Dry Salvages, which gave the poem its title. Eliot became acquainted with the promontory as he learned how to sail small crafts throughout the summers he spent in his family’s Gloucester house, and became reacquainted with it during

his Harvard years sailing with his friend Harold Peters. “[T]he Dry Salvages was the last seamount they passed outward bound, and the first they picked up homeward bound” (Kramer 103). Helen Gardner provides a description of the location:

The Dry Salvages and the Little Salvages lie about a mile east-north-easterly from Straitsmouth Island off the northern point of Cape Ann. The official *United States Coast Pilot, Atlantic Coast, Section A: St. Croix River to Cape Cod* (4th edn., 1941) describes the Dry Salvages as ‘a bare ledge about 15 feet above high water near the middle of a reef about 500 yards long in a northerly direction’. . . .When the easterly gale is raging the entire group—Dry Salvages, Little Salvages and Flat Ground—becomes a seething mass of foam, as heavy swells from the Atlantic break and roar over it; and at all times it is a menace to navigators attempting to round Cape Ann.

At the time when T.S. Eliot knew it, Dry Salvages was marked by a wooden tripod; but owing to the frequent need of replacing or repairing this beacon after a storm, it was removed in 1945, leaving the rock bare as ‘it always was’.

(*Composition 52*)

Knowledge of the place is, however, very specialized. After reading the poem’s first draft, John Hayward was confused (among other issues of Massachusetts’ nautical vernacular) as to whether Eliot intended to maintain the pattern of naming the poems after significant locations (Kramer 105), so Eliot added an explanatory note under the title (unique in *Four Quartets*) that reads: “The Dry Salvages—presumably *les trois sauvages*—is a small group of rocks, with a beacon, off the N.E. coast of Cape Ann, Massachusetts. *Salvages* is pronounced to rhyme with *assuages*. *Groaner*: a whistling buoy.”

It is interesting how the poet dedicated a whole sentence in the note to the correct pronunciation of the seamount: stressing the penultimate syllable. Helen Gardner consulted the

issue of pronunciation with Eliot's cousin, Rear-Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison, who stated that he pronounced it as Eliot had specified because that was what his brother called them. He mentioned, however, that Eliot's pronunciation for the promontory is not universal, as the use of nautical charts has prompted modern mariners to emphasize the antepenultimate syllable. Nonetheless, Admiral Morison remarks Eliot's memory is "vindicated" in the fact that, at least, some Gloucester fishermen pronounce the name of the seamount as the poet instructs his readers to do it (*Composition* 54). Nevertheless, the tension Eliot brings up with this note is remarkable, as he is deliberately instructing the reader not to read the title as the spelling of the word would suggest (a derivative of the verb "to salvage") or as the original French name of the promontory would suggest ("savages"). Either of these "incorrect" pronunciations could lead to semantically relevant constructions for the quartet, pronunciations Eliot is actively discouraging. In a poem that mainly deals with time as the sea, itself a part of a collection about time and the timeless, the idea of "salvaging" something from time is meaningful. In fact, salvaging something that is dry around the sea of time and death is a very provocative idea. "Dry salvages" is a fit vehicle for the timeless in this construction. This poem will also deal with primordial time and the way it works as a preserver of past transgressions, which brings tension to one who reads the title as "the dry savages." In the only quartet which engages in American imagery, the drive to read the title of the poem as a hint to one of the great American sins is also hard to resist.

The first movement of the poem begins with a fourteen-line section written in first person singular. It is a reflection of the idea of a river as an ever-present god that has been neglected but not completely forgotten, a god that is patiently waiting to remind the "worshippers of the machine" (10) about what they "choose to forget" (9). This section is comparable to the ten-line abstract meditation on time from "Burnt Norton" or the thirteen-line illustration of a house's decay in "East Coker," but it is closer to the later. While both the

beginning of “Burnt Norton” and “East Coker” aim to meditate on the passage of time, “East Coker” does it with an illustration and “Burnt Norton” does it with an abstract reflection which will be later illustrated with the rose-garden episode. “The Dry Salvages” follows “East Coker” more closely as it also chooses to meditate around the image of this river god. It is, however, more subtle, as there is no open relation between the river and time until the last four lines of the section, which associate the rhythm of the river to the seasons of the year, the seasons of a person’s life, and, in turn, with each of the quartets:

His rhythm was present in the nursery bedroom,
In the rank ailanthus of the April dooryard,
In the smell of grapes on the autumn table,
And the evening circle in the winter gaslight. (11-14)

If each line is taken to correspond to each of the quartets, line 11 appears to provide confirmation to Perkins’ interpretation of the rose-garden from “Burnt Norton” as a symbol of “the child world of fantasy” (258). Line 12, which would correspond thematically with “East Coker,” provides interesting choices and problems. On the one hand, the mention of the ailanthus (which means “tree of heaven” or “tree of the gods”) is of note as it brings back the images of the axle-tree from “Burnt Norton” and the ascension to a timeless heaven that begins the second movement of both poems past. It is also a characteristic tree of St. Louis, Missouri, which grounds the reader in the America of Eliot’s youth and associates the “strong brown god” of the river with the Mississippi. This corresponds to Eliot’s own interpretation of the line, as he stated in his acceptance speech of the Emerson-Thoreau award in the winter of 1959-60: “[y]ou will notice, however, that [“The Dry Salvages”] begins where I began, with the Mississippi; and that it ends, where I and my wife expect to end, at the parish church of a tiny village in Somerset” (*Composition* 47). This position towards the serpentine river gods and its relation to “The Dry Salvages” was also made clear earlier in his “Introduction to

Huckleberry Finn.” He might as well have been talking about himself when comparing Joseph Conrad’s approach to the Congo river in *Heart of Darkness* and that of Mark Twain’s to the Mississippi in *Huckerberry Finn*:

Mark Twain knew the Mississippi in both ways: he had spent his childhood on its banks; and he had earned his living matching his wits against its currents. Thus the River makes the book a great book. As with Conrad, we are continually reminded of the power and terror, of Nature, and the isolation and feebleness of Man. Conrad remains always the European observer of the tropics, the white man’s eye contemplating the Congo and its black gods. But Mark Twain is a native, and the River God is his God. It is as a native that he accepts the River God, and it is the subjection of Man that gives to Man his dignity. For without some kind of God, Man is not even very interesting. (xv-xvi)

On the other hand, the mention of April directs one more towards spring (which one would associate with “Burnt Norton”) than with summer (“East Coker”). On this, Professor Kristian Smidt has been quoted mentioning that Eliot, in 1948, told him that “during the writing of *East Coker* [...] the whole sequence [of four poems] began to emerge, with the symbolism of the four seasons and the four elements. *Burnt Norton* then had to stand for spring in the sequence, though its imagery is perhaps more summery” (Gardner, *Composition* 18). This suggests an overlap in the seasons that “Burnt Norton” and “East Coker” aim to represent, with “Burnt Norton” shooting forward into the summer imagery while discussing the “spring” of life (childhood) and “East Coker” regressing from the summer scene described in the second section of the first movement towards the wedding dance in the May of the late spring. This overlap is present in the representation of “East Coker” in line 12 of “The Dry Salvages,” since the line moves toward April’s spring from the “rank ailanthus,” which smells its strongest when it blooms during the height of summer: June and July. Perhaps, line

12 is also playing with Mary Stuart's "in my end is my beginning" ("East Coker" 209). There is, however, another interesting interpretation relating to the etymology of the word "April." The word is traditionally understood to come from the Latin "aperire," which means "to open." When line 12, "In the rank ailanthus of the April *dooryard*" (emphasis added), is read as a whole with this etymology in mind, a completely different image is brought to mind. A similar overlap could be present in line 13, which stands for autumn and "The Dry Salvages" itself. The mention of "grapes on the autumn table" (13) suggests the image of "vitis labrusca," the "Concord Grape" which got its name when it was first developed in Concord, Massachusetts in 1849 by Ephraim Wales Bull and was probably a staple of Eliot's summers right before going back to St. Louis in the fall. Finally, line 14 corresponds to the fire of the gaslight in winter. This image of fire and winter becomes very meaningful in "Little Gidding," but it will be addressed in the following section, as Eliot was very far from developing it when he was writing "The Dry Salvages."

Once the association between a lifetime and the river is set, the characterization that Eliot makes of the river becomes more vivid. Describing the river as "intractable" (2) and "implacable" (7) takes on a whole new level. To recognize the river as a "frontier" (3) sets the tension for the constant line in the third movement's "Fare forward" (137, 149, 160, 168), which Kramer recognized as the temporal theme of that movement (25). The river as "destroyer" and "reminder" (8) will be associated with the later line "Time the destroyer is time the preserver" (115), and the river as "only a problem confronting the builder of bridges" (5) becomes a clever self-reference for the poet. These are only a handful of examples of the very clever way Eliot worked this metaphor in the opening of "The Dry Salvages." Because of this, Derek Traversi acknowledges that while "[t]here has been a tendency among critics of the *Four Quartets* to find *The Dry Salvages* the least successful poem in the series" (152), he has to say about this section that "[t]he opening 'movement' of

the new quartet is, whatever we may think of what follows, one of Eliot's most sustained and evocative pieces of writing" (153).

Time as a river, however, is a very common metaphor. In his book *Historia de la eternidad*, Jorge Luis Borges disregarded the persistent use of this metaphor as he considered it one of four to which poets "limit themselves" (81). Lera Boroditsky, nevertheless, mentions it as the prime example of the use of time-moving (horizontal) metaphors ("Metaphoric Structuring" 5), which is consistent with Eliot's metaphoric system so far. The exception is that the river is used for a linear rather than circular conception of horizontal time. The river goes from its source to the sea like life goes from birth to death. Nonetheless, the aspect of the river Eliot explores is its rhythm in the circular, recurrent cycle of the seasons. As such, time as the river should be taken here as a horizontal time-moving metaphor that has both linear and circular characteristics. This dual nature of the metaphor will be exploited by Eliot throughout the poem, as the horizontal characteristics of the metaphor will be blurred in the next section of the movement. Later, they will mostly fade in the circular sestina that begins the second movement, but they will come back in force in the third.

Line 15 of the poem, the first of the second section in the movement, achieves a monumental transformation of the metaphor just discussed. By stating: "The river is within us, the sea is all about us" (15), it changes the perspective from the river to the sea, which, symbolically, carries strong implications. First, if one follows the metaphor previously described, one realizes that the poem has shifted its focus from the unruly course of life to the endless expanse of death, as the river has run out into the sea. Second, while the first line of the previous section twice uses "I," the first line of the second section twice employs "us;" that is both a shift from a personal to a communal experience of time and a change of agency: from the subject pronoun of life/river to the object pronoun of death/sea. This is not to imply that the metaphor before was ego-moving; the narrative voice does not claim control over the

river. However, the change from a subject to an object pronoun underlines the passivity humans have over time, augmented on the prospect of death. Third, line 15 also does away with the linear characteristics of time the river proposed. The sea being “all about us” addressed an interminable circularity of horizontal time that, nevertheless, will also have vertical implications further in the movement. Finally, this line is concluded with a semicolon, which gives it relative isolation with what follows while maintaining thematic connection.

It is common among scholars of *Four Quartets* to point out how “East Coker” and “The Dry Salvages” are especially connected through their final lines. For instance, Raymond Preston (36, 50), Derek Traversi (151, 180), Helen Gardner (*Composition* 113-149), and Kenneth Paul Kramer (100) all point to this connection in the final lines of both poems. This interpretation makes a lot of sense, since “East Coker” and “The Dry Salvages” are, by far, the closest quartets in composition. Nonetheless, not enough attention is paid to the constant allusions Eliot made in “The Dry Salvages” to the ideas he developed around the concept of land in the previous poem in light of the vaster perspective that the sea brings. Line 16 is an example of this, as the sea is pointed out as the edge of the land where the river runs and, in its facet of death, “tosses / Its hints of earlier and other creation: / The starfish, the horseshoe crab, the whale’s backbone” (17-19). The mention of these other lifeforms, which casts a shadow over our human sense of importance, prompted Raymond Preston to interpret a progression between the poems, where “with the change of setting from the village to the sea there is a shift of mental perspective from the person to the family—personal experience and inheritance—to the race” (38). Derek Traversi took on this “racial” interpretation and expanded it, stating:

If the motive which provided the starting-point for *East Coker* was primarily personal, the poet engaged, as it were, in taking stock of his situation at a given

moment of particular stress and menace, that of *The Dry Salvages* looks beyond England to America; it takes in his earliest conscious memories and reaches out, beyond these, to the links—largely preconscious, essentially non-intellectual, unconceptual in kind—that bind his experience as an individual to that of the race to which he belongs. (152)

The word-choice of both Preston and Traversi is problematic. To talk about “race” in the 1940s, as well as today, is very politically charged, especially in the case of a writer with such controversial political views as T.S. Eliot. It becomes important to clarify that Raymond Preston uses the word “race” in the sense of the human race. For Preston, “[i]nstead of *my beginning* [the sea] is *the beginning*” (39). The same is true for Derek Traversi, who judges the river as “the racial experience which runs as a determining factor, present even when undetected in the life-blood of each individual man” (153). As for Eliot’s own words, political views aside, this poem does not support a racist reading outside of the vaster human race, being the poem that equates the devotion to the Virgin to the wisdom of Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, while also starting from a clearly pagan position of a river god. All this to say, the poem seems to propose a general human attitude towards death as the sea “tosses / Its hints of earlier and other creation” (17-18).

After evoking earlier creation, the narrative voice guides the poem to a more recent past. The reference to “pools where [the sea] offers to our curiosity / The more delicate algae and the sea anemone” (20-21) brings to mind the dry pool mentioned in lines 33-35 of “Burnt Norton,” with the obvious difference that these ones are not dry. If seawater stands for death in this poem, it stands to reason that the moment of clarity, which was dry and full of “water out of sunlight” (35) in the poem of childhood and spring, is now full of seawater and perspective of the reality approaching death in the poem about fall. There is reasonable support for this idea in Eliot’s lecture on F.H. Bradley, only months before his death:

There might be the experience of a child of ten, a small boy peering through seawater in a rock-pool, and finding a sea-anemone for the first time: the simple experience (not so simple, for an exceptional child, as it looks) might lie dormant in his mind for twenty years, and re-appear transformed in some verse-context with great imaginative pressure. (*Composition* 125)

For the next three lines, Eliot continues to display objects to illuminate the metaphor of the sea of death that brings awareness of our own mortality. The metaphor drastically expands, nonetheless, after Eliot introduces the sea's voices in line 24.

The poet clearly draws the reader's attention to this section by punctuating and breaking lines 25 and 26 in the middle. These lines are noticeably broken as the poem shows how this sea of death (through the metonymies of salt and fog) invades the briar rose of the fourth movement of "East Coker" and the axle-tree of the second movement of "Burnt Norton":

. . . The sea has many voices,
Many gods and many voices.

The salt is on the briar rose,

The fog is in the fir trees.

The sea howl

And the sea yelp, are different voices

Often together heard[.] (24-28)

The images are chosen carefully, as they respectively represent St. John of the Cross' "via negativa" (the "dark night of the soul") and "via positiva" (contemplation.) The briar rose is the earthly purgation conducted by the "wounded surgeon" (147) in "East Coker": "And quake in frigid purgatorial fires / Of which the flame is roses, and the smoke is briars" (165-166). This allusion is clear. The allusion to the fir trees, on the other hand, is more layered. It

parallels the “rank ailanthus” that anchored the previous section to St. Louis with a tree characteristic of Massachusetts in this second section. Nonetheless, the parallels between the trees go beyond that. As Hageneder notes, in Siberian folklore, the World Tree is a fir that connects the realms of the living, the spirits, and the dead. Also, for Native-Canadians, the fir is the tree that connects the earth and the sky (143). These facts should make the connection with the ailanthus, the aforementioned “tree of heaven,” clear, as well as the overarching connection with the axle-tree of “Burnt Norton” that led to timelessness “among the stars” (61).

It is like this that the metaphor of the sea as death overshadows the whole metaphoric system established in both horizontal and vertical representations of time. The implications of this perpendicularity will be thoroughly explored in the poem in the second section of the second movement and all throughout the third movement. Nevertheless, it can be ascertained that, in lines 25 and 26, the orientation of the time metaphor changes. The agency remains firmly on time, but the orientation becomes vertical, making this an instance of a vertical time-moving metaphor.

After this very meaningful mention of salt and fog, line 26 breaks once again and opens into a very celebrated passage. It explores time’s meaning from the multiple voices of the sea, which ultimately crystalize in the bell: a “buoy warning the approaching ship of the danger of rough water. In contrast to a clock’s time and to our human sense of time and duration, this is a different kind of ‘eternal’ time, traditionally symbolized by the sea” (Servotte and Grene, 36). It is also possible that the “sea howl” and the “sea yelp” might also stand for Scylla and Charybdis in Book XII of Homer’s *Odyssey*. In this narrative, Odysseus and his men navigate the difficult passage between the open maelstrom of Charybdis, who howls as she swallows and belches the sea, and the rock that houses Scylla, who yelps like a young dog. It is also in this order that these images are developed in lines 29-30.

The image delivered from lines 26-35 is that of a mariner navigating through the fog using the sound of the “groaner” (bell) as a guide. This metaphor was previously explored by Eliot in “Marina.” The image must come from a fairly familiar experience for Eliot, according to his cousin, Rear-Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison (*Composition*, 128).

Derek Traversi interprets the “[m]any gods and many voices” (25) of the sea in this section as “a surface current” crystalized in “[t]he tolling bell” (35) which speaks of an “under-tow”:

The surface current, we might say, is given by the time-theme, the sense of human, the sense of *human*, measured time bearing life along to its inexorable conclusion; but beneath this, moving—so to speak—as counter-current, not so much *against* the first as *under* it, modifying and qualifying it by its intuited presence, is another sense of time, not to be reduced to mathematical measurement or abstract division into ‘past’ and ‘future’, ‘before’ and ‘after’: the totality of ‘time’ as apprehended in the living moment we call ‘the present’ and as destined, in the continual process of becoming ‘the past’, to die. The two rhythms, simultaneously present on their different levels—which we might call, in psychological terms, the conscious and the sub-conscious, the personal and the racial, the civilized abstraction and its primitive foundation—converge together, meet in the central, unifying image of the bell. (157)

Traversi’s interpretation posits that the verticality of the metaphor of the sea does not just rise to the briar rose and the axle-tree, but also moves underneath the current. This interpretation finds support when one considers the mention of the “[g]round swell” in line 37. Most of that line is dedicated to this phenomenon, which Servotte and Grene define as “a broad, deep undulation of the ocean, often caused by a distant storm or earthquake, which by its rocking movement causes the bell buoy to sound” (36). Kenneth Paul Kramer concurs with Traversi’s

assessment and extends the interpretation's significance for the lines that follow in the poem (37-48):

In this moment, human time is interwoven into, and emerges from, primordial time, which is measured by the focal sound of the "tolling bell." Against the background of primitive terror and the mechanical darkness of machines, anxious women (in a traditional seacoast community in New England) lie awake at night fearing the death of their loved ones, struggling to make sense of past events in light of future possibilities. But notice the difference between their anxious preoccupation of "counting" time (as if chronological temporality can be separated from infinite time) and the unhurried bell's "measuring" time (that is here and now present and also "was from the beginning"). (110)

The last two lines of the movement, "Clangs / The bell" (47-48), come after a comma on line 46, implying that the realization of the last ten lines comes from that bell. A sort of parentheses that starts with "The tolling bell" in line 36 and ends on "Clangs / The bell" in lines 47 to 48. The word "Clangs," which occupies a line by itself, also brings to mind "Chill" in the fourth movement of "Burnt Norton," which also features a bell. Both Traversi and Kramer made note of this, associating it with the idea of a death knell. An annunciation of death which later gives way to the Angelus-bell, a capitalized Annunciation that means "new life, which may emerge from accepted death" (157) for Traversi and "the Angel Gabriel's annunciation and the birth of Christ, through which new life emerges from death" (110) for Kramer. While Traversi's interpretation seems less religiously inclined, it seems clear that Eliot was not aiming for religious sobriety in "The Dry Salvages." It may be because of this inclination that what appears to be a clear intertextual reference has been overlooked, that of the "anxious worried women" (39) and the figure of Homer's Penelope.

The passage reads:

. . . a time
Older than the time of chronometers, older
Than the time counted by anxious worried women
Lying awake, calculating the future,
Trying to unweave, unwind, unravel
And piece together the past and the future,
Between midnight and dawn, when the past is all deception,
The future futureless, before the morning watch
When time stops and time is never ending[.] (37-45)

Eliot, a self-described classicist, must have passed by the figure of Penelope in this passage, lying awake at night, unweaving, unwinding, and unraveling Laertes' shroud, contemplating both her past with a husband lost at sea and a future that might come from the 108 suitors who beset her. This allusion mirrors the allusion to the "lotos" (36) in the first movement of "Burnt Norton." There, the lotos rising brought up the idea of a permanent present, without a home to look back on or forward to. It works as a counterpoint here, as Penelope's permanent present (achieved artificially in the shroud) comes from the uncertainty of her husband's death, forcing her to undo her story ("τέχνη," which means both "text" and "textile" in Ancient Greek) between midnight and dawn to later redo it throughout the day. This image will be brought back in the fourth movement, but the overall relevance of the definite nature of death as a redeeming force towards time will be relevant throughout the poem. This makes the image of unweaving Penelope particularly illuminating.

The first movement of "The Dry Salvages" shows a more frugal Eliot in terms of metaphor, as, rather than employing many images that echo his metaphoric system, he uses one all-encompassing and elaborate metaphor: time is the water that flows from the river of life into a sea of death that invades everything. As neither the narrator nor the reader can

claim any agency over this aquatic time, the metaphor should be read as time-moving. As for orientation, the metaphor is mostly horizontal, except for the figure of the fog, used to invade the vertical aspect of the two previous quartets. While the river of life is linear, the sea is not. That is not to say that the sea is circular in the manner the previous horizontal metaphors had been, but that will be addressed in the second movement. It is of note, nonetheless, that Eliot is using time-moving metaphors vertically, which was rare in the other quartets. Because of this, even though the fog and the salt are very much a part of the sea image, they will be taken as a separate metaphor due to their distinct verticality.

As mentioned before, Helen Gardner observed in “The Music of *Four Quartets*” that the second movement of the four poems contrasts the execution of one idea in two boldly different sections: one highly lyrical and the other colloquial and conversational. In the same essay, Gardner identified the first section of the second movement of “The Dry Salvages” as a simplified sestina. She explains the concept of sestina, the alterations that Eliot uses, and their significance in the poem in her notes of “The Music of *Four Quartets*”:

The *sestina* is a poem of six six-line stanzas, each stanza repeating the rhyme words of the first but rearranging them. There is often a coda of three lines with the rhyme words in their original order in the middle and end of each line. Spenser adopted a simpler form of rearrangement of the rhymes than the Italian *sestina* shows in his August Eclogue, no doubt to suit our duller ears. Mr Eliot does not rearrange his rhymes, as he wishes to give the effect of repetition without progression, a wave-like rise and fall. He also does not confine himself to the repetition of the six rhyme words of the first stanza, employing other rhymes and sometimes assonance, and only returning to the original rhyme words in his last stanza. (136)

Derek Traversi mostly agrees in identifying the rhyming scheme of it as “a free adaptation of the *sestina* form used by [Sir Phillip] Sydney in a poem from *Arcadia*, [which] is, of course, an exceptionally difficult one to handle” (158-159). As for the reasoning behind this choice, Derek Traversi differs slightly from Gardner when he explains at length:

The poet no doubt chose it in part out of attraction for the very challenge it represented. He is also likely to have felt that the long final rhymes, and the effect of a stanza endlessly turning upon itself, answered to a sense of desolation which we can see as carried on from the preceding section: the sense, in other words, of the sheer, unending repetition which limitation to mere temporal succession —‘time before and time after’—seems to involve. The recurrent rhymes emphasize the circular, essentially closed nature of the experience they contemplate; and they end in a ‘calamitous’ assertion —which the poet calls an ‘annunciation’: the word is used three times in the *sestina*, with developing significance— of what he seems to see as a process of universal drift and death. (159)

Three considerations are crucial to understanding this section’s approach to time: the orientation of recurrent images, the two different ways to approach the reading of it (which yield slightly different results), and the development of the concept of “annunciation.”

On the topic of imagery, this section ponders, from the shore of the aforementioned “sea of death,” about the journey to be done in it. Three recurrent images are of note to understand how this section addresses time: the drift of wrecked objects (52, 55-56, 58, 64, 70, 82) which works in a horizontal time-moving fashion, the dropping and withering of autumn flowers (50-51, 80) which works in a vertical time-moving fashion, and the journey of fishermen which has both horizontal and vertical properties and contrasts the others by being ego-moving (67-68, 73-77). The image of the “drifting wreckage” (52, 82) addresses

the product of action, the “[c]onsequense of further days and hours” (56), in a sea that, as before, stands for both time and death. Human action appears doomed to absurdity when Eliot affirms that:

We cannot think of a time that is oceanless
Or of an ocean not littered with wastage
Or of a future that is not liable
Like the past, to have no destination. (69-72)

In this section, what we do in the river of our lifetime washes out and is broken in the subsequent communal ocean of death and time. The “consequence[s]” (56) of our actions move horizontally, yet not by the agency of the actor but by the action of time itself, which moves them and moves through them. “The silent withering of autumn flowers / Dropping their petals and remaining motionless” (50-51) is another recurring image in this movement which echoes the existential dread of the drifting wreckage but adds a referential aspect that brings context to the rose-garden of childhood in “Burnt Norton.” In “Burnt Norton,” the spring poem, the act of remembering the roses of childhood is addressed as “Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves” (16). “The Dry Salvages,” the autumn poem, meditates on the same idea of flowers in an image that corresponds much better to Eliot’s own age at the time of writing the poem and anticipating the moment when they would hit the ground. If in this poem life is a river that washes down to sea, life can also be seen as flowers that eventually fall from a tree. The flowers, like the breakage, have no agency as they move to their final position through time and end up being motionless, timeless. If time in this poem is movement, this stanza is affirming that death also brings timelessness, an important idea (which the poem will develop further) that can be better achieved vertically than horizontally.

Finally, the metaphor of the journey of the fishermen is particularly interesting, as it contrasts with the lack of agency from the ego in the other images. It does not quite adjust to

Lakoff and Johnson's TIME IS STATIONARY AND WE MOVE TOWARDS IT (43-44), the proposed alternative by the authors to TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT, but rather mixes the two conceptual metaphors. It can also work as an extension of the conceptual metaphor widely described by Lakoff and Turner LIFE IS A JOURNEY (60-62), with the important difference that the tenor here is death rather than life, but the journey from one to the other is continuous. The metaphor of the fishermen in stanzas four and five also orients itself in a spatially remarkable way, being both horizontal and vertical in orientation. It must be mentioned that this metaphor is suggested as a fallacy in this section, as a comforting self-deception of what happens to us when we die, but that does not diminish the extraordinary use of imagery (and the idea itself will be vindicated anyway in the third movement). The poem states:

Where is the end of them, the fishermen sailing
Into the wind's tail, where the fog cowers? . . .
We have to think of them as forever bailing,
Setting and hauling, while the North East lowers
Over shallow banks unchanging and erosionless
Or drawing their money, drying sails at dockage (67-68, 73-77).

The poem proposes thinking of the people that journey over the sea of death as doing it willingly and reaching a destination where they can get dry, a conventional notion of heaven. It is proposed as a consolation for the living, those at shore, but it uses the curving of the horizon to combine the horizontality of the journey with the more spiritual applications of vertical metaphors that descend or "lower" into a final destination in time.

In *Landscape as Symbol in the Poetry of T.S. Eliot*, however, Nancy Duvall Hargrove proposes otherwise. She proposes that "while the North East lowers" in line 74 should be interpreted as "while a Northeaster (a nautical term for a storm or high wind from the

northeast) threatens darkly in the distance, symbolizing an ever-present threat of disaster and death in the human journey” (175). While this theory might have some merit, the text itself does not address a “Northeaster” but the “North East.” The perspective in this stanza is also not the one from the shore, but of those fishermen sailing beyond the horizon. Finally, while “lower” is addressed in the OED as an acceptable spelling for the nautical term which means “to haul down,” the perspective points to it being the disappearing in the horizon of the North East United States rather than a storm descending on the shore.

The second consideration to be kept in mind is that the first section of the second movement of “The Dry Salvages” can be read in two different ways: lineally and non-lineally. Lineally, this section is a series of questions and answers. Stanza one asks, and stanzas two and three respond; stanza four asks, stanzas five and six respond. Eliot takes advantage of the form of the sestina not only to create a sense of hopeless ebb and flow as Traversi suggests, but also creates a feeling of dreadful rosary-like repetition from the questions and answers. The first stanza asks about the possibility of an end of death, to which the second responds negatively: there is no end of death, only an infinite addition of the death of everything around us, which itself only leads to the further addition of our own death, developed in the third stanza. The fourth stanza asks how “we” should think of those lost in this sea of death, to which the fifth stanza answers: we should ignore the truth of death and pretend they are not lost. Finally, the sixth stanza seems to reinstate the absolute power of a capitalized Death, which appears recognized as divine. Nonetheless, Eliot’s clever use of figuration reveals a connection between the questions asked in the first stanza and the definitive answers found in the sixth, which appear to be written as question an answer, image by image. This prompts the reader to read this section in a non-linear fashion. When read together, the connection between stanzas one and six becomes obvious:

Where is there an end of it, the soundless wailing,

The silent withering of autumn flowers
Dropping their petals and remaining motionless;
Where is there an end to the drifting wreckage,
The prayer of the bone on the beach, the unprayable
Prayer at the calamitous annunciation? (49-54)

There is no end of it, the voiceless wailing,
No end to the withering of withered flowers,
To the movement of pain that is painless and motionless,
To the drift of the sea and the drifting wreckage,
The bone's prayer to Death its God. Only the hardly, barely prayable
Prayer of the one Annunciation. (79-84)

Read this way, the feeling of litany-like repetition of the section is strengthened. The reader is led to associate thematically stanzas two and three, four and five, and one and six. Isolated in pairs, the presence of some issues is heightened in the sestina.

Stanzas two and three emphasize the shared experience of death, integrated in the “[c]lamour of the bell of the last annunciation” (66). This clarifies two crucial concepts. First, that the rhythm of bell in the first movement of “The Dry Salvages” (35, 48) and in the fourth movement of “Burnt Norton” (127) has to do with our personal experience of time through death. Second, that knowledge of death is the meaning of lower-case annunciation in this section. Stanzas four and five force the reader to ponder on the identity of “we” (69, 73) and “them” (67, 73) as the living and the dead, respectively. Under this light, these stanzas’ asking of how we are to think of dead people reflects the notion back to us: the difference between “we” and “them” is fleeting. Stanzas one and six, finally, emphasize the different annunciations discussed in this section. The lower-case “annunciation” (54) of upper-case

“Death” (84) is explicitly “unprayable” (53), which leaves only the “hardly, barely prayable / [p]rayer” (84-85) of the upper-case “Annunciation” (85) as an alternative.

This reasoning leads one to the clearly central issue of the concept of annunciation, which has been a divisive one. Helen Gardner and Raymond Preston see a difference between the “annunciation” of the first stanza and that of the third stanza, interpreting, then, the three different annunciations as “the calamitous annunciation of terror and danger, the last annunciation of death, and the one Annunciation of history” (Preston 40). Traversi, on the other hand, associates the annunciation of the first stanza “to a sense of life as unendingly subjected to a repetitive and apparently meaningless process in time,” the annunciation of the third stanza to “a final confirmation of desolation,” and the capitalized Annunciation as “an act of faith . . . [where] Eliot is making use of his own personal beliefs . . . [as a] prelude to the ‘historical’ Incarnation which brings with it, for the believer, the only conceivably valid redemption of the temporal process” (160). Kramer also takes them as three different annunciations, but instead interprets them as “the death of body and the death of the psyche” after which follows the Annunciation “of spiritual death and rebirth” (111). Despite these scholars making a differentiation between the annunciation of the first and third stanza (and all interpreting the whole concept differently), it can be agreed that one is clearly an echo of the other. Even if one is to take these annunciations as separate, they are connected in a way the third (and capitalized one) is not. The mention of the “one” true annunciation can be taxing on the non-Christian reader, as it leans very heavily in Eliot’s faith in the Christian story as an objective event in the poem.

The second section of the second movement consists of nine statements in prosaic language. The first three statements summarize the core of the previous two poems, the following five discuss how the realizations from “The Dry Salvages” problematize them, and the ninth presents this poem’s version of “the still point of the turning world” (“Burnt

Norton” 62). Eliot delivers this section keeping with the first-person plural employed in the first section of this movement with two exceptions: the impersonal “one” in line 85 and the self-referring “I” in line 96. One could argue that the communal “we” is employed to encompass all living people, including but not limited to the narrator and any reader. It can also be read as an attempt to keep the rosary-like tone of the previous section. Albeit, Traversi suggests that the first-person plural is richer in this section, as here “we *are* our past, in so far—and in so far only—as *our* past, that past which is personal and individual to each one of us, continues to live in our present circumstance, lending it a fruitful depth of perspective which it would otherwise lack” (164).

The first statement offers a rare recapitulation of the problem that has driven all *Four Quartets* up to this point: the need to approach time in such a way as to redeem it. The narrator argues that “as one becomes older / [the past] ceases to be a mere sequence— / Or even development: the latter a partial fallacy, / Encouraged by superficial notions of evolution, / Which becomes, in the popular mind, a means of disowning the past.” (85-89) This argument is a way to reinstate the previous admonition against forgetting the old river god from the first movement, and it will likewise lead to the terror of the sea. One may notice that “sequence” comes from the Latin “sequi,” which means “to follow,” suggesting that, as one becomes older, time ceases to be understood lineally, like a river.

The second statement summarizes the philosophical position found in “Burnt Norton”, asserting:

The moments of happiness—not the sense of well-being,
Fruition, fulfillment, security or affection,
Or even a very good dinner, but the sudden illumination—
We had the experience but missed the meaning,
And approach to the meaning restores the experience

In a different form, beyond any meaning

We can assign to happiness. (90-96)

In other words, that approaching the meaning of past moments of illumination restores them in a transcendent manner, beyond any need of meaning.

Likewise, the third statement summarizes the philosophical position found in “East Coker” as a natural continuation of “Burnt Norton”, which is displayed poetically as the third statement begins in the middle of the line where the second one ended:

I have said before

That the past experience revived in the meaning

Is not the experience of one life only

But of many generations—not forgetting

Something that is probably quite ineffable:

The backward look behind the assurance

Of recorded history, the backward half-look

Over the shoulder, towards the primitive terror. (96-103)

This argument, as explained in the analysis of “East Coker”, attempts to redeem time stating that the communal vision of time heightens its meaning, as it draws toward a pattern rather than a sequence. This look into one’s communal past, however, unveils the primitive terror of one’s death that gives way to “The Dry Salvages,” as hinted in the aquatic imagery that closes “East Coker.” The spatial metaphor implicit in those lines (101-103) is relevant. It portrays time as an agent that follows at one’s back as one tries to take assurance in the historical connection “East Coker” advises. It is horizontally oriented and time-moving. Finally, the change from a first-person plural perspective to a first-person singular perspective sets this statement aside. It exempts it from the rosary-like feeling that will be reinstated after the period that ends line 103.

The next five statements cohesively express the novel position of “The Dry Salvages” as opposed to the ideas of the previous quartets summarized in the previous three statements:

Now, we come to discover that the moments of agony
(Whether or not, due to misunderstanding,
Having hoped for the wrong things or dreaded the wrong things,
Is not in question) are likewise permanent
With such permanence as time has. We appreciate this better
In the agony of others, nearly experienced,
Involving ourselves, than in our own.
For our own past is covered by the currents of action,
But the torment of others remains an experience
Unqualified, unworn by subsequent attrition.
People change, and smile, but the agony abides.
Time the destroyer is time the preserver,
Like the river with its cargo of dead Negroes, cows and chicken coops,
The bitter apple and the bite in the apple. (104-117)

Line 104 makes this return to the poem at hand clear, as it begins with the words “Now, we”, realigning the reader in both time and point-of-view. That fourth statement puts forward the idea that the same approach to meaning that redeemed moments of illumination in “Burnt Norton” also gives permanence to the moments of agony. This idea is developed negatively in the fifth statement in the same way “East Coker” developed “Burnt Norton” positively: arguing that one’s communal experience of the past, which enhanced the redemption of time in “East Coker”, immortalizes the agony that comes from humanity’s awareness of death. It is important to note that Eliot contrasts “we” and “others” at this point. If “we” stands for the living, “others” must stand for the dead, “the fishermen sailing / [i]nto the wind’s tail” (67-

68) from the previous section of the movement. The sixth statement illustrates and expands the fifth through deliberately polysemic water metaphors. When the poem argues that “our own past is covered by the currents of action” (111), “current” should be taken both as a body of water that moves in a definite direction as well as an opposite of the word “past.” When the poem says that “the torment of others remains an experience / [u]nqualified, unworn by subsequent attrition” (112-113), “torment” should be understood as both “storm” and “agony.” In this deeply meaningful metaphor, the currents of time present can “cover” our past, but the torment of others, having already sunk their past, cannot further sink it after death. The implicit metaphor becomes apparent: in the sea of death the poem proposes, the present is in the surface and the past lies underneath. One does not go underneath willingly, but by the “currents” and “torment” of the sea itself, which makes this a vertical time-moving metaphor.

The reversal in value over what had been achieved in the other two quartets appears confirmed in the seventh and shortest of the statements in this section. By asserting that “[p]eople change, and smile: but the agony abides” (114), the poem declares the fleeting quality of individual and communal happiness contrasted to the enduring nature of humanity’s torment in its awareness of death. This grim realization will be used in the eighth statement both as a reminder of past sins, but it also points the way to the alternative offered in the third movement. Knowing that the river portrayed in the first movement is the Mississippi of Eliot’s childhood, the mention of “its cargo of dead Negroes” portrays the very American original sin of slavery, openly addressed in all its shameful permanence in the symbol of “[t]he bitter apple and the bite in the apple” (116). Nancy Duvall Hargrove does associate this line to the Garden of Eden (177), but she fails to explain the recurrence of the river in this section whose topic is the sea. One would suggest that the river is brought back as a symbol of the serpent, a relation thoroughly explored by the likes of Sir James Frazer in

The Golden Bough, by Veronica Strang in *Water: Nature and Culture*, and by T.S. Eliot himself in his “Introduction to Huckleberry Finn.” It is, however, the line preceding these in the eighth statement that points the way forward in the poem, both in this quartet’s interpretation of “the still point of the turning world” (“Burnt Norton” 62) in the ninth statement as well as the alternative presented in the third movement: “Time the destroyer is time the preserver” (115). Servotte and Grene (40) identify this as a reference to the heroic couplet in the first sonnet of Percy Bysshe Shelly’s “Ode to the West Wind”: “Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere; / Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!” (13-14). While the relation between Eliot’s “Time” and Shelley’s “West Wind” might not be immediately clear, looking into the poem gives credit to this interpretation, given that the poem develops the West Wind as “the breath of Autumn’s being . . . from whose unseen presence the leaves dead / [a]re driven” (1-3). “The Dry Salvages” is Eliot’s autumn poem in the cycle, and the image of the West Wind dropping the leaves off trees makes it symmetrical to the vertical time-metaphor of the previous section of the second movement: “The silent withering of autumn flowers / Dropping their petals and remaining motionless” (50-51). However, as relevant as the reference to Shelley might be, noticing that line 115 also echoes *Bhagavad Gita* 10:33 establishes a vital connection between the second and third movements: “I am Time inexhaustible; and I am the all-pervading Preserver.” In a poem criticized by its blatant Christianity, this reference reinforces yet again the importance Heraclitus’s fragment 2 in the epigraph has for the whole of *Four Quartets*: “Although the Logos is common to all, the majority live as though by a private wisdom of their own.”

In the face of all of this, the ninth statement offers an alternative that mirrors the capitalized Annunciation of the previous section. It is also faith-based and highly metaphorical, but the precise choice of vocabulary allows the reader just enough information for interpreting it:

And the ragged rock in the restless waters,
Waves wash over it, fogs conceal it;
On a halcyon day it is merely a monument,
In navigable weather it is always a seamark
To lay a course by: but in the sombre season
Or the sudden fury, is what it always was. (118-123)

It starts by contrasting the restlessness of the water to the fixity of the ragged rock. Given how established the symbolism of the sea is at this point, one can hint that this rock that contrasts it represents some form of eternity, the still point in the turning world. Partly because the poem is so openly Christian, biblical allusions come to mind regarding this rock that stands in the restless waters, such as 2 Samuel 22:2 (“The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer”) or Matthew 16:18 (“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it”). Morris Weitz uses this reasoning to justify his interpretation of the rock as God’s Church (151). Nonetheless, a classical reading is also productive, considering that Odysseus bypassed Poseidon in the *Odyssey* by staying close to the rock that housed Scylla, a timeless monster that represented the death of six shipmates but also allowed the crew to continue the journey towards Thrinacia. Line 119, however, underlines a spiritual connotation, as it associates the rock to the briar rose and the fir trees mentioned in lines 25 and 26, which themselves remit to the “still point” in line 166 of “East Coker” and lines 56 and 62 of “Burnt Norton”.

It is crucial not to overlook Eliot’s word choice when he writes that the rock is merely a monument “[o]n a halcyon day” though “in the sombre season / [o]r the sudden fury, is what it always was” (120, 122-123). *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word “halcyon” as a “calm [and] tranquil” past, reminding the reader of the rose-garden episode in the first movement of “Burnt Norton”. But the word “halcyon” also refers to the genus of

three kingfishers, in the subfamily Halcyonae, which reminds one to the kingfisher in the fourth movement of “Burnt Norton” and its Christian connotations. If one digs deeper, one finds that this genus receives its name from a bird of Greek legend associated with the kingfisher, said to nest in the sea and to have the capacity to calm it when it is time to lay eggs during the winter solstice. This myth is found in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* as the story of princess Alcyone. Her husband, Ceyx, announces to her that he must embark on a sea journey even though she knows it is ill-fated. In this voyage, Ceyx’ ship is sunk by Aeolus, Alcyone’s father and ruler of the winds, who scorns his daughter’s husband. Juno, the goddess of marriage, is outraged by Aeolus’ behavior. Juno sends her messenger, Iris, to the land of Sleep, who is commanded to send his own messenger, Morpheus, to inform Alcyone of her husband’s fate in a dream. This leads Alcyone to find her husband’s corpse on the shore. As she jumps toward her husband’s body, Alcyone is transformed into the bird of fable.

This knowledge on the word “halcyon” in line 120 illuminates and further develops several crucial themes in the poem. For instance, the notion of women who lost their husbands at sea (found in the first movement in line 39-45 and in the fourth movement in lines 75-76.) Also, the dramatization of the Christian ideas of Annunciation, angelus, and Incarnation (central to the second, fourth, and fifth movements, respectively) through the lense of Classic literature. Note that the poem’s Annunciation, angelus, and Incarnation coincide with Ceyx annunciation of his voyage, the visit of “messengers” (which comes from the Greek “ἄγγελος” that is usually transliterated as “angelos”,) and the laying of eggs during the winter solstice, which is also the time Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus. The myth of the halcyon bird that calms the sea in order to lay eggs also brings to mind the episode in Matthew 8:23-27 where Jesus calms the storm, or that in Matthew 14:22-32 where Jesus has Peter (etymologically, “rock”) walk over the restless waters.

Finally, it is important to remark that the “ragged rock [that has] [w]aves wash over it [and] fogs conceal it” (118-119) shares into the vertical time-moving metaphor already discussed regarding lines 25-26 of the first movement. It also works in tandem with the metaphor identified in line 111. In this section, this vertical time-moving metaphor contrasts the effect of horizontal time over a boat, which is helpless against it, and over the ragged rock of the Dry Salvages, which stands defiantly vertical against it.

As mentioned before, the third movement of each quartet attempts to reconcile the contradictions of form and content of the previous two movements. In Gardner’s words, it “is the core of each poem, out of which reconciliation grows: it is an exploration with a twist of the ideas of the first two movements” (“Music” 123). “The Dry Salvages” is, however, the only poem of the group that attempts this reconciliation without dividing the third movement into sections. The movement will contrast the opposition of the pagan and Christian approximations to the consciousness of the inevitability of death of the first and second movements, respectively, by trying to integrate Krishna’s message in the *Bhagavad Gita* and Heraclitan philosophy. The poem tries to achieve this integration through an overarching seafaring metaphor. This metaphor’s message is especially reminiscent of the fallacious approximation to the dead found in the fifth stanza of the first section of the previous movement, but it also evokes familiarity as it is interlocked with vehicles used in the third movements of the previous two poems. This use of metaphor makes the third movement of “The Dry Salvages” feel like an intersection between the other movements of the poem as well as between the third movements of all the poems so far.

What the third movement of “The Dry Salvages” does first is to switch back to first person singular. This switch makes the dissertation that follows appear individual, humbler, less ambitious than that of the second movement which is transmitted in first person plural. In the first two lines of the third movement, the aforementioned “I” introduces its idea as the

meaning behind something Krishna said. This frames the argument in Hindu spirituality, in stark contrast to the heavily Christian second movement. Derek Traversi suggests that this also reflects Heraclitus' fragment 60, suggesting that Hindu spirituality stands for "the way down" to Christianity's "way up" (167). This interpretation, however, should be taken with care, as Eliot has also made use of similar spiritual devices in the third poem of "The Waste Land" without them being related to Heraclitan parity. The idea in question that the poem's "I" introduces is "[t]hat the future is a faded song, a Royal Rose or a lavender spray / [o]f wistful regret for those who are not yet here to regret, / [p]ressed between yellow leaves of a book that has never been opened" (126-127). The future as something "faded" pressed between "yellow leaves of a book" echoes one of the first ideas delivered in "Burnt Norton," that "time future [is] contained in time past" (3).

In this metaphor, the future is a substance contained in time past, corresponding to the conceptual metaphors TIME IS A SUBSTANCE and TIME IS A CONTAINER, respectively. While the past is only represented as a book with yellowed leaves, three vehicles are employed for the tenor of future: a song, a Royal Rose, and a lavender spray. The song is the most self-referential of the three vehicles, as it reinstates the idea from "Burnt Norton" that the act of reading the poem brings back echoes of the past (11-15), and that the future has to do with "[d]isturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves" (17), since roses in that movement stand for "what might have been." "The Dry Salvages" had already nudged the reader in this direction, with a number of metaphors that regard the future as the final position of "petals" dropped from "autumn flowers" (50-51), which itself lead to the other two vehicles. The "Royal Rose" suggests the so called "Tudor Rose," an unreal rose with both white and red petals that is still dear to the English centuries after the end of the Tudor dynasty.

In her book *Britain's Royal Families*, Alison Weir explains how the Royal Rose arose as a symbol of reconciliation employed by Margaret Beaufort, through her son, King Henry VII, to appease an England that had been ravaged in a war between the York family, who employed a white rose as their symbol, and the Lancaster family, who employed (though less frequently) a red rose as their symbol (146-149). While this conflict would later be known as The War of the Roses, during its time it was known as The Cousins' War, given the fact that Yorks and Lancasters were both branches of the Plantagenet royal line. This reference provides the poem with an important bridge between the English royalty in which Eliot found identity and stability and the Hindu frame of the movement. The earlier mention of Krishna refers the reader to the *Bhagavad Gita*, a poem within the great epic known as the "Mahabharata" (or the song of the Bharata family,) which tells the story of the war between cousin Kauravas and Pandavas. Finally, the lavender spray (only mentioned here in the whole of *Four Quartets*) brings with it a number of referents. Its name comes from Latin "lavare" (to wash) or "livere" (blueish,) both relevant to the maritime imagery of the poem. Lavender is also one of the "holy herbs" mentioned in The Song of Songs 4:13-14, reason why Plague Doctors in the XIII century would use it to ward off death, and the sweet essential oil of "Old English Lavender" (*Lavandula Angustifolia*) has traditionally been employed for its antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties. (Young 156-157)

Line 129, which stands alone as a sentence between the previous and the following metaphors, is especially interesting for this research. It reads: "And the way up is the way down, the way forward is the way back." The conjunction that begins the sentence implies that the tenor of time future of the previous sentence is maintained, and it provides two orientational vehicles to approach it, vertical and horizontal. The agency of this metaphor, however, will be momentarily unclear. What is clear, however, is the connection line 129 establishes with Heraclitus, both explicitly with fragment 60 ("The way up and the way down

are one and the same”) in the epigraph of the poems and implicitly with fragment 103 (“Concerning the circumference of a circle the beginning and end are common”).

The following two lines maintain this Heraclitan theme, saying: “You cannot face it steadily, but this is sure, / That time is no healer: the patient is no longer here” (130-131). Stating that the future cannot be “faced” steadily, would suggest ego-agency, but not necessarily of movement. In everyday speech, “facing” time is common in both ego-moving and time-moving metaphors. In order to clarify the agency here, one needs to analyze the rest of the metaphors in the third movement, first of which is the introducing of the “patient” just mentioned.

On the one hand, the idea of a “patient” in need of a “healer” is reminiscent of the fourth movement of “East Coker,” which, as mentioned before, develops the image of Jesus as a wounded surgeon that heals a patient that stands for a communal first-person plural. But the image of a patient is also present in the third movement of “East Coker,” as the mystical exercise of the Dark Night of the Soul is likened to be “under ether” (122). As suggested in the analysis of the previous poem, this also works as a reference to the “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” that reads, “Let us go then, you and I, / When the evening is spread out against the sky / Like a patient etherised upon a table” (1-3). All of these lines suggest discourages an ego-moving interpretation, for the agency in all these instances of patient-metaphors is external. On the other hand, the absence of the patient in line 131 could also be read as Heraclitan fluidity, such as that found in the fragments where he employs river related metaphors. For instance, fragment 12 (“On those who enter the same rivers, ever different waters flow”) or fragment 49a (“We step and do not step into the same rivers; we are and are not”).

The dual orientation of line 129, foreshadows that the third movement will have both vertical and horizontal aspects. Namely, three horizontal time-moving metaphors developed

throughout the movement will be intersected vertically by a message from above, quoted in lines 149-165. The first of these horizontal metaphors is found in lines 132-141. It brings back the horizontal time-moving metaphor from both “Burnt Norton” and “East Coker” of a train that transports people through their lives’ journey. Two crucial differences in “The Dry Salvages”: the metaphor is not circular (as it was in “Burnt Norton” and “East Coker”) but linear, and the train carries them away from, rather than through, their lives:

When the train starts, and the passengers are settled
To fruit, periodicals and business letters
(And those who saw them off have left the platform)
Their faces relax from grief into relief,
To the sleepy rhythm of a hundred hours.
Fare forward, travellers! Not escaping from the past
Into different lives, or into any future;
You are not the same that left the station
Or who will arrive at any terminus,
While the narrowing rails slide together behind you[.]

Up to line 146, communication is clear. The narrative voice (first person) speaks to its living readers (second person) about the dead “passengers” of the train who depart their lives (third person.) This line of communication is blurred after line 147, where the “travellers” become the “you” to whom the narrative voice speaks. This ambivalent communication forces the reader into identification with the dead, the travellers. This merger of the second and third person is consistent with the central idea of the third movement, which implies integrating Krishna’s message to Arjuna in the field of battle with the Heraclitan fluidity previously established for the communal “patient” of line 131.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna, the best archer among the Pandavas, has refused to fight against the Kauravas, whom he knows are his relatives. In response to this, his charioteer and friend Krishna reveals himself to be an avatar of the primordial deity and urges him to fight. Krishna argues that the death of all the warriors in the field of battle has been predetermined already, and that Arjuna's role is just to accept his fated part in this destruction, as it is not his to impede:

Lord Krishna replied: I have shown myself to thee as the Destroyer who lays waste the world and whose purpose is destruction. In spite of thy efforts, all these warriors gathered here for battle shall not escape death. Then gird up thy loins and conquer. Subdue thy foes and enjoy the kingdom in prosperity. I have already doomed them. Be thou my instrument, Arjuna. (11.32-33)

If one analyses the absence of the patient in line 131, already subject to Heraclitus' fluidity of the river, through Krishna's lens of predestined death, one realizes that death is continual and unavoidable, whether one wants to resist it, like Arjuna, or not. The merger of the second and third persons, the living and the dead, makes complete sense from this perspective. It is clarified in line 159 ("the time of death is every moment) and mirrors the previously commented ambiguity found in "East Coker": "And we go with them, into the silent funeral, / Nobody's funeral, for there is no one to bury" (110-111).

The phrase "Fare forward" (137, 149, 162, 168) appears in this metaphor for the first of four times throughout the movement. Given the non-agency of the travellers of the train, which reflects the non-agency of the patient, the action of faring forward into death encapsulates Krishna's admonition of willfully executing what was already fated, which is not completely unlike Spinoza's concept of "conatus" as the only form of free-will in a predetermined reality. Morris Weitz made an approximation to this interpretation, but ultimately forfeited it when he affirmed that "Eliot is neither Bergsonian nor a Spinozist in

his philosophy of time, but essentially a Christian neo-Platonist” (152), a position that is ultimately problematic given the clear Heraclitan theme of the poem. This theme becomes even clearer in lines 139-140, which reaffirm that the impermanence of personality here is akin to the impermanence of the river in Heraclitus. Traversi also notes that “[t]he point of contact between the injunction to ‘Fare forward’ and the advice offered to those facing old age in [“East Coker”]— ‘Old men ought to be explorers . . . We must be still and still moving’—is sufficiently apparent” (174).

Almost seamlessly, the vehicle of this metaphor, whose tenor is death, changes from a train trip to a sea voyage in lines 142-145. The transition occurs without the use of a period, but rather a semicolon at the end of line 141 that ascertains the fluid connection between these horizontal metaphors. The deliberate pattern becomes clear when one compares line 141 (“While the narrowing rails slide together behind you”) and line 143 (“Watching the furrow that widens behind you”). It is deceptively clear that in these metaphors time moves “us” toward the future and away from the past in a linear manner. However, symmetrically, the train metaphor begins, and the boat metaphor ends, by undermining this orientation:

Fare forward, travellers! Not escaping from the past

Into different lives, or into any future;

. . .

You shall not think “the past is finished”

Or “the future is before us.” (137-138, 144-145)

The rejection of the metaphor’s express orientation should be analyzed with care, because, while the poet affirms that the passengers of either train or ship will no longer think of time in horizontal and linear terms, the poem does not reject but continues to deliver its message through this metaphor of “far[ing] forward” (137, 149, 162, 168) from “the hither [to] the farther shore” (152) to one’s “real destination” (166). Instead, it appears that the apparent

rejection of the metaphor's express orientation serves to deliver the idea of not looking at seafaring in the river's terms, which also drives the central issue of reconciliation of the third movement. Namely, that death disassembles our understanding of time. Our experience of the temporal become absurd after death, just like looking behind for port in the open sea. In the afore mentioned similarity between line 141 of the train metaphor and 143 of the ship metaphor, this is perhaps the most relevant difference: the train metaphor is apt for life, where the past narrows, like the rails, to a single point; while the ship in the open sea is apt for death, with an ever expanding furrow that makes the backward look irrelevant. To reconcile the opposites of the poem, Eliot exposes the paradoxical relation between death and time. Death is both the end of time and a requirement for its existence.

With the same fluidity of the previous metaphorical transition, the following lines momentarily open the image to being interpreted both as the ship of the previous line and the theater of the third movement of the previous poem: "At nightfall, in the rigging and the aerial, / is a voice descanting" (147-148). The "rigging" refers to the "lines and chains used above a ship especially in working sail and supporting masts and spars" as well as "a similar network in theater scenery used for support and manipulation" (OED). Similarly, the "aerial" refers to the network "operating or operated overhead on elevated cables or rails" (OED), integrating also the metaphor of the train. In this intersection of vehicles for the tenor of death, the voice "descanting" refers both to "a discourse or comment on a theme", the expected means of a poem, as well as to "a melody or counterpoint sung above the plainsong of the tenor" (OED), the expected means of a string quartet. A parenthesis in the middle of the same line attributes this voice to a "shell of time" that murmurs, "but not to the ear" and "not in any language" (147-148). If one follows the metaphor of the sea, whose tenor stood for death and time in the previous movements, the "shell of time" that delivers the message from above would stand for a seashell, which proverbially murmurs the sound, the rhythm, of

the sea. In this astonishingly beautiful knot of images, both vertical and horizontal, the “descanting” voice from above intersects train, ship, and theater with the message of the voices of the sea: the “tolling bell” (35) of the first movement.

The message of the “shell of time” from “the rigging and the aerial” reads:

“Fare forward, you who think that you are voyaging;

You are not those who saw the harbor

Receding, or those who will disembark.

Here between the hither and the farther shore

While time is withdrawn, consider the future

And the past with an equal mind.

At the moment which is not of action or inaction

You can receive this: ‘on whatever sphere of being

The mind of man may be intent

At the time of death’—that is the one action

(And the time of death is every moment)

Which shall fructify in the lives of others:

And do not think of the fruit of action.

Fare forward.

O voyagers, O seamen,

You who come to port, and you whose bodies

Will suffer the trial and judgement of the sea,

Or whatever event, this is your real destination.” (149-165)

The first striking peculiarity of this section is that Eliot here chooses to quote his previous admonition of faring forward, switching the voice of the narration with that of the “shell of time.” As an item of revelation, the “shell of time” takes the place of the bird from “Burnt

Norton,” which makes sense as “The Dry Salvages” corresponds to the element of water like “Burnt Norton” corresponded to air. The shell of time, however, after a Heraclitan introduction to the metaphor of the ship that washes its hands of the plausibility of the fishermen alternative in lines 73-78 and further develops the idea of the impermanence of life as that of the river, opts to cede its place to the voice of Krishna in lines 156-158, quoting the *Bhagavad Gita* 8:6. In the translation of Shri Purohit Swami, which Eliot used for *Four Quartets*, the complete verse reads: “On whatever sphere of being the mind of man may be intent at the time of death, thither he will go.” As one may notice, Eliot substituted the end of this quoted verse, switching focus from the eschatological to the social. This substitution, nonetheless, interrupted by a clear Heraclitan interpretation of the concept of death between parentheses in line 159, remains true to the spirit of the *Bhagavad Gita*, which states: “But thou hast only the right to work, but none to the fruit thereof. Let not then the fruit of thy action be thy motive; nor yet be thou enamored of inaction” (2:47). The similarity between this verse and lines 158-161 of the poem is no accident, as the following verse in chapter two of the *Bhagavad Gita* also mirrors the message of “the shell of time” in preceding lines 152-154: “Perform all thy actions with mind concentrated on the Divine, renouncing attachment and looking upon success and failure with an equal eye. Spirituality implies equanimity” (2:48).

By quoting this impersonal “shell of time” that speaks with the voices of the sea, Eliot allowed himself to merge the message of Krishna with a compatible Heraclitan graft on the concept of death. This concept is illustrated in line 162, which summarily delivers the theme of faring forward yet again, and then with a period cuts the line in the middle. The line cut on line 162 seems to correspond to the ubiquity of death remarked in line 159, as it is the difference between addressing the reader as “you who think who are voyaging” (149) before and “O voyagers, O seamen” (162) after. Of note also is the difference between “you” and

“bodies [that] / [w]ill suffer the trial and judgement of the sea” (163-164), bending further the physicality of the concept of death, and the use of the word “destination” (165), which means both “goal” and “destiny” and could provide further grounding for a Spinozist reading of the poem.

Taking all this into account, one can see that the third movement of “The Dry Salvages” delivers one great over-arching metaphor that goes from line 131 to 165. It is mainly a seafaring metaphor that matches the overall imagery of the poem, but it is also linked to similar metaphors of the previous third movements. Namely, that of the patient in 131, that of the train in 132-141, and that of the theater in 146-147. Furthermore, one can state that it is mainly a horizontal time-moving metaphor that allows barely room enough for an active acceptance of the predetermination of death in the theme of “Fare forward, travellers” (137), but this horizontality is traversed by the inclusion the message from the “shell of time” (148) that comes from above, “in the rigging and the aerial” (146). While this horizontal inclusion does not imply any agency, whether of time or the ego, it locates the ancient ideas of Heraclitus and Krishna above, which is consistent with the metaphoric system Eliot established in the second movement of “Burnt Norton” with the axle tree: the past is above. This poem, which illustrates humans necessary passivity towards the awareness of death, does not allow the reader to “move above the moving tree” (56) as it did in “Burnt Norton,” but it definitely contrasts inevitable death in the bottom of the sea to past and perhaps eternal ideas in the rigging and the aerial.

The movement closes as it opens, by adjudicating the message delivered to an interpretation of the admonition Krishna delivered to Arjuna. Kramer interprets this reiteration has an integrating function when stating:

By reiterating Krishna’s emphasis on an active spiritual discipline, one that integrates *karma yoga* (the renunciation of the fruits of action) and *bhakti yoga*

(surrender and self-less devotion), the words “fare forward” include [“Burnt Norton’s”] “descend lower” and [“East Coker’s”] “be still” and transmute their descending inaction into ascending action without attachment to outcomes.

(121)

Interestingly, the closing mention of Krishna in line 166 differs from the opening one in 124 because of the line that succeeds it. By including the phrase “On the field of battle” (167), the poem is firmly anchored to its time and situation: 1941 and open warfare between England and Germany. This reading is often missed by peacetime readers, but the burden of wartime death in the poem is made explicit through another line-break that mirrors the one of line 162. “Not fare well, / But fare forward, voyagers” (167-168) fully delivers the weight of the relation between the general slaughter of the Mahabharata and the foreboding reality of World War II.

The lyrical fourth movement of “The Dry Salvages,” an attempt at integration of the third movement with the three previous ones, is made up of three stanzas where Eliot, according to Gardner, makes “a change in temper from the reflective to the hortatory, represented by a similar change of rhythm from the six-stress line to the firm handling of the line of four stresses” (“Music” 124). Because of its highly Christian tone, the fourth movement of “The Dry Salvages” has perhaps been more severely criticized than any other part of *Four Quartets*, but even critics who try to leave the issue of religion aside have been disenchanted by it. Derek Traversi, for instance, qualifies it as “[l]ess poetical than the corresponding passage in ‘Burnt Norton’ and less ‘ingenious’ than that in ‘East Coker’” (175). It has also been a source of disagreement in terms of representation, as both Hargrove (179-180) and Kramer (124) identify the “Lady, whose shrine stands on the promontory” (169) as Our Lady of Good Voyage Church in Gloucester Harbor, patroness of Gloucester fishermen, while Gardner (*Composition* 141) and Servotte and Grene (42) defend that the

“Lady” refers to Notre Dame de la Gard in Marseilles. To our purposes, however, both criticisms and disagreements are insubstantial, since the poem itself describes the object of prayer in a metaphorically relevant way that follows the metaphoric system previously established.

The Lady stands on the promontory, introduced in the second movement as the ragged rock that stands defiantly against time, whether it be as Church or any other symbol of eternity. She is the vertical element that opposes the “traffic” (172) through time and eventually death as described in the third movement. This image should not be confused with the more commonplace understanding of death which is represented in a metaphorically distinct way since the first movement and will be addressed in the third stanza. It states:

Lady, whose shrine stands on the promontory,
Pray for all those who are in ships, those
Whose business has to do with fish, and
Those concerned with every lawful traffic
And those who conduct them. (169-173)

A number of strange issues arise from this stanza. The mention of those “[w]hose business has to do with fish” in line 171 probably refers to Matthew 4:19: “‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men’”, which roots the poem even further in Christian theology. The “lawful traffic” mentioned in line 172 invites the question of what would represent “unlawful” traffic through the sea of time and death. A possible answer is that the enumeration of esoteric practices that begin the fifth movement are all forms of “unlawful” traffic opposing the Christian practice of this fourth movement. This possibility brings forth the issue of “those who conduct [those who are in ships and whose business has to do with fish]” (173). It would not be unlikely from Eliot that they represent either priests or church leaders, which validates the backlash from this movement to be blatantly proselytizing.

Nonetheless, it should also be mentioned that this stanza is not just excessively Christian as compared to the rest of the poems, but that it is also excessively male when opposed to the second stanza:

Repeat a prayer also on behalf of
Women who have seen their sons or husbands
Setting forth, and not returning:
Figlia del tuo figlio,
Queen of Heaven. (174-178)

Clearly, the prayer seems to be addressed to the Virgin Mary, who is immediately qualified as “Figlia del tuo figlio / Queen of Heaven.” Raymond Preston (47) identified this epithet as a quote from Dante’s *Paradiso*, 33.1 and canto 31.100, respectively. Helen Gardner mentions that one of the first readers of “The Dry Salvages” suggested that “the whole poem was not addressed to the Virgin but to her mother St. Anne, who could be regarded as ‘daughter of *her* Son, (who is) Queen of Heaven” (*Composition* 141). Appealing as that interpretation might be when one considers that *The Dry Salvages* is off the coast of Cape Anne, Gardner qualifies that interpretation as unnecessary “contortions of sense and syntax” (*Composition* 141) due to a misquotation of Dante from “tuo” to “suo” in the poem’s first drafts. The theory also limps from the fact that Cape Ann was not named after St. Anne but king Charles I’s mother, Anne of Denmark.

These, the last two lines of the stanza, make Mary to be daughter, mother, and wife of Jesus, respectively. This allocation forces the reader to a crossroad of faith: if Jesus did in fact resurrect, Mary is not one of those “[w]omen who have seen their sons or husbands / [s]etting forth, and not returning” (177-078); however, if there is no resurrection, Mary is one more of those women, but this prayer is in vain. With no resurrection, there is no alternative to the sea of death, the alternative presented in the fourth stanza of the second movement is nothing but

wishful thinking, and the only escape from temporal horror is the Hindu-Heraclitan one from the third movement. Nonetheless, the Christian approach invalidates the permanence of death, ruling out the Hindu-Heraclitan horizontal solution for the Christian vertical promontory. The two ways, one horizontal and the other vertical, exclude one another, but both provide an escape from time. This is a metaphorically interesting twist on Heraclitus' fragment 60: "The way up and the way down are one and the same."

Considering Penelope also in this section, keeping on with the findings from lines 39-45, adds another layer of depth to this stanza. While Mary, being portrayed as daughter, mother, and wife of Jesus, does not perfectly fit the description of being a woman who saw son and husband "setting forth," Penelope fits it perfectly. Although Odysseus and Telemachus did not actually die in the *Odyssey* like Jesus in the gospel did, Penelope's dilemma is her uncertainty of her son's and husband's death at sea. It is only when she convokes the suitors to the trial of the bow for her hand in marriage, an act of acknowledging her husband's death, that Odysseus returns. The ambiguity of this symbol was also commented by Heraclitus, as he points out in fragment 48: "[t]he name of the bow ($\beta\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$) is life ($\beta\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$), but its work is death."

The third stanza of the fourth movement addresses shipwrecks, the dead. This might appear confusing, as the first stanza already addresses those who are in ships on the sea of time and death. Which is, according to the Heraclitan third movement, a continuous dying: "the time of death is every moment" (159). Nevertheless, the third stanza alludes to a more literal death, such as the one we can perceive in the others as mentioned in the second movement: "We appreciate this better / In the agony of others, nearly experienced, / Involving ourselves, than in our own" (108-110). This is evidenced in the change of verbal tense between the second line of the first stanza of the fourth movement, "Pray for all those

who are in ships . . . ” (170), and the first line of the third stanza, “And pray for those who were in ships . . . ” (179).

The dead are portrayed as those who “[e]nded their voyage on the sand, in the sea’s lips” (180), the end and beginning of the horizontal understanding of time the poem proposes, or “in the dark throat” (181), a polar point of the vertical understanding of time the poem proposes. Which leads into lines 182-183: “Or wherever cannot reach them the sound of the sea bell’s / Perpetual angelus.” Line 182 does not specify which of these two orientations or understandings of time it ascribes to when it states that the sea bell’s sound *reaches* the dead, nor does it limit itself to these two options with the word “wherever.” It remains ambiguous. It should be read both horizontally and vertically, as both orientations are validated in the fourth movement.

The sea bell and its rhythm that marks time “[o]lder than the time of chronometers” (38) is also given a different character in this movement, that of a “[p]erpetual angelus,” the two words that stand alone in line 183, closing the fourth movement. The angelus is a Christian prayer that evolved from a recitation of three “Hail Mary’s” (like the three stanzas of the fourth movement) following an evening bell around the XII century, and reached its current form in the 1500s with added iterations, becoming a “prayer at morning, noon and night to commemorate the Annunciation by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin of her conception of Christ” (Servotte and Grene 43). “Angelus,” Servotte and Grene also remark, became the name of “the church bell to announce [this] prayer” (43). The prayer reenacts the angel’s annunciation to the Virgin of her divine conception, which ties together in the fourth movements crucial concepts from the second and fifth movements: Annunciation and Incarnation, respectively. The “Hail Mary,” whose recitation is at the core of the angelus, is also key here. Like the fourth movement of this poem itself, the Hail Mary asks for the intercession of the Virgin “now and in the time of our death,” but if “the time of death is

every moment,” as stated in Eliot’s Heraclitan addendum to Krishna’s message in line 159, so these two moments are one. This realization also integrates Krishna’s message to Arjuna and Gabriel’s message to Mary from opposite perspectives: the first before a great massacre and the second before a great birth.

In the fourth movement of “The Dry Salvages,” the attempt Eliot makes at reconciling the third movement to the other two thematically achieves the integration of his metaphoric system technically. Through the image of the Lady “whose shrine stands on the promontory” (169), which itself stands against the sea and its currents, Eliot merges his vertical and horizontal uses of time metaphors. However, unlike the previous quartets, horizontal metaphors here do not stand for absurd, cyclical, and shortsighted ideas of time, but for an infinite death that opposes the Christian vertical model of eternity. Nonetheless, this horizontal orientation in “The Dry Salvages” is also used to lead to eternity in a Heraclitan fashion associated to Hindu theology.

The horizontal metaphors (present here in lines 172, 176, 180 and 182 in the image of the sea) lack agency from the ego but not from time, so, as done before, they will be categorized as horizontal time-moving. The vertical metaphors (present in lines 169, 181, and 182 as the bottom of the sea or the promontory) pose a harder challenge, as one needs to understand if the devotional effort on conceiving time vertically should be understood as ego agency. Given the fact that the result of this intervention is outside of the ego’s possibilities, or the Virgin’s for that matter, who only intercedes, one is inclined to assume no ego agency in devotion, which fits the sea’s “dark throat” (181), literal death and the polar opposite of the promontory. Hence, these metaphors will continue be classified as vertical and time-moving, as was the case of its parallel in the third movement.

As stated before, “[t]he fifth [movement of each quartet] recapitulates the themes of the poem with personal and topical applications and makes a resolution of the contradictions

of the first” (Gardner “Music” 124). The fifth movement of this quartet specifically contextualizes how time requires death in one’s meditation, and death is not a concept outside of “incarnation,” the central motif of the movement. Nonetheless, this fifth movement in particular has been found dissonant of the common pattern found in the other poems to many critics. For instance, Nancy Duvall Hargrove objects to the fact that “Eliot makes no use of the symbolism of the New England coast which has dominated the poem, and there is only an oblique reference to the river” (181). Likewise, Kramer makes a point of this movement being unique as it opens with a return “to the theme of time, especially those who unravel the future” rather than the “attempt to make sense of the ever-present, ever-challenging gap between words and meaning” (127) found in the other three poems of the series.

The first ten lines of the undivided fifth movement of “The Dry Salvages” list twelve popular practices that would have been deemed esoteric at the time by most people, certainly by highly religious T.S. Eliot. Taken in their historical context, however, their inclusion in the poem becomes particularly interesting.

The first reference, “To communicate with Mars” (184), alludes to the popular association of the idea of advanced alien life with the fourth planet of our solar system. This association became popular in 1901, when celebrated physicist Nikola Tesla claimed to have detected radio-communication coming from the planet in his *Collier’s* article “Talking with the Planets.” A year later, the association between alien life and Mars became even more present in the popular mind when the also celebrated physicist Lord Kelvin gave a lukewarm support to Tesla’s claims, as they supported his own ideas of “panspermia,” as Raulin-Cerceau and others explain (597). By the time Eliot wrote “The Dry Salvages,” the idea had become so common that even fellow English Christian writer C.S. Lewis had written a novel on the subject, 1938’s *Out of the Silent Planet*. The mention of Mars here, however, may also allude to the Roman god, given the war undertone of the poem. The idea of “conversing with

spirits,” found in the same line, has always been evocative to people. Nonetheless, in Eliot’s England, “conversing with spirits” was central to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, an influential cult in the literary circles to which Eliot belonged. Passi and Serra describe the participation of Arthur Machen and W.B. Yeats in it, respectively. The organization had a three-tier hierarchy: the “First Order” that focused on the Hermetic Qabalah and the four classical elements (not entirely unlike *Four Quartets*), the “Second Order” that focused on magic and alchemy, and the “Third Order” that purported to govern the other two by spirit communication. It is because of this fixation on communicating with spirits that Aliester Crowley, as described by Tully, infamously tried to supersede the Golden Dawn with his own cult, Thelema, claiming direct communication with Aiwass, a spirit messenger of Horus, in 1904. Aside from the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Yeats (who Eliot referred to as “the Master,” according to Helen Gardner’s *Composition*) also joined “The Ghost Club,” a paranormal research organization based in London in 1911.

Line 185, “To report the behavior of the sea monster,” probably refers to the Cosmati pavement in the coronation floor of Westminster Abbey’s sacralium. According to Trowles, in this pavement, the world (surrounded by the four classical elements) has its end calculated in terms of the lifetimes of three sea monsters, for a total number of 19863 years after creation (27-28). Lines 186-191 go on to number different historical practices of divination, such as the horoscope (divination through the stars,) haruspication (divination through animal entrails,) scrying (divination through water or crystals,) graphology (divination through handwriting,) palmistry (divination through the analysis of the hand,) sortilege (divination through sorts, such as dice,) tasseomancy (divination through tea leaves,) and cartomancy (divination through cards.) Line 191 continues on this tendency by mentioning the “fiddling with pentagrams,” which could both be a Pythagorean allusion as well as a common practice of the aforementioned English occultists. After this, lines 192-194 finally move on to more

modern practices. One being the recreational and “spiritual” use of barbituates (which, as Ainsworth mentions, were named after Saint Barbara,) which became widespread during both World Wars and would lead to widespread use twelve years after “The Dry Salvages” with Aldous Huxley’s publication of *The Doors of Perception*. The enumeration finally ends with a clear jab at the practice of psychoanalysis, whose popularity had only increased since Sigmund Freud’s relocation to London in 1933 until his death, only two years before the publication of “The Dry Salvages.”

Eliot is dismissive about all of these “pastimes” (195) aimed at divining the future or the past. He writes that they have always been there “And always will be, some of them especially / When there is distress of nations and perplexity / Whether on the shores of Asia, or in the Edgware Road” (196-198). This appreciation suggests Eliot’s anxiety about the state of the war in 1941. The mention of Edgware Road, however, is particularly evocative, as this road originates in the Roman road of ancient Londinium and ends in Westminster, England’s current seat of power. This makes it, so to speak, a road through time, echoing Eliot’s point through a horizontal ego-moving metaphor. In this poem, this kind of metaphor is a rarity, as it seems disconnected to the passive spatial pattern that is so constant in “The Dry Salvages.”

In the lines that follow, the poetic argues that, by exploring time through the previously mentioned esoteric methods, one “clings to that dimension” (200), the dimension of time. Amusingly, Eliot’s choice of verb, “clings,” onomatopoeically alludes to the bell of primitive time introduced in the first movement: “Clangs / The bell” (47-48). By trying to bypass the power of time, the poem seems to argue, one clings to the bell; one fastens oneself to the primitive, “implacable” (7), “brown god” (2) that keeps “its seasons and rages” (8) while it is “watching and waiting” (10) for our death, to wash out to sea, whether we ignore it or not. Those “dwellers in cities” (7) that play with time submit themselves to time.

As an alternative to this response to anxiety regarding time, Eliot proposes apprehending a “point of intersection of the timeless / With time, [which] is an occupation for the saint” (201-202), a metaphor that makes use of horizontal and vertical metaphoric orientations of the vehicle of the sea. Something similar was also used in the second movement, lines 67-68 and 73-77, but with a degree of personal agency that is not found here. In this metaphor, one does not reach a farther shore through the sea of death, but just the promontory, the point of intersection. In the poem, this might also be an example of religious syncretism, as Krishna (who, as previously mentioned, is an avatar of Shiva, all-destroying Time) expresses in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

But the Great Souls, O Arjuna! Filled with My Divine Spirit, they worship Me,
they fix their minds on Me and on Me alone, for they know that I am the
imperishable Source of being.

Always extolling Me, strenuous, firm in their vows, prostrating themselves
before Me, they worship me continually with concentrated devotion. (9.13-14)

Krishna is not the one who apprehends the point of intersection of the timeless with time in the passage, but Arjuna. Little after these words by Krishna, in the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna will request from his friend to see his true form, all-destroying Time. It is with this revelation that Arjuna apprehends that his own true form is also that of a timeless god, Shiva’s companion Nara. Arjuna’s apprehension is not entirely unlike that of the Virgin Mary, who becomes pregnant of and by God, turning herself into that point of intersection between the timeless and time. Like Arjuna, she is also to become a timeless figure in her own right in the Christian faith through her Ascension. These characters, Arjuna and Mary, are the two figures who were “occupied” by something “given / And taken, in a lifetime’s death in love (203-204). They become “the ragged rock” (118), the Dry Salvages.

The alternative found in lines 200-205 contrasts the esoteric stance toward time represented in the various practices that open the fifth movement of the poem, but that is not an alternative meant for the reader. Eliot does not purport to be a saint like Mary or Arjuna. For himself, and us, he writes:

For most of us, there is only the unattended
Moment, the moment in and out of time,
The distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight,
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. (206-212)

Like lines 11-14 in the first movement, lines 208-210 allude to the previous quartets. The “distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight” (208) clearly refers to the rose-garden episode from “Burnt Norton” as “the wild thyme unseen” (209) points to the wedding dance of “East Coker.” Likewise, the “winter lightning” (209) leads one to the conclusion of the series: “Little Gidding,” the quartet that corresponds to winter and fire. These episodes of fleeting enlightenment are Eliot’s alternatives “for most of us” (206). Unattended moments were we can see the promontories such as Mary or Arjuna “in and out of time” (207), in and out of the tide. In this way, the poem includes the reader in the previously analyzed vehicle of the sea, which is vertical and horizontal, but time-moving. Lines 210-212 deepen even more the connection of “The Dry Salvages” with the rest of *Four Quartets* as they allude to lines 140-145 of “Burnt Norton”:

. . . Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still

Moves perpetually in its stillness.

Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,

Not that only, but the co-existence[.]

That “co-existence” from line 145 of “Burnt Norton” is “the moment in and out of time” in line 207 of “The Dry Salvages.” These lines also fulfill the purpose of bringing back the idea of these poems being, somehow, like string quartets; the poem only exists, really, as it is read, but even while not being read the poem is not entirely gone.

Nonetheless, the poetic voice makes these moments of revelation secondary in the following lines. They become nothing but “Hints followed by guesses” (213). Because Eliot places the brunt of one’s alternative to temporal horror on “prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action” (214) rather than the revelations that these poems themselves stand for (208-212), the fifth movement of “The Dry Salvages” feeds Karl Shapiro’s accusation that the poems signal T.S. Eliot’s “poetic bankruptcy.” This dismissal of poetry, along with the blatancy of the poem’s religious tone, also supports Hugh Kenner’s idea that the fourth movement of each quartet’s spirituality is satirical, and that “The Dry Salvages” stands for the fourth movement of the whole *Four Quartets*. Albeit, the poem shifts attention right back to itself in line 215: “The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation.” Incarnation here (along with the obvious references to Krishna and Christ) stands for the poem while it is being read, “music heard so deeply / That it is not heard at all, but you are the music / While the music lasts” (210-212). This interpretation is confirmed and taken deeper yet in the reflection contained between lines 216-225, where the word “here” points to itself, the act of reading that very word in the poem:

Here the impossible union

Of spheres of existence is actual,

Here the past and future

Are conquered and reconciled,
Where action were otherwise movement
Of that which is only moved
And has in it no source of movement—
Driven by daemonic and chthonic
Powers. And right action is freedom
From past and future also.

The words “impossible union” should bring the reader back to the closing lines of the fifth movement of “East Coker,” which speaks of old men aspiring “For a further union, a deeper communion / Through the dark cold and the empty desolation, / The wave cry, the wind cry, the vast waters / Of the petrel and the porpoise” (206-209). “The Dry Salvages” revealed how these lines aim to point out that union beyond the different “cries” of the sea toward the petrel (both marine animal and “ragged rock”) and the porpoise (both marine animal and “purpose,” the fruit of action.) Eliot frames said union here as the “impossible union / Of spheres of existence” (216-217), bringing the reader to the direct quotation from the *Bhagavad Gita* with a Heraclitan twist in the third movement (line 156-159) only to further pollinate that line when he states that, here, it is “actual” (217).

It is profitable here to consider that the word “actual” means both “pertaining to acts” as “in action or existence at the time; present, current” (OED 24). The first definition points one to the preeminence of action explained in line 214 while the second definition brings one back to the beginning of “Burnt Norton.” To say “Here the impossible union / Of spheres of existence is actual, / Here the past and future / Are conquered, and reconciled” (“The Dry Salvages” 216-218) is to reinstate, though with an entirely different conclusion, that “If all time is eternally present / All time is unredeemable” (“Burnt Norton” 4-5). In the same way, it is interesting to note that, in lines 223-224, the poem states that the act of reading “Here” is

“Driven by daemonic or chthonic / Powers.” It is remarkable to note that “daemonic” means “not terrestrial, spiritual” (OED 639) and “chthonic” means “from beneath the surface of the earth (OED 410). If one is keen on the elemental connotations of *Four Quartets*, this is saying that the act “Here” of reading the water quartet is driven by the aerial and earthen powers of the previous two quartets. Furthermore, to place this “Here . . . / Where action were otherwise movement / Of that which is only moved / And has in itself no source of movement” is to drive the act of reading this poem, this “Incarnation” (215), to the notion of “right action” mentioned in line 224, which originates (and was worded) from the sixth chapter of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*:

Intellect itself, however, moves nothing, but only the intellect which aims at the end is practical; for this rules the productive intellect, as well, since every one who makes for an end, and that which is made is not an end in the unqualified sense (but only an end in a particular relation, and the end of a particular operation)—only that which is done is that; for right action is an end, and desire aims at this. Hence choice is either desiderative reason or ratiocinative desire, and such an origin of action is a man. (92)

In short, for Aristotle there are three forces that control action and truth: sensation, intellect, and desire. He dismisses actions moved by sensation as amoral, since even beasts motivate their actions by them, and he also dismisses actions moved by desire, as they are only practical, a means to an end. Nonetheless, he regards an action moved by intellect (which itself moves nothing) that is an end unto itself as “right action.” Aristotle’s ethical thought is akin to his metaphysical thought, as one can see here how intellect takes the place of the Unmoved Mover and action takes the place of movement. The idea of the Unmoved Mover, as previously mentioned, is how Eliot achieved the “impossible union” in “Burnt Norton” as “right action” does it in “The Dry Salvages,” which also sheds a new light to “The inner

freedom from practical desire” found in line 70 of “Burnt Norton.” This idea, however, is not uniquely Aristotelean, as the poem itself has also grounded it in Hindu thought by introducing in line 161 an allusion to the forty seventh verse of the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*: “Let not the fruit of thy action be thy motive, nor yet be thou enamored of inaction.”

The idea of right action as an alternative to time in “The Dry Salvages” was, as previously mentioned, not well-received by all. Nancy K. Gish, for instance, pinpoints the fifth movement of this poem as “the emotional low point of the *Four Quartets* in its resignation of ordinary people to, at best, right action and the avoidance of utter defeat” (110), going on to state that “The Dry Salvages” is “the least effective of the poems . . . at least partly because of this central idea. It is difficult to create moving poetry from such a vision” (111). Notions like this, or Hugh Kenner’s statement that “the poem leads us *out of* ‘poetry’” (190), fully endorse Karl Shapiro’s notion of poetic bankruptcy.

Whether one agrees with this or not, the poem does not appear to care for soothing words. It ends by stating that even right action is just an “aim / Never here to be realised” (226-227), as we should be content “If our temporal reversion nourish / (Not too far from the yew-tree) / The life of significant soil” (231-233). One would propose that, given that this “reversion” refers to one’s inevitable death, what the poem suggests is that one can only hope to become like the dancers of East Coker, “Nourishing the corn. Keeping time, / Keeping the rhythm in their dancing” (“East Coker” 39-40), implying the future, death, being below, as this same vehicle denoted in the previous quartet. This can be quite meaningful in the full context of the poems. As mentioned in the analysis of “Burnt Norton”, the yew-tree (a graveyard tree) stands for death and resurrection while the dancers passively remain in the soil. This is akin to the idea of saints apprehending the point of intersection of the timeless

with time by rising over the tide as a promontory while, “for most of us,” there is only trying and failing to emulate them. To this, Kenner opines:

The poem’s last formulation is one from which no agnostic propounder of a free man’s worship would dissent. No one succeeds, the thing is to try; our efforts ‘fructify in the lives of others’, and we ourselves enrich the ground. This is very close to the gospel of ants; and the final line empties of inconsistent optimism a Ruskin-like cliché about significant toil. . . . Thus the parody-reconciliation, the collective voice of the late nineteenth century, urging us to strive without personal hope, to consider how we are placed in a cosmos whose dimensions dwarf us on an earth whose soil at least knows how to make use of us, seeking our fulfilment in a collective endeavor, and our religious support in ‘religious experiences’ which are likely to be experiences of nature—‘the winter lightning / Or the waterfall’—or of music, and not really distinguishable from the fulfilment of ‘a very good dinner’. (191)

Nancy Duvall Hargrove adds herself to the resistance to this tone of resignation, comparing its mood of supposed reconciliation with that of despair in “The Waste Land.” She shows herself reluctant to Eliot’s choice of making “no use of the symbolism of the New England coast which has dominated the poem” to change it for “the wasteland world of time were men rely on magic, superstition, and psychology rather than religion to solve the enigma of time and life” (181). This observation about Eliot’s Waste-Land-evoking approach, as well as the different arguments for “poetic bankruptcy,” were also noted by Derek Traversi, whose opinion is perhaps more accepting of Eliot’s choices in light of the overall pattern of four poems:

The final section of this quartet aims, accordingly, at pulling together the various intuitions previously explored, from *Burnt Norton* onwards, into a more

inclusive statement. This will not be a conclusion—and it may even include, as a necessary stage, a partial sacrifice of poetic intensity; but it will represent an indispensable step in the advance toward such a conclusion. The step will be taken in the light of the central reality, as it is to be affirmed of Incarnation as a bringing together into unity of time and the extra-temporal, flesh and spirit, the moment of intense and living intuition and the concept that may serve to give it meaning. (177)

Helen Gardner grants some truth to the critical line of these ideas, as applied in the message and not in the form of “The Dry Salvages.” In her book *The Art of T.S. Eliot*, she begins her fourth chapter, entitled “The Dry Season,” by stating that “[t]he contrast, striking and obvious as it is, between the matter and manner of *The Waste Land* and of *Four Quartets* is, like every true contrast, made possible by an underlying sameness” (78), and she ends it by writing that the ending of “The Waste Land” is not despair, but “the truth of the human situation as the religious mind conceives it: the beginning of wisdom is fear” (98). It can be interpreted from these lines that Helen Gardner ultimately believed that no true wisdom could be attained in “Little Gidding” were it not entered in a state of Job-like expectation. A state that everyone seems to agree was achieved through “The Dry Salvages.”

Donald Davie stated that, in *Four Quartets*, “‘The Dry Salvages’ . . . is the odd one out in all sorts of ways” (160). On the one hand, it has inspired resistance, as well as proselytizing praise, for being the most overtly Christian poem in the series. On the other hand, it is the most ecumenical poem in the series, acknowledging veracity and even equivalence in the Hindu faith, to which the third movement is dedicated, and a certain undeniability to the pagan beliefs of old since the first line of the poem. “The Dry Salvages” demands more of the reader in terms of religious faith, but it certainly is not a layman’s faith. When F.O. Matthiessen affirmed that “‘Burnt Norton’ is the most philosophically dense of

the series,” (94) perhaps he should have also considered Max Weber’s notions of religious amalgamation, as the different creeds considered in “The Dry Salvages” are amalgamated to metaphysical and ethical challenges (both alone and in comparison) unlike anything the previous quartets explored before. Whether one agrees with Flint that Eliot succeeded in making “poetry out of philosophy” (108) or stands with Shapiro in believing that Eliot “traded poetry for the metaphysical abstraction” (246), complex philosophical thought goes by the hand of faith in this poem.

As for time metaphors, “The Dry Salvages” definitely fits with the metaphoric system of the other quartets, although it does it by contrast. As F.O. Matthiessen stated: “[t]he contrapunctual balance of sea and river reinforces, throughout ‘The Dry Salvages’, the themes of time and movement” (96), like a Cello would in a string quartet.

Consider the following summary of time metaphors in the poem:

Table 3

Summary of Time Metaphors in "The Dry Salvages"

MOVEMENT	TIME METAPHORS	LINES
I	A. HORIZONTAL TIME-MOVING	1-14, 15-25
	B. VERTICAL TIME-MOVING	25-26, 37
II	C. HORIZONTAL TIME-MOVING	52, 55-56, 58, 64, 70, 82
	D. VERTICAL TIME-MOVING	50-51, 80
	E. HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL EGO-MOVING	67-68, 73-77
	F. HORIZONTAL TIME-MOVING	101-103
	G. VERTICAL TIME-MOVING	111, 119
III	H. TIME IS A SUBSTANCE	126, 144
	I. TIME IS A CONTAINER	128
	J. VERTICAL TIME-MOVING	129
	K. HORIZONTAL TIME-MOVING	129, 132-141, 149-165, 168
	L. THE PAST IS UP	146
IV	M. VERTICAL TIME-MOVING	169, 181, 182
	N. HORIZONTAL TIME-MOVING	172, 176, 180, 182
V	O. HORIZONTAL EGO-MOVING	198
	P. HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL TIME-MOVING	201-202, 207
	Q. THE FUTURE IS DOWN	231-233

Unlike "Burnt Norton" with its metaphoric variety, "The Dry Salvages" concentrates its ideas in the overarching vehicle of the sea, a pattern of metaphoric economy already present in "East Coker." However, unlike "East Coker," "The Dry Salvages" exploits a

multiplicity of tenors through this one vehicle with an exuberance that dwarfs that of “East Coker,” surpassing even the one achieved through metaphoric diversity in “Burnt Norton.”

Also, in both agency and orientation of time metaphors, “The Dry Salvages” breaks well-established patterns from the previous quartets. In terms of agency, this poem is the opposite to “East Coker,” where time-moving metaphors were mostly not employed. In “The Dry Salvages,” the agency of the whole metaphoric system is clearly time’s, although there are two exceptions: the metaphor designated with the letter E, that the poem mostly discards as wishful thinking, and the metaphor of Edgware Road, designated O, that is clearly disconnected from the system. This pattern goes in accordance to the message of “The Dry Salvages” which, unlike the philosophical insights of “Burnt Norton” and the privational insights of “East Coker” to escape temporal horror, only offers right action that is doomed to fail “For most of us” (226), even if it “fructif[ies] in the lives of others” (160). This unexpectedly ironclad metaphoric consistency with the well-expected “contrapunctual” ideology of “The Dry Salvages” surely contributed to the poem being perceived as the “odd one out” in the series. The absolute contrast in agency with “East Coker” is unique in the series. The contrast was not as strong between “East Coker” and “Burnt Norton,” given that the first quartet was not written to interact with any other poem, and the contrast between “The Dry Salvages” and “Little Gidding” is also not as great, due to the total integrating role expected of the last quartet of the series.

Regarding orientation, perhaps because of this lack of ego-agency, “The Dry Salvages” also diminished the role of exclusively vertical metaphors, which in the previous quartets allowed the reader an intellectual or devotional escape from Time’s influence. In “The Dry Salvages,” the vertical metaphors designated B, D, and G are there to show how the previous escape mechanisms are overtaken by the sea of death and time, and metaphor M is reserved for “saint[s]” (202), religious figures whom “one cannot hope / To emulate” (“East

Coker” 184-185). This leaves metaphor J, a restatement of Heraclitus’ fragment 60, which is presented in a third movement that only explored the Hindu/Heraclitan alternative to Time, both time-ridden and horizontal. The third and fifth movements of “The Dry Salvages” do portray moments of illumination like the previous quartets did, and they are represented vertically, but they are shown through metaphors that do not allow ego-agency, particularly metaphors L and Q. These metaphors allow glimpses out of time, but not exploration. They are truly “hints and guesses” (212), moments “in and out of time” (206). As for horizontal metaphors, they break with their likes in the other quartets in two ways: first, they do away with circularity, opting to challenge orientation altogether, and second, they do not only stand for the terror and absurdity of temporal existence (as they did in “Burnt Norton” and “East Coker”) but represent a solution to them when put to its final extent, as developed throughout the third movement. Which leads to the novel appearance of both horizontally and vertically oriented metaphors, designated E and P, enabled by the notions of horizon and tide in the promontory, respectively. They do not, however, run against the metaphoric grain of the poem, as the wishful thinking nature of E and “our” (231) inferiority towards the “saints” in P reaffirm time’s absolute grip over human existence.

A curiosity of the poem is a slight resurgence of substance and container time metaphors, present in metaphors H and I, which were common in “Burnt Norton” but had receded in “East Coker.” One might be led to think that they appear as natural complements to the vehicle of the sea, but this is not the case. This resurgence is misleading, as these container metaphors appear both within the tangential “book” vehicle that introduces the third movement and the latter use of H, in line 144, is used in negation rather than affirmation. When compared to the affirmative use, these kind of containment metaphors had in “East Coker,” it is clear that “The Dry Salvages” shows even more recession in their use.

There are, however, very interesting similarities between the metaphoric systems of all three analyzed quartets that should be pointed out. First of all, the influence of time in “The Dry Salvages” is explored horizontally. In the first two quartets this exploration might have been motivated by the implied circularity of these metaphors which suggest the infinity of Time. “The Dry Salvages” did away with this circularity in its vehicle of the sea, only to replace it with reaffirmed infinity, that also allowed it to invade the vertical metaphors used previously to represent alternatives that lead one toward timelessness. This timelessness, nonetheless, remains vertical in “The Dry Salvages,” even if it is reserved for “saints” and can only be glimpsed by “most of us.” The alternatives to time continue to behave gravitationally as they did in the previous quartets: our past can be escaped by going up and our future escaped by going down, as if the endless horizontality of time were intersected by a timeline that precipitates in a straight drop with initial and terminal points. This vertical time schema, as mentioned before, was found by Boroditsky to be absent from the English language. However, it must be psychologically set up, as it is very present in oriental languages and English speakers are quick to adopt it when trained in its use. This is, perhaps, appropriate in this very Hindu quartet, that feeds on the message given to Arjuna: even if one gains special insight into time, one continues to be helpless towards it.

“Little Gidding”

While the concluding poem of the series includes and redevelops the themes of the previous quartets, it has a number of unique elements that are reinterpreted movement by movement, conveying in the reader a sense of deeper truth behind them all. First, movements I, II, and III of the poem (and, to a lesser degree, the last two which contain them) reflect on the image of a symbolic white bloom, akin to the bloom of the hawthorn that is associated with the coming of spring, but occurring at a time that is counterintuitive. Second, this

blooming occurs at a liminal, horizontal space between three places, and it is the result of the descension of a sublime force from above. Third, this event forces the poetic voice to reconcile three conflicts: the paradox between God's eternal love and the temporal pain brought about by sin that concerned XIV century English mystics, the clash between the Royalist Cavaliers and the Parliamentarian Roundheads in the English Civil War during the XVII century, and Eliot's own struggle to find meaning in the poetic activity in the midst of World War II. In its conception, the poem also meditated around the struggle of the War of the Roses in the XVI century, and while this theme was dropped in development, the remain important vestiges that need to be addressed. Fourth, all of these temporal and special forces will finally converge on the idea of fire, which is at the same time Heraclitus' supreme principle, Eliot's Holy Ghost, and the descending force behind the extemporaneous white bloom. In the poem, all of these come together in the church at Little Gidding. Servotte and Grene aptly and succinctly describe and contextualize the role of the church thus:

Little Gidding is the English village where Nicholas Farrar founded an Anglican religious community in 1625, which lasted until it was dispersed by the Parliamentarians in 1647. It consisted of a few families who wanted to devote themselves to a life of prayer, work and charity. King Charles I is said to have come there one night after his decisive defeat by Cromwell at Naseby in 1645, and prayed in their chapel. In the Anglican (Episcopalian) Church it remains a model of what Christian life could be. Eliot was a Board member of the society of Friends of Little Gidding. (49)

It is important to remark a peculiarity that the study of "Little Gidding" presents at this point: there are so many early drafts and correspondence about the composition of "Little Gidding" readily available (expertly compiled by Helen Gardner in *Composition of Four Quartets*) that many critical approaches seem to focus more on what the poet appears to have

originally meant to say than what the published poem actually says. This leads to extremely wide interpretations that make the text feel watered down and the reader disconnected from what is read. So, while the early drafts and correspondence will be considered in this analysis, their use will be kept to a minimum and only to tie together elements that are present in the published version of the poem.

The first movement of “Little Gidding,” as is the case with the other quartets, contrasts an illustration and a meditation. This first movement in particular, however, is divided into three sections, which will mirror the aforementioned three-parted liminal space the poem explores. The first of these sections is remarkable in the fact that, as Gardner (*Composition* 58) and Kramer (110) point out, it is wholly developed in the present tense. It is also of note that this section is developed impersonally, which strongly sets it apart from the other two. These factors are significant as the first section addresses the notion of “midwinter spring” (1), this movement’s white blooming manifestation of transcendental fire that bridges time and the timeless. Nancy Gish remarks that this use of (impersonal) present tense lends the first section an air of certainty that contrasts with the ensuing two sections (111). This is especially true in light of Marie A. Quinn’s observation that the second and third sections are narrated in conditional clauses (41), emitted from an authoritative poetic voice to a second person singular receiver that visits Little Gidding. This can be interpreted as a reflexive poetic voice addressing itself on its visit to the church at Little Gidding or as the poet addressing the reader on its visit to the poem “Little Gidding.” Regardless, the second section of the first movement concerns itself with the physical and historical implications of coming to Little Gidding, while the third section concerns itself with the spiritual implications of coming to Little Gidding.

From the start, “Little Gidding” dramatizes its image of an extemporaneous white bloom in its three-parted liminal space by reinterpreting familiar ideas. The first movement of the poem begins by stating:

Midwinter spring is its own season
Sempiternal though sodden towards sundown,
Suspended in time, between pole and tropic. (1-3)

Gardner connects how “spring” here connects the imagery of the poem to that of *Murder in the Cathedral* (*Composition* 159), and Gish points out that the certainty of the verb “is” in the first line is opposed to “perhaps” in the second line of “Burnt Norton” or “I do not know” and “I think” in the first line of “The Dry Salvages” (111). In these lines, “sundown” will create a sempiternal (from the Latin “semper” and “aeternus” meaning “always ageless”) moment “suspended in time, between pole and tropic” (3), in composition, “cold and heat” (*Composition* 158). This image is the first manifestation of a descending sublime force (sundown) merging three opposing concepts (sodden, cold, and heat), but it does so by reconsidering previous images. It brings back both the dusk of the fourth movement of “Burnt Norton” (along with its death knell) and the wounded surgeon of the fourth movement of “East Coker” that resolves “the enigma of the fever chart” (151) by questioning “the distempered part” (148) of the poetic voice saying:

The chill ascends from feet to knees,
The fever sings in mental wires.
If to be warmed, then I must freeze
And quake in frigid purgatorial fires
Of which the flame is roses, and the smoke is briars. (162-166)

These five lines lead unto an image that further redevelops ideas from the previous quartets. The poem moves on to a reinterpretation of the incident with the dry pool in “Burnt Norton”

to set the stage for the white bloom of this movement, the snow on the hedgerow that resembles the hawthorn bloom that marks the coming of spring:

The brief sun flames the ice, on pond and ditches,

In windless cold that is the heart's heat,

Reflecting in a watery mirror

A glare that is blindness in the early afternoon. (5-8)

It is an interesting contrast how the pool was decidedly dry in "Burnt Norton" ("filled with water out of sunlight" (35), though) while this pond is clearly filled with ice. On the other hand, while sunlight reveals "what might have been" in "Burnt Norton," the glare is blinding in this "watery mirror" at dusk. If one considers the conceptual metaphor LIFETIME IS A DAY (Lakoff and Turner 6) and the fact that "The Dry Salvages" clearly established the use of water as a symbol of death in *Four Quartets*, the contrast between the dry pool and the watery mirror is one of the insight of childhood, which illuminates the possibilities of what might be, and the insight of the dusk of old age, which obscures the meaning of what has been. In the poem, this is a difference prompted by the presence of water, of death. This last idea of the obscured meaning of "what has been" plays a very important part on the second section of the second movement.

Despite all of these similarities, here, where "the hedgerow / is blanched for an hour with a transitory blossom / Of snow" (14-16) by the action of sundown, none of the pathos of the previous quartets is present. The symbolic bloom in line 10 "[s]tirs the dumb spirit" but with "no wind," which in "Burnt Norton" stood for an "[e]ructation of unhealthy souls" (108) "in and out of unwholesome lungs" (106), but rather with "pentecostal fire." The reference to "pentecostal fire" alludes to Acts 2.1-4, which reads:

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole

house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the spirit enabled them.

Servotte and Grene cunningly mention that the image of the white bloom and the biblical reference come together in the concept of “Whitsun,” used in Britain and Ireland as an equivalent to “Pentecost” (49). The white bloom is also set apart as “[t]here is no earth smell / [o]r smell of living thing (12-13), which in “East Coker” refers to “[o]ld fires [turned] to ashes, and ashes to the earth / [w]hich is already flesh, fur and faeces” (6-7), a reflection of the vanity of toil and passion brought about by death. Nancy K. Gish highlights this contrast between the first two quartets and the last one by pointing out that this scene draws its power from a redeemed experience of the natural and temporal experience:

The opening image of sun on ice is first of all a literal description. The water is water and remains so, a shimmering surface overlaying ice. But the flame of sun on ice corresponds to the flame of God on ‘the dumb spirit’. As in “Burnt Norton”, natural reflects supernatural, yet here the natural remains as an integral experience. Unlike the soundless sound or invisible presences of “Burnt Norton”, the absence of earth smell or smell of any living thing is not a paradox but the natural consequence of winter. Though this is a promise of spiritual regeneration, it remains grounded in the physical: blossoms appear, real and visible, but formed of snow. Though transitory, they neither bud nor fade but simply change form. The effect of this is to suggest not timelessness but a special grace within time, illuminating and intensifying it. (112)

Gish will continue to emphasize throughout how “Little Gidding” achieves the intersection of the timeless with time in patently natural ways that are actual and immediate, very much in

the simple present spirit of the first section of this movement, and the first sections of the movements that follow.

The poem breaks away from this moment of “midwinter spring” (1) that occurs out of “time’s covenant” (14) by questioning its source or meaning in the last lines of the first section, launching the poem into the two sections that follow. The last two lines of the first section ask: “Where is the summer, the unimaginable / Zero summer?” (19-20). Among *Four Quartets* scholars, there is a consensus that this, along with line 47 of “Burnt Norton,” are the most mysterious lines of the series. Perhaps the most authoritative voice to express this frustration is that of Helen Gardner in *Composition of Four Quartets*, who stated in a footnote: “[w]henver I am so rash as to agree to answer questions after a lecture on *Four Quartets*, I know that ‘Garlic and sapphires in the mud’ and ‘Zero summer’ will turn up” (160). Nonetheless, two comments of note can be said about the question that closes the first section of “Little Gidding.” On the one hand, it is the conclusion of a reasoning that mirrors one in William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* where, Oberon and Titania’s quarreling since midsummer spring causes the seasons to overlap. One effect of this, among other things, are summer buds made out of snow:

The human mortals want their winter cheer.
No night is now with hymn or carol blessed.
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases do abound;
And through this distemperature we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
And on old Hiems’ thin and icy crown

An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set. The spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter change
Their wonted liveries, and the mazèd world
By their increase now knows not which is which;
And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension. (2.1.101-116)

While the imagery is the same, the tone behind the image is completely different to that of “Little Gidding.” Titania argues that the confusion of the seasons is detrimental to mortals, while the poetic voice of “Little Gidding” praises the overlap of “midwinter spring” (1). This responds to the purpose of the different works: the fairies speak for a sensuous comedy, very much “in the scheme of generation” (18), while “Little Gidding,” as Traversi states, speaks of “life, but life in the order of the spirit, ‘not in time’s covenant’” (185). On the other hand, Gardner herself quotes John Hayward who, in his correspondence with Eliot during the composition of “Little Gidding,” enquired whether “Zero summer” referred to the concept of Absolute Zero from physics (*Composition* 160). Although Eliot never confirmed or denied this, it has become a popular interpretation of line 20. What is not found in the literature is the fact that a “Zero summer” could have spatial implications given the associations made between temperature and verticality in the “East Coker” section of this study, where “cold” was associated with “down.” This association is backed by Hargrove, although for just this section of “Little Gidding,” when she writes that “[i]n addition to the contrasting symbols of time vs. the timeless and winter vs. spring, there are those of heat vs. cold and light vs. dark” (188). An Absolute Zero summer would be at the lowest temperature possible (0°K, -273.15°C), a point where no motion is possible. This is an apt representation of a timeless summer. In terms of space, it would be the lowest point possible. Given the gravitational

pattern of the previous poems, this would be the terminal point of a downward trajectory where acceleration equals zero. A moment of zero movement has been associated in the previous poems with death, our own lives' terminal point. This notion becomes very interesting given the fact that, in "Little Gidding," is always the result of the descent of a sublime force that, in this first movement, is dusk, the end of one person's life in the aforementioned conceptual metaphor LIFETIME IS A DAY (Lakoff and Turner 6). It becomes even more interesting in light of the second movement, where the descending sublime force is a Nazi bomber, a symbol of massive death. Nevertheless, here, if midwinter spring stands for a spiritual awakening in old age, it makes sense that "Zero summer" refers to some sort of revival after death.

The second section of the first movement picks up from the line-break that ends the first section. This is reminiscent of the line-breaks in the first movement of "Burnt Norton," with the difference that this poem's set-up uses the line-breaks to mark the end of one section and the beginning of another. In this case, it means the end of the illustration and the beginning of the meditation. As mentioned before, this section and the one that follows it are driven by conditional clauses directed at a "you" that might both be reflexive or addressing the reader. Hargrove remarks how important it is to keep both of these perspectives in mind when she writes that "[t]hese passages involve the reader personally, for the protagonist, addressing him as 'you,' takes him along the actual road into the chapel" (189), which one can also argue is at once a church, a poem, and a position towards time. This becomes clear on lines 35-37, where Little Gidding is taken as one of a number of places, all holding connections to the other quartets in the series, which are "the world's end" (36).

Although the first lines of the second section (and those of the third section that echo them) are reminiscent to lines 11-13 of "Burnt Norton," their differences are what makes the contraposition of these lines most enlightening. In "Burnt Norton," lines 11-13 likewise mark

a change, except, in the first quartet, it is from meditation to illustration rather than the other way around. They read:

Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose-garden. (“Burnt Norton” 11-14)

If you came this way
Taking the route you would be likely to take
From the place you would be likely to come from,
If you came this way in may time, you would find the hedges
White again, in May, with voluptuary sweetness. (“Little Gidding” 20-24)

In many ways, these lines mirror one another. Where the first one takes the poem from the abstract to the sensuous, the second one goes from the sensuous to the abstract. Where the first one makes clear that “we” did not take the passage or opened the door, in the second one we did come this way and took this route out of our own volition, even if that volition does not matter. Whatever that volition is, in “the end of the journey” (25) “it would be the same” (25-28). These lines are also, with all its metaphorical implications, a passage through time. In “Burnt Norton,” they transport us from “the autumn heat” (25) to the scene in the rose-garden, which Eliot affirmed “had to stand for spring in the sequence, though its imagery was perhaps more summery” (*Composition* 18). In “Little Gidding,” they highlight the unimportance of time through a play on the capitalization of the word “may,” first implying a modality of action and then the month that marks the end of spring and the beginning of summer. This play on words must have been very relevant to Eliot, as it is featured in the very first outline of the poem as the core of the meditation:

Winter scene. May.

*Lyric. air earth water end & &
daemonic fire. The Inferno.*

*They vanish, the individuals, and
our feeling for them sinks into the
flame which refines. They emerge
in another pattern & recreated &
reconciled
redeemed, having their meaning to-
gether not apart, in a union
which is of beams from the central
fire. And the others with them
contemporaneous.*

Invocation to the Holy Spirit. (Composition 157)

It should also be mentioned that this play on the word “May” midwinter was similarly used by Eliot previously in his poem “Gerontion” as a metaphor for old age.

The next few lines bring the reader properly to the chapel at Little Gidding by alluding to King Charles I’s visit after his defeat at Naseby in line 26, which Gardner suspects was inspired by J.H. Shorthouse’s *John Inglesant* (Composition 61), and through the description of the “rough road” that leads to it in lines 28-30, which Hargrove takes as a literal description, though she believes the experience is threefold: literal, symbolic, and

emotional/spiritual (186). Quinn agrees with this literal reading and extends it to lines 31-33, which speak about “a shell, [o]r a husk of meaning” (31) when she writes:

A series of five conditional clauses lends an air of tentativeness to this paragraph. The ‘way’, the ‘route’, the ‘place’, of departure, the purpose of the journey are all left vague and unspecified. Little Gidding itself consists of two structural shells or husks, a façade and a tombstone. . . . Eliot’s use of the journey image is similar to his earlier use of the mystical dark night of the soul.
(41)

There is merit to this idea, as it implies an orientational shift in metaphor (from vertical to horizontal) that makes sense as the poem has thematically shifted from the vertically-dominated mystical to the horizontally oriented natural. Nevertheless, instances reminiscent of St. John’s devotional poetry will still be found throughout the poem, and the recurrent white bloom still hinges on vertically oriented forces that descend upon a liminal point whose existence is possible by a paradox similar to that of *Dark Night of the Soul*.

Setting Hargrove and Gish’s literal reading aside, lines 30-35 are ideologically akin to the third movement of “The Dry Salvages” (“Fare forward, travellers”) and to the fifth movement of “East Coker” (“Old men ought to be explorers”) that also used the vehicle of a journey whose purpose is irrelevant:

. . . And what you thought you came for
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning
From which purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled
If at all. Either you had no purpose
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured
And is altered in fulfilment. (“Little Gidding” 30-35)

A remarkable difference, however, is the fact that the journey in “Little Gidding” is directed to a definite point, while those in “East Coker” and “The Dry Salvages” were indefinite. That point is, of course, the familiar “still point of the turning world” (“Burnt Norton” 36).

Traversi explains:

The true purpose of the journey only breaks out from beneath the ‘shell’ when the purpose originally ‘figured’ by the pilgrim in his coming has been transformed in relation to his sense of an end which leaves it ‘altered in fulfilment’. The relation of this concept, developed in *The Dry Salvages*, of life as a journey constantly changing and developing in time, is by now becoming clarified. Only through an act of faith, a personal commitment to what is conceived, beneath its desolate appearance, as a continuing source of life outside and beyond the order of time, can the ‘place’ be seen in its true, timeless significance. (186)

This point is, nonetheless, multiple, as the following lines explain:

. . . There are other places
Which also are the world’s end, some at the sea jaws,
Or over a dark lake, in a desert or a city—
But this is the nearest, in place and time,
Now and England. (“Little Gidding” 35-39)

Although Raymond Preston, full of post-war anxiety, read these locations as allusions to war and Palestine (53), this reading has had a falling out in favor of interpretations based on actual monasteries Eliot later associated with these lines, as well as interpretations that understand these locations as referential to the other quartets. Hargrove summarizes Eliot’s comments on actual monasteries thus:

All these places are connected with saints, as Eliot revealed in a letter to his brother. The sea jaws refer to the islands of Iona and Lindisfarne, associated with St. Colomba and St. Cuthbert respectively; the dark lake is Ireland's Glendalough where St. Kevin established a hermitage; the desert alludes to St. Anthony's temptations; and the city is the Padua of the other St. Anthony. The speaker has chosen Little Gidding, associated with the "saint" Nicholas Ferrar, because it is the nearest, in place and time, / Now and in England." (190)

On the other hand, "the sea jaws" are clearly connected to lines 180-181 of "The Dry Salvages," and the "city" and the "desert" are features of the third and fifth movement, respectively, of "Burnt Norton."

What is most remarkable for our purpose, though, is that this is the first instance in the series that implies that "the still point" can be accessed in the human experience, which the poems constantly portray horizontally, rather than the typically vertical mystical allusions to "the still point." In "Burnt Norton," the still point is the axle-tree that awaits, with us, "the kingfisher's wing" (134). In "East Coker," the still point lies figured among "old stones that cannot be deciphered" (196) in the open field of the phantom dancers and the "[t]hunder rolled by the rolling stars" (58). In "The Dry Salvages," the still point is the promontory at which we can only hint and guess to use as a "seamark" (121), but it means death and can only be apprehended, anyway, by the saint. In "Little Gidding" alone, the still point can be apprehended through a horizontal journey to a number of different locations, but "the nearest, in place and time, / [is] [n]ow and in England" (38-39). That location is Little Gidding, both the church and the poem.

The third section of the movement, as was the case with the second, begins in the middle of a line broken and separated from the previous section. Moreover, the third section begins with almost the same words and the second, the only difference being the change of

“the” route for: “If you came this way, / Taking any route . . .” (39-40). This is a sensible change for the poem, as this section is dedicated to a sort of clean-up of the simple interpretations that a reader might get from the point “[n]ow and in England” (39). Lines 40-42 are clear in stating that, just like any purpose when arriving at Little Gidding “would be the same” (28) in the second section, any starting point, time, or season “would always be the same” (42) on this one. The place itself is not the key either, as Gardner explains the lines “You are not here to verify, / Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity / Or carry report” (43-45) as “censorious warnings to antiquarians and tourists” (*Composition* 165). This section makes clear that the key to the intersection is prayer, and is dedicated to explain what that means:

. . . Your are here to kneel
Where prayer has been valid. And prayer is more
Than an order of words, the conscious occupation
Of the praying mind, or the sound of the voice praying.
And what the dead had no speech for, when living,
They can tell you, being dead: the communication
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living.
Here the intersection of the timeless moment
Is England and nowhere. Never and always. (45-53)

This is one of the many instances that alienate non-Christian readers from *Four Quartets* for the faith required to connect with Eliot’s point. Although this objection is valid, one should remember a number of things to truly understand the shade of the faith required here. First off, it is important to consider how, conservative Christian though he was, Eliot’s faith was peculiar. Kenneth Paul Kramer sees fit to remark that “once, while visiting Virginia Woolf in her London home, Eliot was asked about what he experienced while praying. In response to this question, he ‘described the attempt to concentrate, to forget self, to attain union with

God” (145). Henceforth, Kramer goes on to explain the obvious Hindu connotations of this. Secondly, though Traversi acknowledges the Christian shape of Eliot’s faith, he makes a point of the fact that prayer should be understood here as it relates to *Four Quartets*:

The essence of the experience is submission leading to ‘prayer’ in a place where prayer has in the past seemed to prove valid. Prayer, in turn, is conceived as leading to contemplation, an experience beyond words or ‘the sound of the voice praying’; an experience which represents the taking up, in a more *conscious* spirit, of the kind of fugitive intimation tenuously glimpsed in the initial experience in the rose-garden. ‘Prayer’, in fact, is the reality which the moment of illumination in the garden is seen to posit when it is advanced beyond the stage of intuition to that of a fully ‘conscious’ reality. (187)

And finally, taking Traversi’s point a step further, one profits from keeping in mind that Little Gidding is both a church and a poem. The same state of mind that makes “prayer” the key to the intersection of the timeless with time in the chapel at Little Gidding is the contemplative reading that unlocks the intersection for the reader of “Little Gidding.”

With these three ideas in mind, the following lines that speak of what the dead can only say once dead prove that, though Eliot made no attempt whatsoever to hide his Christian faith, these are not devotional poems, and they tap into something that all people, not just the religious, have in common. Kramer quotes Eliot in an argument that ties together lines 49-53 with themes present throughout *Four Quartets*:

I had chiefly in mind that we cannot fully understand a person, grasp the totality of his being, until he is dead. Once his is dead, the acts of his life fall into their proper perspective and we can see what he was tending toward. Also with the living presence removed, it is easier to make an impartial judgement, free of the personality of the individual. (146)

Furthermore, Traversi places the importance of prayer as a way to access tradition, which is an aspect of the timeless:

Prayer, conceived in this way, unites us in a living relationship with the *tradition* which has formed out thoughts and feelings; it makes us one with the dead who live again in what is seen to be the Incarnation, the point—and we remember ‘the still point’ of *Burnt Norton*—at which the ‘timeless moment’, ‘intersecting’ with time in a relationship to which it brings meaning becomes the logical crown of the process of human and spiritual living. (188)

Once again, the value of understanding prayer at Little Gidding as poetry in “Little Gidding” becomes apparent.

The last two lines of the first movement perform two important tasks: they affirm that the intersection between the timeless and time, inaccessible to us according to lines 200-202 of “The Dry Salvages,” is, in fact, accessible, and they also connect the object of this meditation to the illustration linguistically. Although the intersection was reserved for the saint in “The Dry Salvages,” this passage of “Little Gidding” includes us into that occupation that is not even “an occupation either, but something given / [a]nd taken, in a lifetime’s death in love, / [a]rdour and selflessness and self-surrender” (“The Dry Salvages” 203-205). In English, it is easy to miss the fire connotation of the word “ardour” that, as related to “love,” was to be fully explored in the fourth movement of “Little Gidding.” On the other hand, these lines place this intersection “never” and “always,” which alongside “now” in the last line of the second section form a good description of the use of the simple present tense, characteristic of the illustration in the first section of the movement. This interpretation might be perceived as a stretch, but considering that impersonal simple present narrations are also featured in the first sections of the next three movements, it is valuable to have it in mind.

In “The Music of *Four Quartets*,” Helen Gardner affirms that the third section of this movement “is a development of the first two, weaving together phrases taken up from both in a kind of counterpointing” (121). It is not easy to agree with Gardner in this, as the third section of this movement is too similar to the second and too distant from the first to be considered any sort of middle ground. The conclusion that she reached from this premise, however, seems all too accurate: “it is true to say that the first movement is built on contradictions which the poem is to reconcile” (121). One of those contradictions that is of particular interest to this investigation lies in how the first section focuses on the downward motion of the sun while the second and third on the horizontal “route” (21, 40) the poetic voice takes along with us. Both of these movements aim for the same terminal point of intersection, and they reaffirm the pattern of vertical time-moving metaphors that contrast (or, perhaps, here, complement) horizontal ego-moving metaphors. However, as the sublime object in question is the sun at dusk, it becomes necessary to acknowledge that the vehicle has horizontal traits, even if its effect is only predicated vertically. To reach this realization, however, one must acknowledge the conceptual metaphors LIFETIME IS A DAY (Lakoff and Turner 6), LIFETIME IS A YEAR (Lakoff and Turner 18), and LIFE IS A JOURNEY (Lakoff and Turner 9) hinted throughout the first section and, to a lesser degree, in the second and third.

The second movement of “Little Gidding” is atypical for the series. While the three previous quartets had maintained a pattern of two sections in their second movements that contrasted one another with the first being highly poetic and the second being quite prosaic, this is not so for “Little Gidding.” Although the first section of the second movement of this poem is quite traditionally poetic, being organized in three stanzas of eight lines each and rhymed in couplets, the second section is arguably more traditionally poetic, having been written in Dante’s “terza rima,” the style of the *Divine Comedy*. Nonetheless, this pattern, as

quoted from Gardner's "The Music of 'Four Quartets,'" does fit in the fact that the first section will treat its idea in "metaphor and symbol to be expanded and developed in a conversational manner" (121) in the second section. Gardner's wording is specially apt here, as the second "conversational" section is an actual conversation between the living poetic voice and a dead master, which written in the style of Dante's *Divine Comedy* becomes uniquely resonant and powerful.

The three stanzas that make up the first section of the second movement are organized around the four classical elements; particularly, around the "death" of each element. They are each also full of references to the previous poem, making "the death of" each element, addressed in the last line of each stanza, stand symbolically to ideas now familiar to the reader. Gish points out how this echoes Heraclitus' fragment 25: "Fire lives in the death of earth, air lives in the death of fire, water lives in the death of air, and earth in the death of water." However, she points out how the fragment is affirmative, as life comes out from death, "[w]hile the lyric speaks only of death" (113).

Interpretation on the whole of this section varies. Helen Gardner concluded that "the effect of the lyric is cumulative; human emotion and human passion depart into the air, human effort crumbles into the dust, [and] the monuments of human spirit are rotted by a corrosion of water and fire" (*Art* 178). Traversi understands the three stanzas differently, as "the collapse of a civilization" (188), "the collapse of fertility" (189) and "the collapse of basic traditions" (189), respectively. Kramer differs from both, to a point, taking these three stanzas to stand, in order, for psychological, physical, and spiritual death (150). The variance goes on among critics, and it should not be taken as a fault of the poem, but as a grace. Each stanza is so full of vehicles from previous poems that each difference in tenor leads to massive dissemination. As such, it appears more productive for this investigation to adhere to the interpretations previously assigned and analyze each stanza accordingly. However, three

general ideas for the whole section where critics agree will be taken as true: the elemental association of each quartet is expected from the reader here, the decadence of the section is cumulative, and it should not be taken as cyclical but as final, as fire finally also consumes itself.

The first stanza states:

Ash on an old man's sleeve
Is all the ash the burnt roses leave.
Dust in the air suspended
Marks the place where a story ended.
Dust inbreathed was a house—
The wall, the wainscot and the mouse.
The death of hope and despair,

This is the death of air. (54-61)

Gardner compiles how the word “ash” in lines 54 and 55 was originally drafted as “dust” but were changed to better fit “the poem’s central theme of fire and, with the two remaining uses of ‘Dust’, points forward to the air-raid passage” (*Composition* 166). After this, she quotes one of T.S. Eliot’s letters, patently identifying the imagery of this stanza as the main vehicle of the poem:

During the Blitz the accumulated debris was suspended in the London air for hours after a bombing. Then it would slowly descend and cover one’s sleeves and coat with a fine white ash. I often experienced this effect during long night hours on the roof [of Faber and Faber]. (*Composition* 166)

As “dust,” line 55 clearly evokes lines 15-17 of “Burnt Norton”: “But to what purpose / Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves / I do not know.” But on the larger scheme, the white ash here should be read as the extemporaneous white blooming, this time brought about

by the descending sublime force of an air-raid. This reading allows for a beautiful instance of polysemy in the first couplet of the lyric: the ash being all the burnt roses “leave” can allude to both the verb that means “to allow to remain” and the verb that means “to sprout.” This image is quite a dark reflection of the buds of snow brought about by sundown, but it is identical in its connotations of death.

Other interpretations, nonetheless, have arisen which complement this one. Hargrove reads in the first four lines of the stanza a nod to the aforementioned story of Sir William Kyte, owner of the mansion of Burnt Norton who gave it its ominous name when he burnt it with himself inside. Likewise, she also relates the following two lines, clearly taken from the first movement of “East Coker,” to a grander theme of decayed houses found in “Gerontion,” “Burnt Norton,” and “East Coker” that stand for “the decay of man and of his efforts within time” (192). Finally, it should be pointed out that lines 60-61 are highly ambiguous. “The death of air” brings about the destruction of an individual or a house that turn to ash, but the “death of hope and despair” are also a path to the timeless through the dark night of the soul, argued in “East Coker” in the words: “I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope, / For hope would be hope for the wrong thing” (123-124).

The following stanza maintains the flow of previous images, but with a much larger emphasis on the watery vehicles from “The Dry Salvages” and how they spell death for the earth:

There are flood and drought
Over the eyes and in the mouth,
Dead water and dead sand
Contending for the upper hand.
The parched eviscerate soil
Gapes at the vanity of toil,

Laughs without mirth.

This is the death of earth. (62-69)

Marie A. Quinn views the word choice of “parched” and “eviscerate” as a clear connection between the vehicle of earth and the tenor of the human body (43). A similar metaphor is found in lines 49-54 of “Burnt Norton,” which placed “[t]he dance along the artery / [and] [t]he circulation of the lymph” as “[g]arlic and sapphires in the mud / [that] [c]lot the bedded axle-tree” and “[a]re figured in a drift of stars.” This being the case, the imagery of the first stanza suggests the unnatural death of an air-raid as contrasted to the survival from said air-raid that leads to insipid natural death from old age. This dichotomy was probably anticipated to us in lines 65-67 of “East Coker” that speak of “a vortex that shall bring / [t]he world to that destructive fire / [w]hich burns before the ice-cap reigns.”

The “death of air” from the first stanza is associated with an air-raid and fire, and the “death of earth” is associated with old age and water. These opposite stances toward death drive us into the third and final stanza of this section, which, allusions to Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” soliloquy notwithstanding, deals with the decay of sacrifice, sanctuary, and choir as it states:

Water and fire succeed

The town, the pasture and the weed.

Water and fire deride

The sacrifice that we denied.

Water and fire shall rot

The marred foundations we forgot,

Of sanctuary and choir.

This is the death of water and fire. (70-77)

Hargrove takes the first five lines of this stanza as evoking “the chapel after its destruction by Cromwell’s soldiers in 1647, although there are also overtones of the city churches damaged by fire and water during the bombing raids on London in World War II” (193). Her argument certainly makes sense with lines 72-73 if one takes them as the destruction of Little Gidding deriding the sacrifice of Charles I that Nicholas Ferrar denied when he tried to help the king escape after his final defeat at Naseby. The king was found and executed anyway, the chapel at Little Gidding was burnt, and the community was disbanded. Gardner, Traversi, and Kramer do agree that this stanza stands, in one way or another, for a spiritual death, a death more related to temporal terror. This interpretation is beneficial, as it allows for a seamless weaving between the white blooming of ash between the three different deaths in each of these stanzas and the “three conditions” that “flourish in the same hedgerow” (150-151) in the first section of the third movement. Lastly, it is important to note how this whole section was kept in an impersonal simple present tense, akin to the first section of the first movement, that is broken in the last stanza by the mention of a “we” in lines 73 and 75 and the actions of this “we,” conjugated in simple past tense. The timeless, impersonal incursion over past, personal actions will be featured in the same way in the first section of the third movement and in reverse order in the second section of the fifth movement, closing the poem and *Four Quartets* as a whole.

The second section of the second movement famously “gave Eliot more trouble than any other section of the poem” (*Composition* 171). In *Composition of Four Quartets*, Helen Gardner quotes a letter from Eliot to Hayward describing how the “austere Dantesque style is more difficult and offers more pitfalls than any other” (178). She illustrates this difficulty when she mentions how “[movements] I and V were, as Eliot wrote to Hayward, only ‘slightly altered’ in revision . . . [and the] same is true of the lyric opening of [movement] II” (155), but in the second section of the second movement, “many lines, phrases, and words

were revised again and again, and argued over . . . [r]ight up to the last proof [where] Eliot was still hesitating over whether he had found the exact word needed” (171). An ultimate example of the difficulty of this section, and, at least, partial dissatisfaction with it can be perceived yet again in Eliot’s correspondence with Hayward, where he affirms:

I think that there is a point beyond which one cannot go without sacrifice of meaning to euphony, and I think I have nearly reached it. . . . There will still be the possibility for alterations in proof. But to spend much more time over this poem might be dangerous. After a time one loses the original feeling of the impulse, and then it is no longer safe to alter. It is time to close the chapter.

(*Composition* 196)

Gardner explains this difficulty as one of clashing styles. She writes:

He was here attempting to sustain a style consistently over a long span, whereas his natural genius was toward the paragraph. He also committed himself to a strict and difficult verse-form, an approximation to the *terza rima* of Dante, a metre in which few English poets have been successful. Here, again, he was writing against his natural bent which was towards a rhythmically flexible verse.

(*Composition* 171)

Servotte and Grene summarize “terza rima,” as employed by Eliot in contrast to Dante, as:

[T]hree-line verses [that alternate] masculine and feminine endings (iambic and trochaic) so that the first and third lines of each verse echo the rhythm of the previous verse’s second line (as those lines in Dante rhymed with one another, setting up the ‘chain-rhyme’ of his extraordinary long poem: ABA, BCB, CDC, etc.) (52)

Critics generally praise the final version of this section, although to varying degrees. Traversi, for instance, refers to it as an “intelligent, honest, and finally positive facing of [a] problem,”

although, when compared to Dante, he affirms that “Eliot’s work clearly belongs to a lesser order of achievement” (198). Eliot would probably concur, but from his struggle with words one thing is absolutely clear: Eliot believed the invocation of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* was vital to the development of the poem.

This section is very narrative, so it is profitable to understand several aspects of its plot to better understand its poetry. This section picks up the image of the white blooming of ash by portraying the early hours of the morning after an air-raid. The source of the bloom of ash is described as “a dark dove with a flickering tongue” (81), which Derek Traversi identifies as an “enemy raider” that has been portrayed as “a parody of the Holy Ghost,” (190) whose flickering tongue of fire stands for machinegun fire that leaves shrapnel in its wake. In this stage, which is set “[b]etween three districts” (85), a “familiar compound ghost” (95) “of some dead master” (92) who imparts the poetic voice “a crown upon [a] lifetime’s effort” (130): three bitter lessons on the process of growing old. Once he finished speaking, the compound ghost departs on the sound of the horn that announces the “all-clear” from the air-raid. Hence, to understand this section, one needs to appreciate the symbolism of the setting and the role of the ghost to finally grasp the ghost’s message as connected structurally to the rest of the poem.

The first eight lines are dedicated to describing the setting. Quinn points out how “[t]he first eight lines are devoted, ostensibly, to an elaborate definition of context, each phrase being introduced by a word indicative of time or place, for instance, ‘in’, ‘before’, ‘near’, ‘at’, ‘after’, ‘while’, ‘over’, ‘where’, ‘between’, ‘whence” (46). In time, it is set “[i]n the uncertain hour before the morning / [n]ear the ending of interminable night / [a]t the recurrent end of the unending” (78-80), bringing back images from the women in the first movement of “The Dry Salvages” who “piece together the past and the future, / [b]etween midnight and dawn, when the past is all deception, / [t]he future futureless, before the

morning watch” (42-44). The scene starts “[a]fter the dark dove . . . [h]ad passed below the horizon” (82), but while the shrapnel of the guns, as described by Traversi (190) and Hargrove (194), “still rattled on like tin / [o]ver the asphalt” (83-84). In place, the scene is set “[b]etween three districts whence the smoke arose” (85), a similar wordplay to “the lotos rose” from line 36 of “Burnt Norton,” which is also reinforced by the image of the white bloom the poem has been exploiting: “arose” can be understood both as the past tense of the verb “arise” and as “blooming roses.”

The orientation of movement in this scene is very interesting. Vertically, the dark dove passing “below the horizon” (82) right before dawn works as a perfect opposite of “sundown” (2) in the previous movement. Whereas the sun can “[flame] the ice” (5), blanching the hedgerow “for an hour with transitory blossom” (15) before nightfall, this “dark dove” (81) works as a sun of darkness whose fire produces “dead leaves” (83) and blossoming smoke in the “uncertain hour before morning” (78). Support for this argument can be found in the early drafts of the poem, where the word “below” was written as “descension,” which Eliot favored for its allusion to John 1:32 (*Composition* 172), reinforcing its contrast with the Holy Spirit, and because “descension” is “an astronomical term” (*Composition* 173), reinforcing its contrast with the sun, as well as alluding to the vertical component in the second movements of “Burnt Norton” (e.g. line 47) and “East Coker” (e.g. 58). This sun-like use of the “dark dove” that passes “below the horizon,” however, implies that this vehicle also has a horizontal dimension that needs to be acknowledged as the effect of the descension of land in a horizontal journey was recognized in the second movement of “The Dry Salvages.” In an exclusively horizontal dimension, the fact that smoke arises “[b]etween three districts” (55) is extremely suggestive. Not only does it evoke the three sections of the previous movement and the three stanzas of the previous section, but it also suggests, because of the use of “terza rima,” the three stages of Dante’s

journey in *The Divine Comedy: Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso*. That suggestion notwithstanding, this section will not make a case to support the allusion to *Paradiso* as it will with *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* by making the “dead master” (92) stand for Brunetto Latino and Arnaut Daniel, respectively. Rather than *Paradiso*, the third district bordering these other two is, of course, wartime England moments before dawn after an air-raid, the setting described to us before. Eliot alluded to this intersection in a letter to Paul Elmer More, saying:

In this life one makes, now and then, important decisions; or at least allows circumstances to decide; and some of these decisions are such as have consequences for all the rest of our mortal life. Some people find themselves consequently in circumstances such that the whole of their mortal life *must* be a torment to them. And if there is no future life then Hell is, for such people, here and now. (*Composition* 185)

Critics like Traversi (190) or Servotte and Grene (54) agree with this interpretation of the three districts and Hargrove goes so far as to propose that this third district as Kensington (194), where Eliot wrote *Four Quartets*. This England holds, nonetheless, a fraction of Paradise, or at least the timeless, as the previous movement argued for “the world’s end” (36) being “[n]ow and in England” (39). It is a notion that evokes yet another interpretation for the three districts that has been ever-present throughout the series: past, present, and future. Whatever many interpretations one admits, the insistence on number three is all too fitting in a poem that revolves around the image of the Holy Ghost, traditionally conceived as the third person of the Holy Trinity.

After the first eight lines set the stage, the second section of the second movement of “Little Gidding” becomes truly reminiscent to Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*. The narration centers on a first-person singular character, turning the poetic voice into a true protagonist for

his meeting with the “compound ghost” (95), the “dead master” (92), though it must be understood that this character is only the protagonist of the section in the way Dante is the protagonist of *The Divine Comedy*: a central character who drives the plot forward through observation rather than through action. Moreover, where Dante was guided by Virgil or Beatrice to speak with the people he interviews, this protagonist passively receives the ghost, who was “loitering and hurried / [a]s if blown towards [him] like the metal leaves / [b]efore the urban dawn wind unresisting” (86-88). The inclusion of wind here is of note, as it contrasts with the first movement where the cold was “windless” (6). As the two meet “compliant to the common wind” (103), one should understand wind as the means of words while still remembering how “wind” was portrayed in “Burnt Norton”: air driven from a collection of graveyards (110-112) that constitutes an “[e]ructation of unhealthy souls” (108). There is a case to be made that this wind in particular should be understood differently, as the first draft of “Little Gidding” described wind as “airless” (*Composition* 179). Nevertheless, as published, the idea of an eructation of unhealthy souls bringing forth this compound ghost where London meets Hell is all too fitting.

The ghost is portrayed as:

. . . some dead master

Whom I had known, forgotten, half recalled

Both one and many; in the brown baked features

The eyes of a familiar compound ghost

Both intimate and unidentifiable. (92-96)

One’s possible first impression, given the context, is that of yet another dark representation of the Holy Ghost, as it is being described as a “compound ghost” that is “both one and many.” However, most critics since Raymond Preston (56) have taken the ghost’s “brown baked

features” and the protagonist’s later reception of “What! are *you* here?” (98) as a clear reference to *Inferno* 15.25-30, where Dante meets Brunetto Latino, his former master:

And I—as he then stretched an arm towards me—
fixed eyes so keenly through his fire-baked looked
that these singed features could not fend away
my mind from knowing, truly, who he was.
And, reaching down a hand towards his face,
I answered him: ‘Brunetto, sir, are you here?’

Although in *Composition of Four Quartets* Helen Gardner confirms that the reference to Brunetto Latino was explicit in earlier drafts of the poem, one should not take this association as final or exclusive from others. Just from *The Divine Comedy*, Traversi associates what the ghost says on line 128 with “the spirit of [the] words spoken to Virgil in Dante’s *Inferno*” (193), and, perhaps more importantly, with Arnaut Daniel on lines 144-145, as this reference shifts from *Inferno* to *Purgatorio* 26.148 (as identified by Traversi (194) or Quinn (46), for instance) and creates fascinating symmetries once the intertextuality of this section is taken beyond *The Divine Comedy*.

Because the protagonist is not meant to be Dante but a Dantesque representation of Eliot, the dead master begs to be placed in contemporary England rather than Renaissance Florence. Who might be Eliot’s “dead master” as Brunetto Latino was Dante’s? Because of lines like “I never thought to speak / In streets I never thought I should revisit / When I left my body on a distant shore” (123-125), that decant familiarity with London but death abroad, contemporary readers of the poem immediately thought of William Butler Yeats. Marie A Quinn, for instance, supports this assumption by connecting the ghost’s words on lines 136 and 144-146 with Yeats’ poems “Swift’s Epigraph” and “Sailing to Byzantium,”

respectively. The connection between the dead master and Yeats is ubiquitous among critics and is also partially reinforced by the fact that T.S. Eliot shared it, admitting that:

. . . the visionary figure has now become somewhat more definite and will no doubt be identified by some readers with Yeats though I do not mean anything so precise as that. However, I do not wish to take the responsibility of putting Yeats or anybody else into Hell and I do not want to impute to him the particular vice which took Brunetto there. Secondly, although the reference to that Canto is intended to be explicit, I wished the effect of the whole to be Purgatorial which is more appropriate. (*Composition* 176)

Gardner remarks, however, how Eliot “began with Yeats in mind and worked towards a greater generality [by removing] the biographical hints, except for the burial abroad” (*Composition* 67). And then there is the issue of the “Purgatorial” effect Eliot desired for this section, which points the reader not to the ghost’s “explicit” reference to Brunetto Latino at first, but to that of Arnaut Daniel at last. This unequivocally leads one to the figure of Ezra Pound. Although Pound was not dead at the time Eliot wrote “Little Gidding,” nor would be for many years after Eliot’s passing, he very much was his master and inseparably connected in Eliot’s mind to Arnaut Daniel. In “The Spirit of Romance,” Ezra Pound lauded Arnaut Daniel as “all that is most excellent . . . in Provençal minstrelsy” (14). Eliot’s *The Waste Land* opens and closes with references to Dante and Daniel, and Eliot dedicated the poem itself to Pound calling him “il miglior fabbro” (“the best smith”) which is both what Dante called Daniel (*Purgatorio* 26.117) and also the title of the chapter Pound dedicated to him in “The Spirit of Romance.”

As for Ulysses, a mythical character that Dante could only know as a benchmark of epic poetry, Traversi (190) suggests that Eliot has Dante himself, whom he is meeting through technique. Nonetheless, in that same measure, Traversi proposes the ghost also

stands for Shakespeare, as it disappears in the blowing of the horn like Hamlet's ghost with the crowing of the cock (1.1.119-120, 1.5.89-91), a reference also pointed out by Preston (56) and Eliot himself (*Composition* 196). Both Traversi (190) and Preston (57) also agree that, when the ghost says that "speech impelled us / To purify the dialect of the tribe" (126-127), he is borrowing from Stéphane Mallarmé's "Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe." This proposition delineates a pattern when taken along Quinn's previous argument that Yeats was invoked through his poem on Jonathan Swift's tomb, implying that, perhaps, the ghost also stands for both Jonathan Swift and Edgar Allan Poe. And the list of identities for the compound ghost goes on and on. To name a few, Quinn (44) also associates the ghost's first point with Milton in *Paradise Lost* 11.538-542. Hargrove relates the whole section with Spencer Brydon meeting his ghost in Henry James' "The Jolly Corner" (195). And Kramer (153) incorporates Cyril Tourneur and Sinclair Lewis to the list among others. Nevertheless, perhaps the most important figure to be associated with the "compound ghost" is Eliot himself. This plot of England bordering Hell and Purgatory, writes Preston, was also rehearsed in *The Family Reunion*, and the ghost is "the Eliot that might have been" (58). One might add, the Eliot-that-was, the Eliot that wrote *The Waste Land*. The text supports this "self-assessment" (Traversi 190) of Eliot and the writers who influenced him, since the protagonist affirms that though "unidentifiable," the ghost is "intimate," and to speak to him he "assumed a double part" (96-97).

If Eliot is both the protagonist and the ghost in this section, his greeting question, "What! are *you* here?" (98) acquires a different level. Traversi writes that "[t]he question . . . is delightfully ambivalent—it addresses poet, stranger and reader alike" (154). Hence, the poem repeats the pattern of the first movement where we are pulled from without by an authoritative voice that addresses us as a second person that now includes Eliot himself: the poet is playing on both sides of the net, so to speak. In short, this compound ghost, a dark

version of the Holy Ghost, stands for Eliot's literary pantheon, which now includes Eliot himself, but whose words, which will be characterized as outdated, will speak of the necessity of a new voice, the renewal of change that Heraclitus represented as fire. The compound ghost speaks in dead words of the need of tongues of flame.

To grasp the ghost's message, one must first assume the attitude in which it is delivered. When the protagonist and the ghost begin conversing, they are characteristically indifferent towards the content of their conversation:

I said: 'The wonder that I feel is easy,

Yet ease is cause of wonder. Therefore speak:

I may not comprehend, may not remember.'

And he: 'I am not eager to rehearse

My thought and theory which you have forgotten.

These things served their purpose: let them be. (108-113)

Once again, it is profitable to recall the homophony of "purpose" and "porpoise," and the use of the latter as a stand-in for Jesus as discussed in the section of "East Coker." Nonetheless, the explicit value of this exchange is to appreciate the apathy the protagonist (Eliot) displays toward the ghost (the literary pantheon), who addresses him apathetically back. The reason for this attitude lies in the need of a renewed voice to address the present, which the ghost, composed of the best voices of the past, is unable to provide. The ghost himself speaks for no other reason than the fact that the protagonist's London and his Hell are so similar that it does not much matter what he says:

. . . last year's words belong to last year's language

And next year's words await another voice.

But, as the passage now presents no hindrance

To the spirit unappeased and peregrine

Between two worlds become much like each other,
So I find words I never thought to speak
In streets I never thought I should revisit
When I left my body on a distant shore. (118-125)

To introduce a conversation like that reinforces the argument of Eliot assuming a “double part” (97), both emitter and receiver of this message, since it mirrors the epigraph to “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” itself taken from Dante’s “Inferno,” which translates to:

Should I suppose, in answering, I spoke
to any person who should ever see
the world again, this flame would shake no more.
But since, if all I hear is true, there’s none
who ever yet, alive, escaped these deeps,
I may reply without the fear of infamy. (17.61-66)

In his first published poem, Eliot used the emitter of these words, Guido I da Montefeltro, as a reflection of Prufrock, a quite autobiographical character who reticently guides us, like Virgil guided Dante, through the Hell of a dinner party. The same character worked as the guide and the object that is observed. In “Little Gidding,” his last published poem, the ghost assumes that same position, underlining the message of the staleness of the literary voices of the past. However, alluding to the fact that both of their concerns were “speech, and [s]peech impelled [them] / [t]o purify the dialect of the tribe / [a]nd urge the mind to aftersight and foresight” [the ghost discloses] the gifts reserved for age / [t]o set a crown upon [Eliot’s] lifetime’s effort” (126-130). That crown, which originally was meant to be a central symbol of the third movement, is made from three conditions of old age the protagonist can now expect, each associated with one of the three stanzas that made up the previous section of the second movement.

To start, the ghost states:

First, the cold friction of expiring sense

Without enchantment, offering no promise

But bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit

As body and soul begin to fall asunder. (92-96)

When this is taken along the first stanza of the previous section, it appears that “the death of air” has to do with the disenchantment of old age and the inefficacy of memory as a way of redeeming the past. Although the power of memory was advocated in “Burnt Norton” as a way to escape the temporal terror, the second movement of “East Coker” decried it as “deliberate hebetude” (78) and “only the knowledge of dead secrets” (79), and the second movement of “The Dry Salvages” described it as “the trailing / Consequence of further days and hours” (55-56) and “Years of living among the breakage / Of what was believed in as the most reliable” (58-59). However, the ghost continues:

Second, the conscious impotence of rage

At human folly, and the laceration

Of laughter at what ceases to amuse. (92-96)

If these lines are associated with the second stanza of the previous section, “the death of earth” stands for the irrelevance of both work and joy. The trying and the exploration that echo generations, which “East Coker” proposed to escape time, are portrayed as “the vanity of toil” (67) and “Laughs without mirth” (68). Toil and laughter, associated with significant soil as they may be, are also associated with death, what the second movement of “The Dry Salvages” called “The silent listening to the undeniable / Clamour of the bell of the last annunciation” (65-66) or “the backward half-look . . . towards the primitive terror” (102-103). As the first stanza of the previous section of “Little Gidding” proposed, “The parched

eviscerate soil / Gapes at the vanity of toil, / Laughs without mirth” (66-69). And the ghost concludes:

And last, the rending pain of re-enactment
Of all that you have done, and been; the shame
Of motives late revealed, and the awareness
Of things ill done and done to others’ harm
Which once you took for the exercise of virtue.
Then fools’ approval stings, and honour stains. (138-143)

Associating this with the third stanza of the previous section, its connections to the story of Little Gidding and the idea of spiritual death, the “death of water and fire” stand for the potential terror that surges from the moments of hard-earned clarity. The “hints and guesses” (212) that reward “prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action” that “The Dry Salvages” proposes as our only alternative to time hides the risk of discovering wrong choices one regrets. The patent image here is that of the razing of Little Gidding for Nicholas Ferrar’s choice of hiding Charles I after his defeat at Naseby. But one cannot help but think that there was some memory of Vivienne Eliot latent in lines 141-142.

Once these three conditions of old age have been stated, this “crown on a lifetime’s effort” (130), the ghost enounces a three line conclusion before disappearing: “From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit / Proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire / Where you must move in measure, like a dancer” (144-146). The words Eliot chose for the ghost’s conclusion are deceptively simple, hiding much semantic and intertextual depth. On the one hand, etymology here is very relevant. “Exasperated” and “spirit” both come from the Latin “spirare,” meaning “to breathe,” and it was used to translate the Greek word “πνεῦμα,” meaning both “to blow” and “soul” or “ghost” according to a number of pre-Socratic

philosophers (OED 914, 2967), opening several metaphoric connections between the poems' wind, the image of the ghost, the act of speaking, and the classical element of air.

On the other hand, as previously stated, line 146 alludes to the Purgatorial punishment of Arnaut Daniel, but the notion of dancing and the idea of doing it "in measure" is also resonant. The vehicle of dancing has been present throughout the series, standing for the kind of movement that is akin to the timeless, as "[t]he dance along the artery" ("Burnt Norton" 52) or that which keeps people's "rhythm in their dancing / [a]s in their living in the living seasons" ("East Coker" 40-41). Although the vehicle of dancing is absent from "The Dry Salvages," it does allude to moving to "music heard so deeply / That it is not heard at all, but you are the music / While the music lasts" (210-211). The allusion to dancing here is, nonetheless, the explicit vehicle of a simile, one "must move in measure *like* a dancer" (146). Since the ghost is made up of Eliot's literary pantheon, his conversation with the protagonist deals with the old age of the writer, and the fact that *Four Quartets*, from its very title, has represented poetry through music, it seems fair to propose that, when the ghost talks about moving in *measure*, the use of historically relevant poetic forms might be what is suggested here. The reader moves in measure, as "terza rima" is the measure of this section of a poem meant to be understood as a string quartet.

Once day breaks, the ghost leaves the protagonist "[i]n the disfigured street" (147) "with a kind of valediction" (148) at "the blowing of the horn" (149). A disfigured street is the result one would expect from an air-raid, but it is also an allusion to how the protagonist and the ghost strolled casually between three districts: from London to Hell, from Hell to Purgatory, and from Purgatory to a London that is at once all three and none of them, a London that is disfigured. Another interesting use of a word is that of "valuediction," which is "the action of bidding or saying farewell" (OED 3584). Considering that Eliot also included himself into the ghost, one has to wonder if Eliot was hinting here that "Little Gidding" was

to be his final poem. Regardless of this assumption, Eliot as the protagonist disappears like the ghost after this section. With the exception of two conditional clauses in the third movement, Eliot's identity will merge with that of the reader into a first-person plural that is no longer addressed as second-person by any authoritative first-person singular. The barrier between "I" and "you" will disappear in the subsequent movements that reach for the impersonal present that started the poem. Within and without the poem, this is a valediction of T.S. Eliot, the poet. Finally, "the blowing of the horn," which Eliot intended as a nod to Hamlet's ghost (*Composition* 196) and also reinforces the theme of the conversation as wind, works as this poem's version of the bell as well, working very much as its opposite. The bell in the fourth movement of "Burnt Norton" signaled night and death, as the drum did in the first movement of "East Coker" and the groaner did in the first movement of "The Dry Salvages." So far, the series has dwelled on the anxiety towards the nightfall of death, be it personal, communal, warlike, and general. This horn marks a change. It signals daybreak after the death brought about by the "dark dove." This reversion is yet another powerful illustration of Heraclitus' fragment 60, in the epigraph of the series.

The second section of the second movement provides the clearest orientational representation of Eliot's metaphorical system for time, a system that echoes those of the other poems in the series but with important variations. "Little Gidding" still uses horizontal metaphors for the human experience of time and vertical metaphors, perpendicular to the horizontal ones, to represent the timeless. Like most of the other poems in the series, horizontal time metaphors are also circular and ego-moving while vertical ones are not, being time-moving and linear. Here, the walk of the protagonist and the ghost along the three districts after the dark dove finishes its pseudo-astronomical descension that leaves its white bloom of smoke represents this pattern. Like most others in the series, the vertical metaphor here also behaves gravitationally: one descends toward the end from the beginning. This

poem is unique, however, in emphasis. “Little Gidding” provides more significance to the horizontal ego-agency, eschewed in the other poems as secondary or even mostly irrelevant, as was the case with “The Dry Salvages.” Like the switch of the bell from dusk to dawn, this poem emphasizes what the horizontal, human experience of time can actually achieve to reach the still point, and, though the vertical component is still fundamental, the poem gives it little attention when compared to its horizontal counterpart. The second movement closes in to the place that can be the world’s end and, as in a spiral movement, allows for a wider simultaneous view of Hell and Purgation, or of the past and future, the closer one approaches the still point. This effect that comes with the spiral trajectory is even more clearly seen in the third movement of the poem.

Helen Gardner considered that “one is less conscious of musical analogies” in the third movement of each quartet, as they behave as “an exploration with a twist of the ideas of the first two movements [after which] the ear is prepared for the lyrics fourth movement” (“Music 123). The twist that leads to an unexpected conciliation (or an attempt at conciliation) between the previous movements has made the third movements of previous quartets feel darker. “Burnt Norton” follows the rose-garden episode and the climbing of the axle-tree with a descent into the unwholesome air of the London tube that leads to a conciliatory dark night of the soul. This is followed perhaps too closely in “East Coker,” where the dark night of the soul also reconciles the ghostly wedding dance and the confusion of the seasons after confronting, again, despair in the London underground. There is some variation in tone in “The Dry Salvages,” but not an uplifting one, as the sea of death and its deadly promontory attempt to be balanced through Krishna’s perpetual faring forward un the face of constant, ubiquitous death. The twist is one of ideology rather than tone, which remains dark throughout. This is not the case for “Little Gidding.” The last poem in the series begins in winter and moves on to war, which makes the reconciliatory twist of the third

movement uplifting in contrast. The first section will oppose the elemental death of the second movement by redeeming the previous quartets' alternatives to time through an image of Hindu wisdom, and the second section will synthesize the peregrination to Little Gidding of the first movement and the compound ghost's "Divine Comedy" of the second movement to redeem the historic conflict of the English Civil War in the light of XIV century English Christian mysticism. Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that the third movement of the poem is the most neglected of "Little Gidding." This should be addressed to understand certain mistakes in the writing and how this movement might not have lived up to its full potential. These issues will be addressed as they appear.

The first section of the third movement remained almost the same since the first draft of the poem, despite John Hayward's complaint that it was "too didactic" (*Composition* 229). Eliot conceded to this complaint replying to Hayward that "the first part of Part III [needed] thorough re-writing," but, Helen Gardner adds, "whether because when he came back to the poem a year later he had forgotten Hayward's complaint, or whether he had not really assented to it, no 'thorough re-writing' took place" (*Composition* 199). From its inception, this section was made out of five statements: the first one presents the conditions of attachment, detachment, and indifference as plants flourishing in the same hedgerow, and the next four statements explain how knowing each redeems the path each of the previous poems in the series propose out of time.

The first statement argues:

There are three conditions which often look alike

Yet differ completely, flourish in the same hedgerow:

Attachment to self and to things and to persons, detachment

From self and from things and from persons; and, growing between

Them, indifference

Which resembles the others as death resembles life,

Being between two lives—unflowering, between

The live and dead nettle. (150-156)

In the context of the poem, one should identify this liminal hedgerow as the location of the white blooming that here is represented by “dead nettle,” which Eliot believed to be “the family of flowering plant[s] of which the White Archangel is one of the commonest and closely resembles the stinging nettle and is found in its company” (*Composition 200*). To the detriment of the poem, Eliot was mistaken in this botanical reference. He “confused two plants of the same family: White Deadnettle (*Lamium album*) and Yellow Archangel (*Galeobdolon luteum*)” (*Composition 200*). Although this oversight does not affect the overall image of the white blooming of the poem, it does disconnect the image of the hedgerow from the reference to Milton in the previous movement (a quote from *Paradise Lost* 11.538-542 spoken by Archangel Michael.) This section’s allusions to the Angel’s messages to John in the Book of Revelations, and to a reference to Richard III in the next section that was eventually cut, though its impact on the poem remains. Nevertheless, the intertextual relation that is still patent in the image of the hedgerow, as pointed out by Kenneth Paul Kramer (160), is to the fourth canto of the *Bhagavad Gita*:

It is necessary to consider what is right action, what is wrong action, and what is inaction, for mysterious is the law of action.

He who can see inaction in action, and action in inaction, is the wisest among men. He is a saint, even though he still acts.

The wise call him a sage, for whatever he undertakes is free from the motive of desire, and his deeds are purified by the fire of Wisdom. (17-19)

The mention of fire, the central theme of the poem, brings back the image of Hellish and Purgatorial fire of the previous movement. As Kramer expands:

This choice between two opposing fires also suggests a choice between worlds of two opposing wills—the will to earthly power (leading straight to the power of the *Inferno*) or the will to God (perfected in the fire of *Purgatorio*). Indeed, like Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, the *Bhagavad Gita* speaks of two kinds of fire: an insatiable fire of desire, passion, and anger (III:37,39), and the fire of wisdom that transforms works of desire to ashes (IV:37). Further, like Dante’s purgatorial fire, wisdom’s fire in the *Gita* has “the power to cleanse and purify” (IV:38). (166)

The following statements of this section are dedicated to this distinction between nettles, between fires. Hellish fire, which brought final death to the objects of *Four Quartets* in the first section of the second movement, and Purgatorial fire, which will redeem them.

First, it redeems the use of memory as means of liberation inasmuch as it is detached: “not less of love but expanding / Of love beyond desire, and so liberation / From the future as well as the past” (157-159). This is a reinterpretation via Hindu detachment of what “Burnt Norton” proposed through the Aristotelian Unmoved Mover:

Desire itself is movement
Not in itself desirable;
Love is itself unmoving,
Only the cause and end of movement,
Timeless, and undesiring
Except in the aspect of time
Caught in the form of limitation
Between un-being and being. (161-168)

Second, it expands this detached love to the “love of a country / [which] Begins as attachment to our own field of action / And comes to find that action of little importance /

Though never indifference” (159-162). It is provocative of this section of “Little Gidding” to mention one’s “field of action,” as it leads to the main image of “East Coker”: “that open field . . . [where] you can hear the music / Of the weak pipe and the little drum” (23, 25-26). In this section of “Little Gidding,” Hindu detachment is the difference between history being “servitude” (162) and history being “freedom” (163), the same expansion Eliot proposed in “East Coker” by the exploration of old men:

. . . As we grow older
The world becomes stranger, the pattern more complicated
Of dead and living. Not the intense moment
Isolated, with no before and after,
But a lifetime burning in every moment
And not the lifetime of one man only
But of old stones that cannot be deciphered. (190-196)

The last statement of this section of “Little Gidding” is less direct, as it does not mention a specific object as the first and second did with memory and history, respectively. The third statement seems more descriptive, saying: “See, now they vanish, / The faces and places, with the self which, as it could, loved them, / To become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern” (163-165). Starting with the word “see,” this statement might remind one of Virgil pointing things out to Dante in *The Divine Comedy*, but it is perhaps more characteristic of the style of the Book of Revelation. In the context of this particular statement of the poem, two episodes come to mind: the Rapture, by which the just are vanished as a form of protection between chapters 7 and 14, and the renewal of the earth, where the Lord’s Voice says to John from above: “Behold, I make all things new” (21:5). Nonetheless, the last statement of the first section of the third movement of “Little Gidding” is probably most akin

to the spirit of the third movement of “The Dry Salvages,” which identically advocated for a Hindu notion of detachment of self to escape time:

Fare forward, travellers! not escaping from the past
Into different lives, or into any future;
You are not the same people who left that station
Or who will arrive at any terminus (137-140)

Echoing the third movement of the previous poem, this section of “Little Gidding” does not advance the case against time, although its next to last line foreshadows how the fourth and fifth movements will do it exploring love. The first section of the third movement does, however, redeem all three previous poems by contextualizing, in the image of the hedgerow, how they succeed or fail as a means of escaping the temporal experience, and it does so mimicking, in its five statements, the five movement structure of each quartet.

The second section of the third movement of “Little Gidding” rehearses the drama of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, though it resolves it in a perfectly opposite manner. Dante used XIV century Christian cosmology to divide the dead (and often the mythical) into those that deserve punishment, those that deserve redemption, and those who deserve praise, creating a fictional afterlife where divine justice sorted out the different kinds of people that made up his convoluted Florentine society. Inversely, Eliot used XIV century Christian mysticism to merge all the dead into one faction, creating an earthly reality where death settled the protagonists of old English struggles into an all-encompassing symbol. A symbol which, coincidentally, Dante also placed at the ending of *The Divine Comedy*: the Rose.

This symmetry, however, came at the expense of some of the early plans for the third movement. In the earliest manuscript of the poem, there is a hand-written prose summary of the third movement that reads:

*The use of memory. to. detach oneself
ones own
from ~~the~~ past. —they vanish & return
in a different action. a new relation-
ship. If it is here, then, why regret it?*

*If I think of three men on the
scaffold it is not to revive dead political
issues, or what might have happened—
For Can a lifetime represent a single mo-
tive? The symbol is the fact, and
one side may inherit the victory, another
the symbol. This means the moment
of union, an eternal present.*

Detachment

& attachment

*only a hair's width
apart.*

Air—air²

earth—

water—

fire & perfect fire

Anima

Christi

(Composition 197)

No mention of Julian of Norwich's XIV century mysticism, which begins and ends the published version of this section, is mentioned in the prose summary. By the same token, the reincorporation of the themes of detachment and attachment and their relation with the four classical elements, which prominently close the prose summary, are not to be found in the published version of the poem.

Helen Gardner (*Composition 69*) emphatically suggests that the inclusion of English mystics into "Little Gidding" was inspired by the death of Evelyn Underhill. She was a frequent collaborator of Eliot's magazine, *Criterion*, and a pioneer in bringing back the figure of Julian of Norwich. Also, Underhill produced a modernized edition of *The Cloud of Unknowing* (which closes the first section of the fifth movement of "Little Gidding"), which

was read by Eliot in his youth along with St. John of the Cross and the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Whether the choice of Julian of Norwich was in fact due to Underhill's passing or not, it has proven itself optimal to what Nancy K. Gish calls the "natural, actual, and immediate" (113) tone of "Little Gidding." As St. John of the Cross's *Dark Night of the Soul* was ideal for the vertical descent of the third movements of "Burnt Norton" and "East Coker," and Krishna's exhortation was too for the uncertain horizontality of the third movement of "The Dry Salvages," Gish proposes that Julian of Norwich's suitability here is due to her being "not one who stresses the solitary negative way" (115), to her not rejecting "the sensual, temporal, experience like St. John or Arjuna, but embraced it" (116), and finally because she is Christian and English, which resonates with the theme of "Now and in England" from the first movement. As mentioned before, a quote from Julian of Norwich also took the place of the ending Eliot originally wrote for the movement, which did coincide with the merging of detachment and attachment with the four classical elements found in the prose summary:

Soul of Christ, sanctify them,

Body of Christ, let their bodies be good earth,

Water from the side of Christ, wash them,

Fire from the heart of Christ, incinerate them. (*Composition 230*)

Not only was this ending a clear reversal of the first section of this poem's second movement, but it also shared into the poem's Anglo-Christian roots, being a rewriting of *St. Swithun's Prayer Book* from the IX century. One can only guess to Eliot's reasoning behind cutting his original ending for this section and changing it for a quote from Julian of Norwich, but three facts about the choice can be ascertained. First, the cut was decided very early in the development of the poem, as the first draft sent to Hayward, more than a year before publication, already mentions it. Second, the original ending of the third movement closed the poem very much on itself, leaving little room for development in the fourth and fifth

movements; conversely, Julian of Norwich's quote opens "Little Gidding" to the rest of the series, alluding to the ending of "The Dry Salvages" and being obscure enough to blend well with the classical and Hindu references of the series. Third, limiting the references of the third movement to XIV century mystics hones the poem into a better contrast of *The Divine Comedy*, also from the XIV century. A similar reasoning might have gone behind limiting the political figures in this section to the English Civil War.

The quotes that begin and end the second section read:

Sin is Behovely, but

All shall be well, and

All manner of thing shall be well. (166-168)

And all shall be well and

All manner of thing shall be well

By the purification of the motive

In the ground of our beseeching. (196-199)

Eliot and Hayward corresponded back and forth on how to make the quotes look deliberate, as Thomas Elyot's quote in "East Coker," finally settling for leaving the capitalized "Behovely" from the original text as enough of a clue. Kramer explains that "by 'behovely,' Julian means a necessary and unavoidable aspect of human behavior" (162). This notion suits his interpretation of the inclusion:

Krishna's teaching of detachment is counterpoised with Julian's teaching of purification. . . . An inner dialectic comes to life between Christian sin and the Indic description of ignorance (*aviday*). In Hindu and Buddhist teachings the Sanskrit term *avidya* (beginningless ignorance) suggests *maya* (illusion, or false

appearance) and *karma* (action-reaction). Like sin, *avidya* undermines attempts at human liberation. (162)

As understanding the meaning of “behovely” in context is important to grasp the first quote, understanding the meaning of “beseeching” in context is important to understand the second quote, and the role of both as a framing device. In Julian’s words:

Beseeching is a true and gracious enduring will of the soul, united and joined to our Lord’s will by the sweet, secret operation of the Holy Spirit. . . . Our Lord brought all this suddenly to my mind, and revealed these words and said: I am the ground of your beseeching. (Kramer 164)

The inclusion of the phrase “the ground of our beseeching” is particularly resonant, as it connects Julian’s idea of God to Eliot’s use of a pilgrimage to Little Gidding as a way to reach the timeless, the still point of the turning world. Moreover, “the ground of our beseeching” will also nurture the image of the Rose, which here works as a reference to Dante’s rose of the Empyrean (*Paradiso* 30) and Eliot’s unique interpretation of the Tudor Rose.

The second section of the third movement is restrictive in place and time. Eliot uses the first person singular perspective for the last time in the poem in the aforementioned two conditional clauses to anchor the poem, respectively, to Little Gidding (“If I think, again, of this place” (169)) and to the English Civil War (“If I think of a king at nightfall” (175)). However, “the king at nightfall” was not introduced to mean any one as specific as Charles I, but a number “of people, not wholly commendable, / Of no immediate kin or kindness, / But some of peculiar genius, / All touched by a common genius, / United in the strife that divided them” (170-174). The idea of these figures being “united in the strife that divided them” and “all [being] touched by a common genius” echoes the figure of the compound ghost of the second movement. This one, however, will be limited to the XVII century figures that lived

through the English Civil War and, in one way or another, came in touch with Nicholas Ferrar, the founder of the community at Little Gidding.

The most explicit of these figures are the “three men on the scaffold” which were featured from the hand-written prose summary of the third movement. Critics uniformly identify them as King Charles I, Archbishop Laud, and minister Strafford (Traversi 202, for instance), whose executions brought an end to the monarchy in the English Civil War. As mentioned before, Charles I visited Little Gidding asking Nicholas Ferrar for refuge after his defeat in 1646, but Quinn (98) is also keen to observe that it was Archbishop Laud who ordained Ferrar as a deacon.

Nevertheless, the reader should resist the urge to read this section as Eliot writing an apology for the Royalist cause. Line 179, for instance, mentions “one who died blind and quiet” that Traversi identified as John Milton, “their adversary who also died, ‘blind and quiet’ after having experienced what must have seemed to him the death of his hopes and the ruin of his most deeply held convictions” (202). On the same note, Traversi also includes Andrew Marvell, who avoided punishment and prevented the execution of Milton after the Restoration, and Helen Gardner (59) also includes George Herbert, who sent Ferrar his poems on his deathbed.

The inclusion of literary figures strengthens the association with the compound ghost and, in development, led to the inclusion of figures not associated with Little Gidding or the English Civil War. Although most were cut, two of them still make their presence or absence felt in this section: William Shakespeare and Richard III. The phrase “kin or kindness” on line 171, as identified by Servotte and Grene (56), comes from “The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark”(1.2.65), intervening here in the poem for the third time. In the same fashion of Marvell and Milton, Shakespeare lived through times of strife and division in England, having been born to a Catholic mother after the English Reformation and making

his career between the Tudor and Stuart reigns. Richard III, on the other hand, had a major role in the development of the poem, “rather strangely accompanied by the Duke of Wellington” (*Composition* 63):

battered
The ~~damaged~~ crown on the/thornbush
The Duke with his iron shutters
Have the dignity of the defeated
In a world in which, as it happens,
~~Only the defeated have dignity~~
The victors seldom have dignity. (Composition 209)

In a similar manner to Shakespeare, Richard III’s inclusion is associated to troublesome transitions in English history. A XVI century legend states that his crown was found on a hawthorn bush after his defeat at Bosworth Field, which marked the transition between Plantagenet and Tudor reigns. Nevertheless, the symbol of Richard’s “crown on the thornbush” itself is far more relevant for the poem. As the last king of the line of York, whose symbol was a white rose, his crown in the hawthorn played into the pattern of the white blooming of the poem and enriched the “symbol perfected in death” (195) of the Tudor Rose which will be commented below. However, as Eliot opted to reduce this rehearsal of *The Divine Comedy*, to figures of the English Civil War, wisely focusing the movement on the church at Little Gidding, he moved aside the references to Shakespeare and Richard III who, now, no more than haunt the poem.

Once Eliot introduces these figures, encompassed by the conflict that divided them, he moves on to explain, in a voice that merges him with the reader, that none of this is to be taken as a longing for the past:

Why should we celebrate
These dead men more than the dying?
It is not to ring a bell backward

Nor is it an incantation
To summon the spectre of a Rose.
We cannot revive old factions
We cannot restore old policies
Or follow an antique drum. (180-187)

The mention of the bell and the drum, symbols of death in “Burnt Norton” and “East Coker,” respectively, should spell out how this is not intended to “revive old factions” (185) or “restore old policies” (186). This section also assures the reader that it does not mean “To summon the spectre of a Rose” (184). As mentioned before, Eliot stated that the capitalized Rose in *Four Quartets* should be read as a socio-political rose, whose only other inclusion is on line 126 of “The Dry Salvages,” although Gardner also mentions associations here to the ballet “Le Spectre de la Rose” and to Sir Thomas Browne’s “The Garden of Cyrus” which elaborates on a particular interpretation of said ballet (202). Nevertheless, the only other use of the capitalized Rose in *Four Quartets* alluded to the Tudor Rose, a symbol of unification between the York and the Lancaster factions after Richard III’s death at the Battle of Bosworth Field, which ended the War of the Roses. Servotte and Grene (56) identify this historical event as the motivation behind the capitalized rose in “Little Gidding.” In the light of the use of the Empyrean rose in the following lines and Richard III’s former protagonism, the use of the capitalized rose here will be understood as Eliot declaring his not summoning his notorious Yorkist fancies (*Composition* 209), but opening the poem to the unifying symbol, perfected in death, of the Tudor Rose.

The choice of this interpretation becomes clear in the following lines:

These men, and those who oppose them
And those whom they opposed
Accept the constitution of silence

And are folded in a single party.
Whatever we inherit from the fortunate
We have taken from the defeated
What they had to leave us—a symbol:
A symbol perfected in death. (188-195)

In *The Divine Comedy*, Dante divided the dead into different degrees of punishment and reward, but he reserved the grandest prize for those in the Emyrean (from the Greek “ἔμυρος” meaning or “on fire”), who spend eternity enfolded in a rose and gazing at God. Eliot makes a clear allusion to that at this point of his fire quartet, but he is far more generous with the people “not wholly commendable” (170) “folded in a single party” (191) in this Rose. Unlike the Emyrean rose, though, this English Rose is not meant as a transcendental form of afterlife, but as a natural afterlife for the “fortunate” (which should be read as “victorious”) and the defeated alike into a symbol that integrates the old opposing factions into the present nation. “Now and in England” (39).

The third movement offers little in the way of time metaphors, being more concerned with the transformation of previous images into the timeless symbol that will close the series. The final inclusion of Julian of Norwich, nonetheless, connects this movement to the horizontal ego-moving metaphor of the route to Little Gidding in the first movement. This link contributes to the emphasis on the human experience of time this poem has been trying to make and to the metaphoric system the series has employed at large.

The lyrical fourth movement of “Little Gidding” is made up of two stanzas, each seven three-stress tetrametric lines long with the exception of the third lines of each stanza, which are trimeters. In metric and prosody, this pattern accentuates the recurrence of the number three in the poem about the Third Person of the Trinity. Each stanza alternates rhyme in the first five lines, followed by a rhyming couplet that also rhymes with the couplet of the

other stanza. The effect is that of a crescendo with a palpable conclusion vary much in the way heroic couplets conclude Shakespearean sonnets. Helen Gardner is privy to observe that the “three-stress line . . . before this was reserved for the close of the last movement” (“Music 124). When read together, the conclusion of the two stanzas echo one another, providing a sense of symmetric gestalt to the images and ideas evoked.

Thematically, the fourth movement of “Little Gidding” is generally considered to be the best in the series, both by itself and in its role as the culmination of the motifs of the earlier poems which, according to Traversi, “are to be read . . . not only for themselves but as preparatory stages in a developing pattern” (205). The general sentiment of the fourth movement of “Little Gidding” as the lyrical cornerstone of the series was summarily explained by Gish, who argued: In ‘Burnt Norton’ the lyric fourth movement is tentative and questioning, though beautiful. In ‘East Coker’ it is terrible, in ‘The Dry Salvages’ resigned. In ‘Little Gidding’ it is both terrible and beautiful, not accepting but assenting” (116). In light of this, it is perhaps shocking that the published version of the fourth movement was developed from the remains of two previous failed attempts whose core was very different. Helen Gardner compiles in *Composition of Four Quartets* how the first manuscript of the poem intended “to repeat the ‘metaphysical’ manner of the lyric in *East Coker*, using the language of financial transactions as he had there used medical imagery” (213), but after three lines of that he switched to two stanzas that, though very similar technically to the published version, do not have the echoing rhyme of the couplets and delve more on a reflection on birth and death in terms of the four classical elements and two of the sacraments. Both the financial reflection, which speaks of Eliot’s early career as a banker and was hinted with the “ruined millionaire” (158) of “East Coker,” and that of the elemental sacraments, which bring back Eliot’s latter themes of death and birth as well as reinforce the elemental theme of the series, were given a stanza in the first typed draft Eliot sent to John Hayward (*Composition* 231),

along with a third stanza identical to the first of the published version. None of these stanzas had at this point the characteristic echoing rhyme in the couplets. Despite all their relevant themes and echoes, the financial and elemental stanzas were dropped and substituted for the sequential second stanza of the published version that, only in conjunction with the other one, manages to both encompass the main themes of “Little Gidding,” illustrate most beautifully both of the Heraclitan fragments that epigraph the series, and finally resolve the most pervasive issue in all of Eliot’s poetry.

The lyrical fourth movement reads:

The dove descending breaks the air
With flame of incandescent terror
Of which the tongues declare
The one discharge from sin and error.
The only hope or else despair
Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre—
To be redeemed from fire by fire.

Who then devised the torment? Love.

Love is the unfamiliar Name
Behind the hands that wove
The intolerable shirt of flame
Which human power cannot remove.

We only live, only suspire

Consumed by either fire or fire. (200-213)

In the first stanza, the first four lines integrate the orientational system of the poem, with the Pentecostal dove descending (which the second movement rehearsed in terms of World War

II) to ignite the tongues below (which were rehearsed in the second and third movements as the “compound ghost” and the men “touched by a common genius,” respectively) to utter the ideas previously discussed. The fifth line sets up the couplet to summarize these ideas: the temporal, hellish pain of existence is, itself, the purgatorial means to escape it. In the second stanza, the familiar Christian language of the poem is replaced by the classic image of the Nessus Shirt (made by Deianeira with the blood of the centaur that attempted to rape her to secure her husband’s love), which forced Herakles to build and jump into his own funeral pyre to be released from his fiery torment. According to Kramer (166), this stanza implies both forms of fire from the *Bhagavad Gita* discussed above. However, what is perhaps most striking about the second stanza is its restraint toward explicitly mentioning God. In the last installment of the most openly Christian movement of each quartet by a very openly Christian writer, God is only hinted through the capitalization of the words “Love” and “Name,” capitalization which is absent in “dove” in the Christian first stanza.

The reason for this might have been overlooked by most critics, whose previously discussed religious bias towards *Four Quartets* has them presenting dichotomic interpretations for the fourth movement. For instance, for Hargrove the lyric is about “man’s two choices of eternal life or eternal death” (199); for Quinn, the “two-stanza structure of this lyric is peculiarly suitable since Eliot’s theme is the dual nature of suffering” (48); and for Kramer, the lyric “presents its readers with a demanding choice, not just between two worlds (old and new), but between two fires (redeeming love or aversion and desire)” (168). This is unfortunate, as it glosses over the deeper message of interconnection in the poem. Traversi explains how “the conditions of ‘hope’ and ‘despair’, which we normally assume to be contraries, are rather different aspects of a single reality [, and] [l]ike the opposed states of ‘life’ and ‘death’, they are inescapably intertwined” (204). By writing a Christian stanza where the place of the Holy Ghost has been taken by a bomber and echoing it with a non-

Christian stanza where pagan “Love” is the vessel of God, he is, more than ever before, affirming how “the Logos is common to all” (Heraclitus’ fragment 2) and how “the way up and the way down are one and the same” (Heraclitus’ fragment 60).

On that note, Derek Traversi also observed how love, “[a]part from a few brief references . . . has been almost conspicuously absent from the earlier poems of the sequence . . . [becoming], as it were, the indispensable missing piece in the puzzle, implicitly present from the beginning but only now affirmed for what it is” (205). Traversi has a point on the rarity of the word “love” in *Four Quartets*. It is mentioned once in “Burnt Norton” (163) as opposed to desire, five times in “East Coker” (124-126, 200) with four of them being negations of it, and once in “The Dry Salvages” (204) as a feature of the saint. All in all, “Little Gidding” alone brings “love” up as many times as the other three quartets combined (157-159, 164, 207-208, 238): seven times, as many as lines per stanza here. But Traversi’s larger point goes beyond just *Four Quartets*, as he believes that Eliot’s writing, ever since “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” shows a man ill-at-ease with love, and this lyric is a final solution for Eliot’s poetry: “a recognition of the need to affirm the reality of love ‘beyond’, though not in opposition to, ‘desire’” (207).

In the way of time metaphors, as expected, the fourth movement of “Little Gidding” does not bring anything new to the table. However, it reaffirms the metaphoric system already discussed, even if mostly implicitly. The only explicit reference to an orientational time metaphor is in the mention of how “The dove descending breaks the air” (200), which, as before, will be taken as a vertical time-moving metaphor.

Helen Gardner argued how the fifth movement of each quartet is divided seamlessly in two sections of the same metre: one that reviews the ideas of the poem colloquially and another that brings back the poem’s images (and often the images of other poems in the series) to echo the beginning of it with tender gravity (“Music” 124). Although this pattern

does not apply to all the poems in the series with the same precision, it describes perfectly what Eliot achieved with the fifth movement of “Little Gidding.” The fifth movement of the last quartet is divided into two interwoven sections connected by a quote from *The Cloud of Unknowing*: one that addresses the issues of the series in terms of poetry and another that reviews the main images of the poems, but both revolve around an idea that Eliot summarized in a single line of the first manuscript: “To make an end is to make a beginning” (*Composition* 219).

The first section of the fifth movement is centered around the concept of “right” poetry, and it is itself divided into two: a secondary message in parentheses that deals with the crafting of poetry and the main message dealing with the reading of poetry. Unfortunately, the secondary message in parentheses makes a grammatical break in the third sentence of the section, making it feel grammatically disconnected, and contributes little to the other references to the crafting of poetry in the fifth movements of the previous poems in the series, which were much better executed. This, however, might be a reflection of Eliot’s attitude to the crafting of poetry itself, which waned in importance from its characterization by an analogy of Jesus in the desert in “Burnt Norton” to the throwaway information of a parenthesis in this, his last poem.

The main message associates “every phrase / and sentence that is right” (216-217) to “right action” as discussed in the previous poem. A phrase or sentence is “right” when it is an end on to itself, hence being both an end and a beginning, a birth and a death. This ambiguity, present in so much of Eliot’s writing, is summarized in lines 224-225: “Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning, / Every poem an epitaph.” That last line resonates with the identification of Yeats’ poem “Swift’s Epitaph” and Mallarmé’s poem “Le Tombeau d’Edgar Poe” discussed in the third movement.

The lines that follow this realization on writing contrast it with action in the terms of the series of quartets as a whole. Said contrast acts as a comment of the redemption that comes from action enlightened by history and fueled by “Love” as introduced in the fourth movement. It is convenient to study this section in four groups. First, lines 225-227 comment, in the terms of *Four Quartets*, of the righteous inevitability of death. Second, lines 228-231 use the image of the sea of death from “The Dry Salvages” to make a beautiful analogy of the redeeming power of poetry and history. Third, lines 232-237 contrast the faces of inevitable death presented before with illustrations of the timeless also from the previous poems in the series. Finally, line 238 will introduce a quote from an English tome of XIV century Christian mysticism, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, that will serve as an invocation to the next section, as it concludes the first section without a period and is only separated from the second section in the space prescribed for the set-up of the poem. The allusions in the first three groups inescapably encroach on the territory the second section of fifth movements has traditionally had, but that should be considered a success in the integration the poem intended rather than a breach in the application of the format.

The first of these groups states that “any action / Is a step to the block, to the fire, down the sea’s throat / Or to an illegible stone: and that’s where we start” (225-227). The reference to “King Charles I’s “block” and to the multifaceted “fire” are symbols of death featured in “Little Gidding,” as “the sea’s throat” was a common symbol of death in “The Dry Salvages,” and the “illegible stone” alludes to the undecipherable tombs in the town and the poem of “East Coker.” The poem is clearly declaring that any action brings one closer to death, but it concludes that by adding that “that is where we start” (227). Hargrove agrees with this explanation while also adding that “‘the fire,’ in addition to being a means of death in Sections II and IV of ‘Little Gidding,’ also recalls the burning of the original house at Burnt Norton” (201). This argument is particularly interesting, as it shows how *Four*

Quartets illuminates its arguments with its poetry: the previously discussed idea that death purifies us from the “currents of action” (“The Dry Salvages” 111) into “a symbol perfected in death” (“Little Gidding” 195) is illustrated by the notion that the beginning of the series, “*Burnt Norton*,” comes after the fire of love and desire that ends the series.

The next two sentences are symmetrical and illustrative of the “right” use of phrases and sentences:

We die with the dying:

See, they depart and we go with them.

We are born with the dead:

See, they return, and bring us with them. (228-231)

These four lines bring a symmetric return to the image in “The Dry Salvages” of the dead departing “To the sleepy rhythm of a hundred hours” (136) that we can only appreciate “In the agony of others, nearly experienced, / Involving ourselves, than in our own” (109-110). In the act of reading these words, written in the simple present tense that began the poem, we, the living, can partake in both the departure and the return of the dead. Nonetheless, there are intertextual influences of note behind these lines. Although Quinn is probably right when she argues that “the phrase [‘See, they return’] is taken from a poem by Ezra Pound, ‘The Return’”(51), the ambiguously sardonic tone of Pound’s poem is absent in these lines of “Little Gidding.” Kramer is probably closer to the spirit of these lines when he analyzes them from the perspective of compassion. His argument is that “[w]e die with the dying’ to the extent that we share in and empathize with their sufferings; at the same time, ‘we are born with the dead’ in that we are continually renewed by the genius and compassion of previous generations” (170) and goes on to contextualize it with a quote from Maurice Maeterlinck from an anthology of mystics, poets, philosophers, and saints that Eliot had prefaced prior to writing “Little Gidding”: “The dead and the living alike are but moments, hardly dissimilar,

of a single and infinite existence . . . , [and] they live in us even as we die in them” (Kramer 170).

The message in the following six lines should be taken in context of the previous six:

The moment of the rose and the moment of the yew-tree
Are of equal duration. A people without history
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern
Of timeless moments. So, while the light fails
On a winter’s afternoon, in a secluded chapel
History is now and England. (232-237)

As lines 225-227 evoked images from the series in reverse order, the first sentence here alludes to “Burnt Norton,” the second touches on the fifth movements of “East Coker” and “The Dry Salvages,” and the third brings one back to the first movement of “Little Gidding.” With the redemption of these alternatives in the third and fourth movement, the effect of these lines is that of the permanence of a meaningful life in the face of the changes of time and the inevitability of death. However, despite their well-trodden symbolic value as birth and death, the attention of critics has been consistently drawn to the literality of the vehicles of the rose and the yew-tree to ground the ideas of the following lines. These analyses are not without added value to the understanding of the poem. Raymond Preston commented that “[a]s the thousand years of the yew-tree are equivalent in value to the hour of the rose’s perfection, so it is not duration that matters: it is the quality and intensity of life which, if it exists in a moment, exists in every moment. Thus the poetry realizes the conception of the timeless” (62). Hargrove considered this interpretation “weak and unconvincing,” favoring her own notion that:

Throughout Eliot’s poetry, and particularly in the *Quartets*, the rose has been associated with the ecstatic experience of timelessness within time, and in

several poems (for example, “Ash Wednesday” and “East Coker”) the yew has been associated with eternal life of the experience of timelessness in the timeless. What the protagonist seems to be saying is that the timeless has the same value whether experienced briefly or in its absolute, ultimate form. It is not a part of sequential time and cannot be judged in conventional terms of “duration.” (202)

Although plausible, and hence valuable, this interpretation hinges on external interpretation that Hargrove failed to provide, and it also does not seem altogether exclusive or conceptually different from Preston’s interpretation. Furthermore, Kramer read these lines through the literality Preston assigned to these vehicles while taking Hargrove’s notion of the timeless in “its absolute, ultimate form” a step further towards religious faith and arrives to the same result: “a rose lives only a few days, the yew tree for centuries, but see through the vision of time redeemed by grace, their duration is equal” (171). Perhaps what is extraordinary of this discussion is how Eliot’s use of metaphor here is that it apparently allows one to approach it from many different perspectives and, because of what the series has achieved, one finally ends up with a very similar general idea.

The line from *The Cloud of Unknowing* that ends the first section of the fifth movement and also begins the second section (due to its lack of punctuation) evokes the ideas of God as “Love” and “Name” from the fourth movement: “With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling” (238). As Helen Gardner compiles, this line was not present in the first typed draft sent to John Hayward (*Composition 232*) when the second stanza of the fourth movement had not been yet conceived. Moreover, the original Middle English quote as cited by Nancy K. Gish (118) shows no punctuation in the word “love” (loue) or “calling” (cleping), which inclines one to believe that Eliot included this form of the quote once Love (by antonomasia) and its superior employment of the Calling of poetry had already been

made clear as the knot that solves the enigma of the timeless and time. When one considers that *The Cloud of Unknowing* incites the reader to “[forget] the self and paradoxically, becoming more aware of the self” (Kramer 172), Gish’s argument for this kind of mysticism as taking the place of the Negative Way in “Little Gidding” becomes evident: “The *Quartets* do not conclude ‘on the negative side’ but on the wholly positive side of granting the greatest possible significance to temporal life as part of a pattern reflecting God’s will” (118). That said, to understand *Four Quartets* is to come to terms with the paradox that, as “the way up and the way down are one and the same” (Heraclitus’ frag. 60), the negative way and the positive way are, in many ways, the same too.

The last section of the series is a high achievement in poetry, filtering the journey from the Garden of Eden in *Purgatorio* to the Empyrean in *Paradiso* through now interwoven imagery from all of the *Four Quartets* (and arguably other vehicles from throughout Eliot’s poetry) into an overarching conclusion. Because of this, rather than attempting to separate and catalogue the images that make up a functionally congruent vehicle here, it is more useful for this study to identify which images from the poems were chosen, what makes them compatible with each other, and how they achieve to channel the poem from *Purgatorio* to the conclusion of *Paradiso*, which “Eliot . . . called ‘the highest point that poetry has ever reached or ever can reach’” (Preston 63).

Throughout the twenty lines that compose this section, the poem brings up the notion of never-ending exploration from “East Coker,” various motifs from the rose-garden episode in “Burnt Norton,” life’s place in the rhythm of the river and the sea from “The Dry Salvages,” and the symbol of the rose that arises from the fire of “Little Gidding.” As all of these metaphors work consistently with the way they function in their respective poems, it does not seem necessary to explain how they work here. However, it is noteworthy to remark that they do work together, bringing true synthesis to *Four Quartets*. A number of critics

have been keen to point out references to other poems and plays by Eliot, such as Preston mentioning how 247-248 “appears to be drawing on an early minor poem (*Landscapes, I* [“New England”])” (63), Hargrove also including “Marina” in the same lines (204), or Helen Gardner (backed-up by Eliot’s own correspondence) associating lines 205-251 to *The Family Reunion* (223). True as these and other associations may be, one tends to agree with Raymond Preston in them being “of little importance” (63), as all of them have been brought up before and refined in *Four Quartets*, making the series consistent and self-contained.

What is of great importance for this investigation is the fact that all of the images referenced here from throughout the series coincide in their horizontal orientation. Moreover, save for the river and the sea from “The Dry Salvages,” all of the vehicles brought back for this section are part of ego-moving metaphors, which reinforces Gish’s idea that “Little Gidding” is mostly concerned with the natural experience of redemption from time, as opposed to the densely spiritual approach of “The Dry Salvages.” This itself is represented in the last section of the poem, as the exploration through the garden towards the realization of the unity of the fire and the rose occur “in the stillness / Between two waves of the sea” (250-251). Like the cello in one of Beethoven’s string quartets, or “The Dry Salvages” in *Four Quartets*, the broad image of the sea of death provides a necessary counterpoint that gives form and containment to the overall image.

The declaration that completes the quote from *The Cloud of Unknowing* from the previous section reads:

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time. (238-242)

Hargrove believes that place “where we started” is meant to suggest several gardens:

the rose garden of Burnt Norton with which we started the *Quartets*, the Garden of Eden where mankind in general started, and the garden of childhood innocence where each individual human being begins [and, most importantly,] the Garden of Eden at the top of Dante's Mount of Purgatory, symbolic of spiritual purity regained through purgatorial suffering. (203)

This interpretation gains strength in the light of the following line that alludes to "the unknown, remembered gate" (242). Gish associates this "gate" to "the door we never opened" in line 13 of "Burnt Norton" that led to the rose-garden, and Kramer associates it in kind to the inscription over the entrance to the church at Little Gidding: "This Is None Other But the House of God and the Gate to Heaven" (138). Because of the plausibility of these interpretations, one would be remiss not to mention that the gate could also allude to the start of Dante's journey through the gate of Hell: "Nothing till I was made was made, only / eternal beings. And I endure eternally. / Surrender as you enter every hope you have" (*Inferno* 3.7). This verse echoes "The death of hope and despair" which anticipated the hell of the second movement of this poem.

Once the entrance through gate and garden has been introduced, the poem summarily recapitulates the integrated travel throughout *Four Quartets* in a celebrated passage that led from the bird's call from "Burnt Norton" (173), through Julian of Norwich's passage in the third movement of the poem leading to the lyrical fourth, to the ending of Dante's *Paradiso* (30.124-126):

Quick now, here, now, always—
A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well

When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one. (238-242)

Part of the brilliance of this passage is that it is framed within the theme of exploration of “East Coker” and incorporates the, so far, hypothetical heaven from the fourth stanza in the first section of the second movement of “The Dry Salvages,” as Hargrove is keen to point out that a “crowned knot” does not just allude to the concentric three circles that make up the Trinity in *The Divine Comedy*, but is also “a nautical term” (205) for a knot that can be used, for instance, to dock a ship.

More than any of the other poems, “Little Gidding” is consistent with the grander patterns of time-metaphors found before, and it builds on them with the least irregularity found in the series:

Table 4

Summary of Time Metaphors in "Little Gidding"

MOVEMENT	TIME METAPHORS	LINES
I	A. HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL TIME-MOVING	2
	B. LIFETIME IS A DAY	2, 8, 4, 15
	C. LIFETIME IS A YEAR	1, 4, 11, 13, 19-20, 23, 41
	D. LIFE IS A JOURNEY	25
	E. HORIZONTAL EGO-MOVING	21, 25, 40
II	F. HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL TIME-MOVING	63, 82
	G. LIFETIME IS A DAY	78-79, 147
	H. HORIZONTAL EGO-MOVING	85-86, 105, 107, 128
III	I. HORIZONTAL EGO-MOVING	199
IV	J. VERTICAL TIME-MOVING	200
V	K. HORIZONTAL EGO-MOVING	239-250
	L. HORIZONTAL TIME-MOVING	246, 251

The poem, in the regularity of the white bloom surging from the three-liminal space urged by the descension of a transcendental force, keeps the metaphors that allude to the human experience of time (dominant in this poem) horizontal and ego-driven, while the more transcendental notions of time that do not have ego-agency are consistently addressed vertically. Other metaphors address time in this poem, but they are used as accessories and correspond to conceptual metaphors. There is only one break in the general pattern in the metaphor designated with the letter L, which is not an issue of "Little Gidding" but the inclusion of a feature of "The Dry Salvages" already addressed.

To understand the poem's horizontal ego-moving metaphors, Nancy Gish proposes that "[o]ne can still envision [the illumination in the rose-garden] through the image of the Neo-Platonic circle, but its form has altered. Now the still point connects with every point in the circle, and God is present in time" (118). This interpretation is very useful, as different from the inaccessibility to the vertical still point that peaked in "The Dry Salvages," "Little Gidding" presents an almost Spinozian immanence of the timeless that the poem develops as "Now and in England" (39). However, useful as this model can be for understanding the poem, one rather proposes a spiral journey through a three-liminal space moving ever closer to the center. The benefit of this model over Gish's is that it accounts for the fact that, as the poem advances from movement to movement, more of the overall pattern is visible, abandoning the partial vision of wartime London for the final crowned knot. This final step, however, hinges on a better understanding of the poem's vertical metaphors.

As explained above, the poem brings up an object of transcendental power that, movement by movement, causes each instance of the white bloom with its descension. Consistent as that is, the vertical time metaphors are not made central to the poem, mostly concerned with the protagonist's and our reaction to their effect. Two very interesting issues, however, can be appreciated in them. First, the vertical metaphors in this poem are, like most in the series, gravitational. The descension of the transcendental object implies one or another form of death that pinpoints its three-liminal nature, often aided by the presence of metaphoric devices that respond to conceptual metaphors such as LIFETIME IS A DAY or LIFETIME IS A YEAR. In these metaphors, death implies the terminal point opposed to birth, which would occur up in the schema, displaying consistency with the other poems. Second, the descension of the transcendental object is consistently associated with the sun, which is not present in English traditional time schemas but does feature in Lera Boroditsky and Alice Gaby's "Remembrances of Times East: Absolute Spatial Representations of Time

in an Australian Aboriginal Community” as the time schema of the Pormpuraawans, whose origin and adaptability to English schemas will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Functional Maps of Spatial Vehicles

The analyses of the previous chapter have shown that all poems in the series represent time primarily through vertical and horizontal systems with secondary time metaphors used for support. These secondary metaphors vary in their appearance, being employed only as accessories of the main metaphoric system, so they will not be included in this section but will be addressed in the next one. Each individual poem displays a certain level of internal consistency regarding how it employs its vertical and horizontal systems. These systems are formed cumulatively between the first and the third movements of each poem, and the fourth and fifth movements either display the integrated system or ignore it altogether. What remains unclear at this point is how each poem's particular approach to time contributes to deliver a unified perspective on time for the whole series. Understanding how the primary metaphoric systems for time are different and how they work together throughout the series is a necessary step to assess how *Four Quartets* as a whole communicates time.

"Burnt Norton" is the quartet of air, spring, the Unmoved Mover, and memory. In terms of orientation, its ideas about time are presented through a neat progression of spatial vehicles. The first movement develops, through the rose-garden of childhood, a horizontal vehicle with a circular trajectory whose center allows a glimpse of the vertical movement of the lotos. The second movement contrasts this with the image of the axle-tree, where an upwards trajectory leads to the past and finally to the timeless, in the figure of constellations. The third movement integrates these two ideas in succeeding sections. First, through the image of a subterranean train, a horizontal vehicle with a circular trajectory leading to several graveyards; second, a downward parallel to the axle-tree that stands for St. John's Dark Night of the Soul as one embraces future mortality. The combination of the two horizontal trajectories is particularly clever, since the vertical system places past above and future

below, the train's circular vehicle leading to death that is below the rose-garden of childhood both in space and time. Taking all of this into account, one can conceive of the main spatial vehicle for the tenor of time in "Burnt Norton" as two circular and concentric horizontal trajectories in the middle of a vertical axis that moves up towards the past and down towards the future, but both ultimately to timelessness.

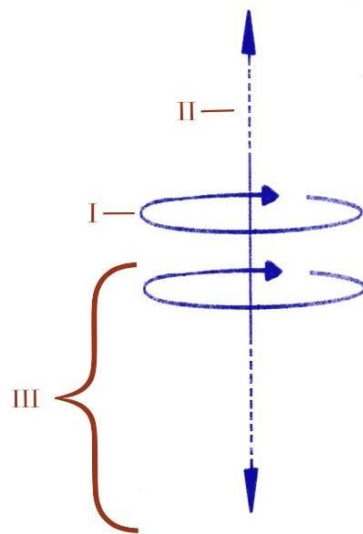


Fig. 1 A chart that maps functionally the spatial vehicles that conform the primary metaphoric system for time in "Burnt Norton" as designed by the author of this investigation. Roman numerals point to the movement of the poem where each part is developed.

This neat development, however, does not extend to the agency of these spatial metaphors. Most of the poem places an emphasis on how spiritual practices allow the ego to traverse the vertical axis, but the rising of the lotos in the first movement happens through the agency of time, disconnecting this vertical metaphor from the rest in the poem. The horizontal trajectories, on the other hand, are divided evenly between the willful movement of the ego through the rose-garden and the involuntary travel on the subterranean train where time leads one toward death. Furthermore, "Burnt Norton" is unique among the other poems

in further developing its metaphoric system in the fourth movement with a horizontal vehicle to the use of memory which had, so far, been represented vertically.

These irregularities probably have to do with the fact that “Burnt Norton” was not composed as part of a series but as a stand-alone poetic offshoot from *Murder in the Cathedral*. The element of air is exploited in the poem, but only directly in the first section of the third movement. Although the episode of the rose-garden coincides with spring metaphorically in its theme of childhood, Eliot himself acknowledged that its “imagery was perhaps more summery” (*Composition* 18). The Unmoved Mover can be conceived as God the Father, but it really is an Aristotelian concept that does not completely fit the Christian notion of the Trinity. Moreover, the first section of the fifth movement clearly tries to Christianize the Unmoved Mover, mostly developed in the succeeding section, through a clear allusion to Jesus as the capitalized “Word” (155). The second and final section of the fifth movement also has the only allusion to love as a means to the timeless outside of “Little Gidding,” which uses that idea as the final solution to the temporal terror. All of these anomalies point to “Burnt Norton” as a poem made to fit a grander design rather than as a natural piece of that design, which may also account for the ill-fitting time-metaphors that accompany the poem’s primary depiction of time.

Nevertheless, one should not ignore that the orientational agency of “Burnt Norton,” which will finally be reversed, was made to fit a particular ideology towards time. The first quartet is especially philosophical and mystical, rather than experiential, in its approximation to time. The ego is assumed capable of shunning the cyclical and horizontal experience of the temporal to aspire to the timeless through an enlightened use of memory or by negative spiritual exercises. As opposed to this, the poem does not dwell much on the agency of time, mostly portrayed as the consequence of the inactive ego. Rather than being detrimental to the poem as the beginning of a series, the mindset portrayed represents well the approximation to

time characteristic of the youth, allowing the subsequent quartets to add layers of experience to this starting point.

“East Coker” is the quartet of earth, summer, the Son, and history. In terms of orientation, it assembles its ideas about time through vehicles that follow the structure of “Burnt Norton” perhaps too closely, but its communal perspective accelerates its development in each movement. The first movement presents another instance of the human experience of time through a horizontal vehicle with a circular trajectory in the wedding dance. This vehicle also has a vertical component, as the long dead dancers are contained in the ground below and are brought back by the protagonist’s awareness of his personal history. The vertical aspect of this metaphor works in the same way as in the previous poem, up towards the past, but it is not transporting the protagonist through the use of memory but the protagonist’s ancestors through the use of history. In the second movement this historic realization reaffirms the certainty of death portraying the familiar future as a descension while the individual experience of time is still horizontal and cyclical described as the way through “a dark wood” (90) or “a grimpen” (91). The third movement, in a manner almost identical to that of “Burnt Norton,” integrates the whole system through the image of a subterranean train, a horizontal vehicle with a circular trajectory that speaks of personal death, contrasted by the downward movement of St. John’s Dark Night of the Soul, as a way to cope with future mortality. “East Coker,” nonetheless, incorporates a horizontal illustration of the Dark Night of the Soul in the third section of the third movement that takes over the absurd cyclical trajectory depicted by the train. All of this together, one can draw up a similar idea of time as the one described in “Burnt Norton.” Two horizontal vehicles with circular trajectories are described, first in the wedding dance of historic experience and later in the train’s travel of personal experience. They also revolve around a vertical axis where downward movement represents the future that eventually leads towards the timeless.

However, personal upward movement towards the timeless is absent here, as the only movement towards the past is to integrate the cyclical experience of related others into one's own.

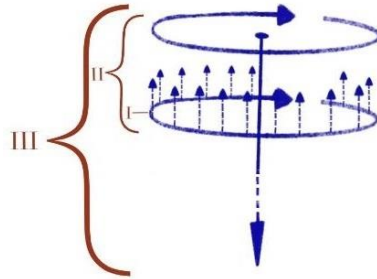


Fig. 2. A chart that maps functionally the spatial vehicles that conform the primary metaphoric system for time in “East Coker” as designed by the author of this investigation. Roman numerals point to the movement of the poem where each part is developed.

The agency of the metaphors that make up this system is much more clearly distributed than that of “Burnt Norton.” The tension of the poem hinges on the downward agency of time, glimpsed in the same words at the beginning of the first movement and the ending of the second. The poem, however, does not dwell on the death these metaphors imply but on the agency of the ego towards living a limited life: represented in the downward trajectory that stands for death awareness in the first section of the second movement, the horizontal circular trajectories of the grimpen and the train in the second section of the second movement and the first section of the third, respectively, and the Dark Night of the Soul, which is depicted through vertical and horizontal vehicles in the third movement.

The more regular execution of the metaphors for time in “East Coker” speaks of how this poem was the first to be conceived as part of a series. There are fewer instances of time metaphors here than in any of the other poems, and the ones that can be found are consistent in their ego-agency. It is not unlikely that this is due to the fact that Eliot knew that he could

further develop other themes in the two poems to come. The elemental identity of earth is exploited throughout the poem. Summer and its seasonal implications are central to the episode of the dancers and the poetic elaboration in the movement that follows. Furthermore, the fourth and fifth movements here have a much clearer thematic identity, with the former dwelling on the Son and the latter alluding to the following poem before closing with a sentence reflective of that which began it.

These changes are ideologically consistent with a clearer focus on the role of history as a means to the timeless. Nevertheless, it is a focus that leaves “East Coker” with a smaller scope, changing the upward mobility from the present through the axis, representing an enlightened memory, for an upward mobility from below that incorporates itself to the present, representing history. The loss of the philosophical alternative to the temporal horror, previously represented in the upwards mobility through the vertical axis, makes the poem darker and more desperate, as the mystical downwards movement of the Dark Night of the Soul becomes one’s only alternative to life in time.

“The Dry Salvages” is the quartet of water, autumn, the Virgin Mary, and death. Its orientation is far more horizontal than vertical, as every movement develops only one metaphor: the horizontal travel through the sea of death, where the river of life washes away. The vertical orientation of the other poems is acknowledged at two points in the poem: line 146 alludes to the past being up and lines 231-233 allude to the future being down, but both deny any mobility and are clear references to the previous poems. There are, however, two main vertical conditions contingent on the image of the sea of death: the possibility of sinking in the sea which stands for dying, which first appears in the second section of the first movement, and the rock that emerges from the sea which stands for religion. There are also some elements of verticality in two of the poem’s horizontal metaphors, but they are not exploited as an alternative to the horizontal movement of the whole poem: one being the

disappearance of sailors in the horizon and its opposite in the first section of the second movement, and the other being the rock as a means of upwards mobility towards the timeless; nonetheless, the rock would just sink any traveler, as it is a privilege reserved for the saint. The singular metaphor of the sea of death allows for a very straightforward understanding of the poem's time system, with time being represented as any horizontal direction taken from a central point whose upwards mobility is denied. No downwards mobility is portrayed, as the timelessness of the lowest point is the object of the poem throughout.

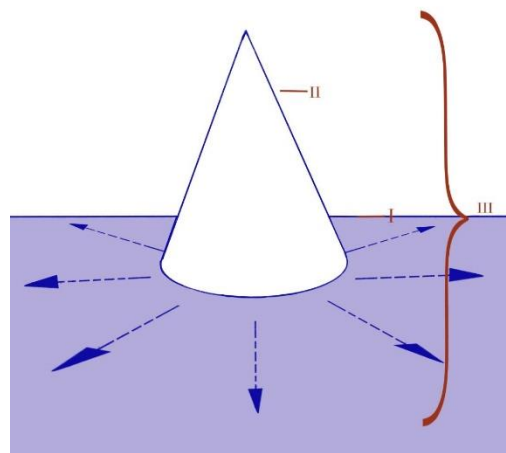


Fig. 3. A chart that maps functionally the spatial vehicles that conform the primary metaphoric system for time in “The Dry Salvages” as designed by the author of this investigation. Roman numerals point to the movement of the poem where each part is developed.

It is easier to understand Eliot’s grander plan for the poem in “The Dry Salvages,” as the agency of “East Coker” is reversed. Where “East Coker” was driven by the agency of the ego towards living a limited life, “The Dry Salvages” exposes the inevitability of death in a metaphoric system that is almost exclusively driven by time. The river of life washing horizontally into the sea of death is time-moving, as is the downward movement under the current and the navigation oriented by the rock. There are only two ego-moving metaphors in

these poems as there were only two time-moving metaphors in the previous one: one in the first section of the second movement that alludes to the possibility of an afterlife in the sea of death, which the poem does not validate, and the other being an allusion to Edgeware Road in the fifth movement which the poem does not develop.

“The Dry Salvages” is the darkest and the least liked poem in the series, as it delves fully death on death and what little effect can come from the orientation of religion. It is completely focused on the element of water and it embraces autumn, a season that was present in the other poems as contrast, as a metaphor of Eliot’s late adulthood. The most feminine poem, being dedicated to the Virgin Mary and the one that alludes to women the most (little as that was,) “The Dry Salvages” is sadly passive, which speaks to Eliot’s conservatism and possible misogyny, a topic that others, such as Catole Seymour-Jones or Michael Hastings, have explored. Nevertheless, it is in the metaphoric system of “The Dry Salvages” that a pattern becomes clear: as “East Coker” denied the upward mobility through the vertical axis that stood for enlightenment in “Burnt Norton,” “The Dry Salvages” negates the downward mobility through the vertical axis that stood for mysticism in the other two poems as an alternative to temporal horror. *Four Quartets* has progressively reduced the vertical component of its metaphoric system, forcing the reader into the natural, as opposed to the supernatural, experience of time.

“Little Gidding” is the quartet of fire, winter, the Holy Ghost, and love. In orientation, it is quite reiterative throughout the poem. In both the first and the second movements, there is a vertical metaphor of time, dusk in the first movement and an enemy plane in the second, whose descension in the horizon, standing for death, causes a symbolic white bloom, a glare in the snow in the first movement and ash from the bombing in the second movement. Although, as both vertical trajectories are likened to the descension of the sun in the horizon, there is a horizontal aspect to this vehicle, it is only exploited in its descension in the poem.

Around this white bloom, the protagonist of the poem, who stands for many people including the reader, does what appears to be a horizontal circular trajectory through three different realms or conditions. Although the vertical descension is not present in the third movement, the horizontal trajectory continues around the white bloom occasioned by it, and with each passing movement the three realms or conditions are shown to be truly only one. The vertical descension is reincorporated in the fourth movement, and the fifth movement reincorporates all horizontal metaphors in the series, portraying them as truly part of the same whole. In the light of these factors, one might propose to think of the poem’s metaphoric system for time as a spiral trajectory towards the center of a triple border that stands for death and, hence, timelessness, with a simultaneous but separate descension from an object above. As each progressing movement follows the horizontal spiral trajectory closer to the center, more of the grander design can be appreciated.

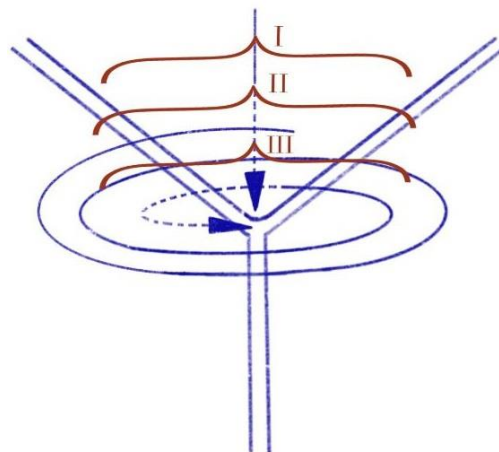


Fig. 4. A chart that maps functionally the spatial vehicles that conform the primary metaphoric system for time in “Little Gidding” as designed by the author of this investigation. Roman numerals point to the movement of the poem where each part is developed.

The agency of movement in this metaphoric system is perfectly consistent: ego-agency for the horizontal movement, which concerns most of the poem, and time-agency for the vertical movement. The only exception to this pattern appears in a time-moving horizontal metaphor in the second section of the fifth movement, but that is a reference to the river and the sea from the “The Dry Salvages” rather than a feature of this poem. This consistent pattern of ego-moving horizontal metaphors and time-moving vertical metaphors is completely opposite to the agency found in “Burnt Norton,” where the ego traversed the vertical axis of time towards timelessness while, willingly or not, time forced people into a cyclical and absurd existence.

“Little Gidding” remarkably adheres to its themes. In a prism-like manner, each movement explores a form of descending fire that blooms into a white death that can be reached through the horizontal ego-moving experience of time, translating that death into timelessness. Winter is addressed in this manner too, literally in the first movement and as a vehicle to the tenor of old age and death throughout. The Holy Ghost is likewise represented throughout the poem, as the white reflection of the sun in the snow (Whitsun) in the first movement, a dark dove in the second, or simply a dove in the fourth. But more importantly, the constant realization that the three realms or conditions are truly one is a powerful representation of the Holy Ghost’s role in the Trinity. However, these spiritual notions that descend from timelessness into timelessness in the vertical axis remain, as in “The Dry Salvages,” beyond the human agency over time, which here is exclusively horizontal. This could have to do with “Little Gidding” being the most natural of all the poems in the series. Timelessness here is not a philosophical or mystical experience, but “a symbol perfected in death” (195), which in the poem has to do with taking part of the grander history that surrounds us. It has become an inevitability that comes with death, whose tone can be varied through one’s different perceptions but, in the end, forms part of one whole. “The Dry

Salvages” became known as the darkest of the quartets through its denial of our access to the timeless, represented so far vertically. “Little Gidding” does not back away from that orientational restriction, but it “redeems” our access to the aspects of timelessness professed in the other poems vertically (memory, history, and death,) though transformed into horizontal vehicles. The poem’s own key to timelessness, love, is depicted in the fourth movement to have been present in all vertical vehicles, but it is integrated into the much more developed horizontal system in the fifth movement. In terms of orientation, this is also a variation to the vertical way in which love was portrayed in the fifth movement of “Burnt Norton,” which speaks to how the first of the quartets might have already portrayed the series’ ending, but it did so in a different manner.

In short, the primary metaphoric system for time throughout the series is composed of horizontal and circular vehicles and vertical and linear ones. The series progressively denies ego-agency in the vertical vehicles of the system, which have to do with philosophical and spiritual notions of eternity, moving on to develop timelessness in more material and horizontal terms. Opposite to this, the agency of time progressively takes over the more intellectual vertical aspects of the system. By the third quartet, time-agency conducts most of the system, but it is relegated to a less developed verticality in the final poem.

Correspondence with Conceptual Metaphors

Now that the metaphoric system by which time is portrayed in *Four Quartets* has been clearly depicted in orientation and agency, the first step towards assessing its relation to everyday speech is to establish to what extent this system is made out of conceptual metaphors. As explained before, conceptual metaphors arise naturally in language and develop stereotypically, so understanding if the metaphoric system of *Four Quartets* is composed of them or not is a good starting point to assess how naturally or artificially the poems communicate time to their readers. To do this, the correspondence of the primary

metaphoric system exposed in the previous section with conceptual metaphors will be examined, followed by the correspondence of the secondary supporting metaphors mentioned before. However, as the analysis of the previous section has portrayed that the horizontal and vertical aspects of the primary metaphoric system act separately and often in contraposition, their connection to conceptual metaphors here will be likewise approached separately.

The horizontal aspect of the primary metaphoric system for time describes a circular trajectory in all the poems save for “The Dry Salvages,” that rather explores this circularity as a straight line in any direction from a central point. In “Burnt Norton,” the agency of this circular trajectory is combined, ego-moving in the rose-garden and time-moving in the train. In “East Coker” all instances of horizontal metaphors are ego-moving. In contrast, the only exception to time-moving horizontal metaphors in “The Dry Salvages” is rhetorical. Finally, “Little Gidding” reverses this again as it only has ego-moving horizontal metaphors. All the metaphors in the horizontal aspect of the system appear to be instances of the conceptual metaphors TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT and TIME IS STATIONARY AND WE MOVE THROUGH IT as described by Lakoff and Johnson in the ninth chapter of *Metaphors We Live By*. Although Lakoff and Johnson affirm that “time in English is structured in terms of the TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT metaphor” (42) and TIME IS STATIONARY AND WE MOVE THROUGH IT is secondary, the frequency is reversed in the poems. Nevertheless, this reversal does not challenge Lakoff and Johnson’s underlying theory, as they were keen to explain that even when the combination of both conceptual metaphors results in the loss of internal consistency of either, they are coherent. That is to say that they “‘fit together,’ by virtue of being subcategories of a major category and therefore sharing a common entailment” (44). In light of this, it appears that the horizontal metaphors of the primary metaphoric system for time in *Four Quartets* are consistent in each individual poem and coherent with one another. The only exception to this is “Burnt Norton,” which exploits

different conceptual metaphors for its horizontal vehicles in the first and third movements, but this combination reflects the pattern of the series at large and does not imply a loss of cohesion in the system.

On a more specific level, the horizontal aspect of the metaphoric system of *Four Quartets* has to do with the human experience of time, which hinges on the concepts of life and death. Among others, Lakoff and Turner explored the relation between the conceptual metaphors LIFE IS A JOURNEY, DEATH IS A DEPARTURE, and DEATH IS GOING TO A FINAL DESTINATION in the poetry of Emily Dickinson. These all apply to what has been found of the horizontal aspect of *Four Quartets*. LIFE IS A JOURNEY is clearly seen in the vehicle of the train in the third movements of “Burnt Norton” and “East Coker,” in the course of the river to the sea in the first movement of “The Dry Salvages,” and throughout “Little Gidding,” but especially in the pilgrimage of the first, third, and fifth movements. DEATH IS A DEPARTURE lies at the center of the grand metaphor of the sea of death in “The Dry Salvages.” And, despite their circular nature, the train in “Burnt Norton” and the pilgrimage in “Little Gidding” clearly lead to graveyards and to the white death, respectively, making them instances of DEATH IS GOING TO A FINAL DESTINATION.

This very direct connection between the metaphoric system for time in *Four Quartets* and conceptual metaphors, however, does not extend to the vertical aspects of it. Although Lakoff and Johnson dedicate the fourth chapter of *Metaphors We Live By* to orientational metaphors of a vertical nature, the few conceptual metaphors that could apply to the metaphoric system of *Four Quartets* do not match the results of this study. Although they provide everyday examples of speech that branch out from the conceptual metaphor FORESEEABLE FUTURE EVENTS ARE UP (and AHEAD) (16, 108), this conceptual metaphor does not correspond to the vertical aspect of any of the poems, where the future is down. As the vertical axis in the series is related (at least in the first two poems) with

philosophical or mystical experiences that lead to timelessness, one might be tempted to relate them instead with conceptual metaphors such as HAVING CONTROL OR FORCE IS UP (Lakoff and Johnson 15) or FREEDOM IS UP (Lakoff and Turner 149), but problems arise quickly from this association. These conceptual metaphors could only apply fully to “Burnt Norton,” since it is the only poem in the series that allows upward mobility, and the poem undermines any idea of upward control or freedom in the fourth movement. One could theorize that they apply to the saints of “The Dry Salvages,” but, as they are not active agents in the poem, the association is tenuous at best. The only reliable association between the vertical aspect found in the poems and conceptual metaphors seems to be with the solar connotation of the descending sublime forces in “Little Gidding” and the conceptual metaphor DEATH IS NIGHT (Lakoff and Turner 8). This is probably due to the naturalistic outlook of the verticality of “Little Gidding” as opposed to the other poems in the series. It is unlikely to find stereotypical metaphorical mappings in everyday speech about the philosophical and mystical concepts that the poems usually represent vertically simply because those concepts are hardly found in everyday use. However, if they have been incorporated to something as ordinary as death, it stands to reason that they will be approached through conceptual metaphors that ordinarily represent death.

Since the horizontal aspect of the poems’ metaphoric system is deeply rooted in conceptual metaphors and the vertical aspect seems to be hardly connected at all, one would expect for the secondary metaphors that support the horizontal aspect of the system to be equally rooted in conceptual metaphors and those that support the vertical aspect of the system to be equally disconnected, but this is not the case. All time metaphors found outside of the primary metaphoric systems, as their individual analyses showed, are related to conceptual metaphor, whether they assist the horizontal aspect of the primary system, the vertical aspect of the primary system, or work independently. This is especially curious when

they are related to the vertical aspect of the primary system, as they seem to ease their unusual ideas by suffusing them in common expressions. For instance, the metaphors that corresponds to TIME IS A SUBSTANCE and TIME IS A CONTAINER in the second movement of “Burnt Norton,” while not integrated to the system, complement the idea of the axle-tree. Likewise, the metaphor that corresponds to TIME IS A SUBSTANCE in the first movement of “East Coker” contains the only direct references to time that allow the reader to relate to the main time-moving vertical metaphor. The instances of TIME IS A SUBSTANCE and TIME IS A CONTAINER in the third movement of “The Dry Salvages” provide the only contrast to the primary metaphoric system in the densest part of its description. Finally, being the only vertical instance in the poem corresponding to a conceptual metaphor, the descending sublime force that can be characterized as an offshoot of DEATH IS NIGHT is thoroughly contextualized in the first movement by metaphors that branch from LIFETIME IS A DAY.

In short, both the horizontal aspect of the primary metaphoric system for time in *Four Quartets* and the supporting secondary metaphors have a direct relation to conceptual metaphors. Opposite to this, the vertical aspect of the primary metaphoric system of *Four Quartets* has little relation to conceptual metaphors, even if it is contextualized through secondary metaphors more akin to everyday speech. This is probably due to the role each aspect fulfills in the poems. The series has consistently portrayed the more experiential aspects of time in horizontal terms and, save for the final poem, has portrayed more unusual facets of them vertically. As such, it seems likely that the former will find parallel expressions in everyday speech while the latter will not.

Compatibility with English Schemas

In the afterword to the 2003 edition of *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson affirmed that “metaphors in poetry are, for the most part, extensions and

special cases of stable, conventional conceptual metaphors used in everyday thought and language” (267). The results of this study strongly lean in that direction, as the horizontal aspect of the primary metaphoric system for time of *Four Quartets*, as well as the secondary supporting time metaphors, have proven to be extensions, clever and sophisticated though they may be, of conventional conceptual metaphors used in everyday language. However, this connection still does not respond to how far removed the horizontal aspect of this metaphoric system is, with its variations in form and agency, to the everyday understanding of time of its English readers. As the secondary supporting metaphors act independently and only sporadically, this question does not extend to them. The vertical aspect of the primary metaphoric system for time of *Four Quartets*, on the other hand, does not appear to match conceptual metaphors, which begs another question: is the vertical aspect of this metaphoric system an exception to Lakoff and Johnson’s 2003 affirmation or is it an “extension” or a “special case” of metaphors from everyday language? Furthermore, how does the reading of the series as a whole, where the horizontal and vertical aspects of the system subsequently change in agency and form, affect a reader’s reception of the concept of time? Moreover, given that the horizontal and vertical aspects of each poem’s metaphoric system for time are not separated but combined, how does that affect the way a reader approaches the concept of time in the series?

To understand how far removed the horizontal aspect of each quartet’s metaphoric system for time might be from everyday language, it is useful to first recapitulate the relative complexity that the horizontal aspect might pose. On the one hand, both “Burnt Norton” and “East Coker” describe simple circular trajectories horizontally, “The Dry Salvages” rather describes linear movement in any direction, and, though “Little Gidding” also draws a circular trajectory, the last poem implies progress, which has been represented as a spiral in this study. On the other hand, the agency of movement in three of the four quartets is

consistent: “East Coker” and “Little Gidding” employ ego-moving metaphors and “The Dry Salvages” employs time-moving metaphors, while “Burnt Norton” moves from ego-moving agency to time-moving agency from the first to the third movement, making it, in the terms of Lakoff and Johnson, coherent rather than consistent.

The circular trajectories of the horizontal aspects of “Burnt Norton” and “East Coker” present the first challenge for a reader’s conception of time. Hoyt Alverson’s experiments on collocation of temporal metaphors point out that American English speakers are more than four times more likely to come up with linear expressions from everyday language than circular ones (68-69). Boroditsky explains why this might be so:

[S]pace has three dimensions, while time is generally thought of as one-dimensional. In space, objects have intrinsic fronts, and can face and move any which way in a layout. The domain of time, once again, is more restricted, events don’t have intrinsic fronts per se and can only move in one dimension. Because the domain of time is restricted in several ways, it is reasonable to suppose that temporal schemas will be simpler, bare-bones versions of their spatial parents. (“Metaphoric structuring” 10)

One of the ways in which time is restricted that is important to consider at this point was mentioned by Boroditsky in a subsequent article. She explains how, along with being thought as one-dimensional, “time is a phenomenon in which we, the observer, experience continuous unidirectional change that may be marked by appearance and disappearance of objects and events” (“Language Shapes Thought” 4). There is a tendency in English speakers to consider time as immediate change that is irreversible, so thinking of time lineally might be more natural than doing so cyclically, as opposed to Homeric Greeks, for whom Alverson affirms “time is circular” (95). As English poems, the circular trajectory in the horizontal aspect of *Four Quartets* could prove a challenge in both scope and causation to its readers. This is

probably a smaller challenge, though, in “Burnt Norton” as it is on “East Coker,” since the former conceptualizes time cyclically but with a definite, irreversible stop: the enumeration of graveyards in the third movement. Opposed to this, the latter thinks this circle as an infinite loop, with the added complication of verticality that will be addressed below. “The Dry Salvages” does not have that problem, as the movement is linear, despite this line being able to be set in any direction and the end not to be seen. Finally, though the movement in “Little Gidding” has an explicit circular trajectory, it clearly draws a notion of progression towards an endpoint, making it more akin to the one-dimensional and unidirectional experience mentioned by Boroditsky.

Experimental evidence also suggests a different level of connection between each of the quartets and everyday language with regards to agency. Contrary to the supposition of Lakoff and Johnson that “time in English is structured [primarily] in terms of the TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT metaphor” (42), Gentner *et al.* found in two different experiments that “subjects were faster to process statements that used the ego-moving metaphor than statements that used the time-moving metaphor” (“As Time Goes By” 550), though in one of the experiments the difference was described as “marginal” (545). This would point to “East Coker” and “Little Gidding” being, at least marginally, more easily processed than “The Dry Salvages,” as Gentner’s “results suggest that the ego-moving metaphor is somehow easier or more natural for English speakers” (559), a counterintuitive result for the only quartet named after a place in the United States. “Burnt Norton,” however, using an inconsistent (though coherent) horizontal agency of time, complicates this considerably, as Gentner *et al.* were keen to point out that, in their experiments, whether time-moving or ego-moving, “consistent metaphors were faster to process than inconsistent metaphors throughout” (552).

Corroborating this, Boroditsky’s experiments found that the participants in her experiments tended not to switch agency when talking or thinking about time: “[p]articipants

in the ego-moving condition tended to disambiguate . . . in an ego-moving-consistent manner . . . , whereas participants in the time-moving condition tended to disambiguate in a time-moving-consistent manner” (“Metaphoric structuring 7) and “reasoning about time was facilitated by consistent spatial primes” (“Metaphoric structuring” 21). In light of this, “Burnt Norton” appears to have the farthest removed horizontal aspect from people’s everyday addressing of time because of its circular trajectory and inconsistent agency. Although “East Coker” is consistent with its horizontal agency, its circular trajectory is still challenging and it “primes” its readers far less than the other poems in regard to its horizontal time metaphors. “The Dry Salvages,” having a linear movement with a consistent agency, is probably easier to approach as far as its horizontal metaphors are concerned, even though evidence points to horizontal time-moving metaphors being of a marginally slower processing. Interestingly, this time-moving agency, as well as the personal impossibility of action characteristic to the poem, correspond well to its Hindu theme according to Alverson’s study. He found that Hindi speakers, “despite having a linearly spatialized space-time deixis . . . resist extrapolation of time as an indefinite line, either straight or orbital” (113), while the “casual omniscience of time is well represented” (112). These findings shed new light on lines like “Watching the furrow that widens behind you, / You shall not think “the past is finished” / Or the future is before us” (“The Dry Salvages” 143-145), pointing to the possibility that the bad critical reception the poem gathered could partly be attributed to a cultural clash in time understanding (active ego-moving Christian vs. passive time-moving Hindu) rather than a complex or inconstant system. Opposite this, “Little Gidding” appears to have the closest horizontal metaphoric system to English everyday speech of them all, displaying a trajectory that portrays progress towards an end point that has consistent ego-moving agency.

These insights throw a new light over the vertical aspect of the primary metaphoric system for time in *Four Quartets*, which is linear throughout the series. In a different

orientation, all the metaphors that make up the vertical aspect of the metaphoric system for time in the series can be said to be offshoots of the conceptual metaphors TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT and TIME IS STATIONARY AND WE MOVE THROUGH IT. As for agency, both “Burnt Norton” and “East Coker” are mostly ego-moving vertically, which evidence suggests facilitates processing in horizontal conditions, while both “The Dry Salvages” and “Little Gidding” are time-moving. Consistency, however, shows the opposite tendency, as the first two quartets have few but relevant breaks in their ego-moving agency in the vertical aspect of the metaphoric system while “The Dry Salvages” and “Little Gidding” are consistently time-moving. Moreover, “Burnt Norton” is notably bidirectional in its vertical axis and, while “East Coker” is far less so, there is a modicum of upwards mobility on its axis to make the representation of history in the figure of the dancers. Nevertheless, the bidirectionality of both axes transmits a set downward trajectory towards the future maintained throughout the series, and their upward mobility is characterized as a sort of reminiscing, not unlike horizontal idiomatic expressions like “thinking back on the day” or looking back through history.” “The Dry Salvages” could also be thought of as bidirectional vertically, but mostly in name, as the poem either subjects any verticality to its horizontal aspects or decries the impossibility of upwards vertical movement. “Little Gidding,” on the other side, portrays a vertical axis that is consistent, unidirectional, and, moreover, could have a priming effect due to the reiterative nature of the descension of a sublime force movement by movement.

All these considerations, it should be said, are only meant to describe how closely the movement of the vertical aspect of the primary metaphoric system of *Four Quartets* would be if they occurred horizontally, since, as vertical time is absent from everyday language in English, all of these metaphors are removed to a certain extent. But the remarkable functional semblance to the most common schemas for time transmitted in English, though in a different

orientation, begs the question: how big of a hurdle is orientation when thinking about time in *Four Quartets*? As has been suggested previously, Hoyt Alverson, Lera Boroditsky, and others have looked into languages where a vertical conception of time appears naturally in speech and thought, such as Mandarin and Pormpuraawan and their implications for English speakers might be enlightening to understand the way English readers approach the vertical aspect of time in *Four Quartets*.

Contrary to Lakoff and Johnson's assumption that THE FUTURE IS UP might be an underdeveloped conceptual metaphor in English, Alverson argues that English does employ vertical time metaphors in everyday language but in the opposite direction, "but [they are] not expressed in a collocational rich fashion: despite 'down through the ages,' we don't have 'up through the past'; the 'Descent of Man' doesn't have as sequel or converse the 'Ascent of Apes'" (105). Alverson makes this observation despite his results not showing any vertical expressions of time in American English speakers, but as a way of contextualizing the fact that Mandarin speakers are likely to use everyday expressions that address the past as up and the future as down (74). The directionality of both Alverson's instances of vertical expressions for time in English and his findings in Mandarin everyday speech behave in the same manner as those found in *Four Quartets*. Lera Boroditsky replicated these findings and went on to demonstrate how "English speakers who were briefly trained to talk about time using vertical metaphors produced results that were statistically indistinguishable from those of Mandarin speakers" ("Metaphoric structuring" 24), which was not true for the same exercise with the directionality reversed.

This might reflect how people read *Four Quartets*, as Eliot's vertical axis parallels that in Mandarin which is more easily "trained" in English speakers than the alternative. Lai and Boroditsky replicated these results, but furthermore demonstrated that "Mandarin speakers are less likely to take an ego-moving perspective than are English speakers" (1),

which appears intuitive as one is less likely to assume agency in a gravitational metaphor than in a horizontal one whose vehicle is, for instance, a journey or a river. If this is so, it would strengthen Nancy K. Gish's argument that "Little Gidding" is the most naturalistic poem in the series, as is the only one where the vertical axis has both mobility and a time-moving agency. The affinity between Mandarin everyday language and the vertical aspect of "Little Gidding," counterintuitively, does not extend to the solar conception of time Boroditsky and Gaby found in Pormpuraaw and the solar metaphors found in the poem. Although Boroditsky and Gaby believe "that the east-to-west time orientation found in Pormpuraaw is related to the motion of the sun" (1638), they found that this orientation only manifested horizontally and that, unlike the Mandarin vertical orientation, it could not be trained into American English speakers. They write:

[T]he majority of Americans simply could not have laid out time in absolute coordinates even if they had wanted to, because they lacked the basic spatial knowledge necessary to do so. The Pormpuraawans not only knew their absolute orientation, but also spontaneously used this absolute spatial knowledge to construct their representations of time. . . . They have come to use the east-to-west axis to lay out time in all scales, from transformations that take mere seconds (an apple falling from a tree) to those that take decades (a young boy becoming an old man). (1638)

Knowing this, it becomes clear that "Little Gidding" could not be tapping into a system like this for two main reasons. First, even if both have a solar component, the Pormpuraawan representation of time manifests horizontally shunning its vertical implications while the descension of "Little Gidding" manifests vertically shunning its horizontal implications. Second, even if it were exploiting notions of time in absolute space, a vast majority of readers is not equipped to think that way, making the system mostly

irrelevant. With all of this in mind, the vertical aspect of each poem in the series appears to lend itself well to train readers to think vertically of time by adapting an English everyday understanding of time into an intuitive gravitational system, though to different extents. To sum up, though all poems use the vertical axis found by Alverson, Boroditsky, and others, each poem addresses it in a different way. “Burnt Norton” employs a bidirectional ego-moving agency that seems to coincide more with English horizontal perceptions of time than with the Mandarin gravitational intuition, which allows English readers to apprehend the verticality of time in the poem more by transposition than by intuition. “East Coker” drastically diminishes the bidirectionality of the vertical aspect of its metaphoric system for time, but the active ego-moving agency is mostly unchanged. Although there is a vertical aspect to the metaphoric system for time in “The Dry Salvages,” it does not allow for upward mobility and its downward mobility is subjugated to its horizontal aspect, making its verticality mostly inconsequential. Finally, “Little Gidding” appears to best reflect the intuitive vertical aspect of time found in Mandarin that Boroditsky proved to be easily trained in English speakers, with its reiterative time-moving aspect with gravitational directionality.

So far, both the horizontal and the vertical aspects of each poem in *Four Quartets* appear to have a decreasing level of processing challenge as they increasingly reflect the characteristics of everyday speech. However, it remains to be discussed how a metaphoric system of time that combines vertical and horizontal aspects might affect a person’s everyday understanding of time. Once again, Alverson’s and Boroditsky’s insights into Mandarin time representations proves enlightening. Although both accounted for vertical representations of the passing of time, both also found this to appear combined with horizontal representations with the latter being more numerous. Out the three relevant categories to evaluate horizontality and verticality (of the total five,) Alverson identified vertical metaphors for time only in one (space-time deixis,) and even there they are slightly less common than their

horizontal counterparts. Boroditsky's results mirror and explain this, as she found that, even "[w]hen answering questions phrased in purely temporal *earlier/later* terms, Mandarin speakers were faster after vertical primes than horizontal ones" (10), "Mandarin speakers answered *before/after* questions faster after horizontal primes" (11) and with equal times horizontally and vertically overall. These results suggest that Mandarin displays a combined metaphoric system for time compartmentalized horizontally and vertically. In light of Lai and Boroditsky's results on testing Mandarin and English representations of time, this compartmentalization may also extend to ego-moving and time-moving agencies, which would, yet again, point the series refining its combined approximation to time from more artificial in "Burnt Norton" toward more natural in "Little Gidding."

This insights into Mandarin, nevertheless, only account for a combined system of horizontal and vertical linear metaphors whose agency responding to orientation, while *Four Quartets* does not only combine orientation and agency but also circular and linear trajectories. Alverson provides an example of a system more remarkably akin to *Four Quartets*' message and level of metaphoric complexity in his remarks about the time representations of the Sesotho speaking Tswana peoples:

[F]or the Tswana people there is a coordination of . . . atemporal cosmologic time with progressive world time. The Tswana believe that there was a creation—a beginning of the cosmos (*tlholego*)— but much more importantly, that beginning continues throughout cosmologic time and is always present. It (*tlholego*) is an eternal existent. Existing time is orthogonal to cosmologic time and is infinite. Moreover, existing time has two aspects, both of which are given in the origins: world time and ancestral time. World time and ancestral time, while in contrary positions vis-à-vis the individual, parallel one another, each participating continuously in the origins of the cosmos. . . . In this context, a

person's age can be conceived of in terms of nearness to the ancestors—closeness to the cultural root (*modi*) which ancestral existence embodies. Age also represents the accumulation of experience. Accumulation of experience recapitulates, to some degree, knowledge of the past—that end to which the future is headed. To put this metaphorically, for the Tswana, aging is simultaneous movement in two directions away from the center: to a primordial past, which is the goal of the future, and to the end of one's future, which is defined in terms of experience accumulated while alive. The Tswana believe children are quite close to the ancestors, to the final order which is also the beginning. Growth cuts one off from this “spiritual” closeness with the ancestors. But with continued growth into the time when one will become “a man of long ago,” closeness to the ancestors is again increased. Many Tswana claim that the very young and the very old understand one another well, in part because they share knowledge based on the closeness to the origins of Setswana.

Alverson's description not only accounts for a naturally occurring time representation in language that combines an existing time that describes a circular trajectory of closeness and distance from the ancestors and a perpendicular cosmological time that is ever present, but one that mirrors *Four Quartets*' notions of the still point of the turning world, the recurrence of the rose-garden and the midnight dancers, or the symbol perfected in death.

In short, the primary metaphoric system for time in *Four Quartets* challenges the understanding of time in everyday English speech in different levels. Its horizontal aspect behaves mostly ordinarily, but its circular trajectories add complication that is eased from the first to the last poem. Its vertical aspect of time representation of time is not found in the English language, but it reflects patterns present in other languages and dormant or underdeveloped in English everyday speech that primes reader understanding in a manner

that is mostly refined from the first to the last poem. Finally, its combined approach to time representation in terms of orientation, agency, and trajectory is not found in English everyday speech, but it would be wrong to call it artificial, as other languages naturally integrate that level of complexity to their representations of time, which are sometimes prone to being imported into English by training.

DISCUSSION

Although it is generally unwise to engage in discussions of authorial intent, one would be remiss not to consider the possibility that the complexities of the primary metaphoric system for time in *Four Quartets* might be due to T.S. Eliot's erudition. It is tempting to attribute the circular characteristic of the horizontal aspect of the system to Eliot's affinity for Classic Greek literature, which Alverson describes as circular in nature. It is just as tempting to attribute the characteristics of the vertical aspect of the system to Eliot's study of Chinese poetry, discussed in the prologue to his anthology of Ezra Pound as an influence that matches the weight of Whitman, Browning, and Provençal poetry, and to consider that the time-driven characteristics of the metaphoric system of "The Dry Salvages," for instance, are the result of his extensive study of Vedic literature and philosophy.

However, unless one is willing to believe that Eliot consciously devised the metaphoric system in *Four Quartets* to reflect these sources (which the progressive change in the series and minor contradictions discourage,) one should be open to the idea that Eliot's poetry reflects the previous priming effect these sources had over him as a poet rather than a design he created in his latter poetry. If this is so, it is possible that reading *Four Quartets* has a similar effect on its readers, priming them to make their conceptions about time more sophisticated. Although the effect these sophistications might incur in their everyday use of English is uncertain, one can speculate that, as suggested by Gentner and Boroditsky's experiments, it would affect their mental habits which in turn affect habits of speech.

On the other hand, the similarities between the metaphoric system for time in *Four Quartets* and that found in Alverson's account of the Tswana's use of Sesotho or Robert Thornton's account of the time representations in Iraqw would unlikely be explained through Eliot's erudition. If these similarities are not by design, they either answer to an enormous coincidence, or to underlying cognitive patterns in the conceptualization of time that are only

slightly exposed in everyday language. If the latter is true, the study of poetry that delves deeply into different cultures' notion of time would be a possible route to confirm or deny the appearance of the patterns found in *Four Quartets*.

Aside from this, the reception and appropriation of the primary metaphoric system in *Four Quartets* remains to be explored empirically, so one is left with several questions. How much of the metaphoric system for time is actually conceptualized or effectively primed in first-time readers of *Four Quartets*? Does this priming enrich the concept of time as the reader progresses in the series or do the changes in orientation, agency, and trajectory hinder its transmission? How easily do readers apprehend the horizontal and vertical aspects of the poem? Which issues are actually easier or harder to apprehend: orientation, agency, or trajectory? How is this apprehension different in multilingual readers?

If the primary metaphoric system of *Four Quartets* is the result of a deliberate design of Eliot's erudition, one would expect for the poem's reception to be prone to erudition as well, and each individual poem would affect readers depending on their background in Classic, Chinese, Hindu, or Renaissance literature. If, otherwise, the poems' metaphoric system are the result of underlying cognitive influences that are, to one extent or another, present in everyday speech, one would expect for the effect of the poems to be cumulative and for the series to be progressively more compatible to readers. These considerations suggest the empirical study of readers' reception of *Four Quartets*' metaphoric system for time or the academic study of similarly complex poetic works as the most promising ways forward.

CONCLUSION

The metaphoric representation of time in *Four Quartets* has a partial relation to everyday speech that is refined as the series advances. This metaphoric representation is made up of a primary metaphoric system made up of horizontal and vertical aspects developed in the first three movements of each poem, with elements that are constant throughout (but not necessarily in every movement, as was the case of the fourth movement of “East Coker,”) and a number of secondary metaphors for support that appear inconstantly in the course of the series. All the secondary supporting metaphors correspond to conceptual metaphors. The horizontal aspect of each poem’s primary metaphoric system also corresponds to conceptual metaphors with different levels of sophistication; however, the vertical aspects of the primary metaphoric system of each poem, though coinciding with many features of conceptual metaphors in English, do not correspond to the orientation of conceptual metaphors for time in that language. All primary metaphoric systems, however, display representations of time found in everyday speech of different languages and cultures that increase in simplicity and precision as the series of poems progresses. As such, though not all aspects of the metaphoric representations of time in *Four Quartets* can be found in everyday English, they all find parallels in a broader linguistic and cultural frame.

The primary metaphoric system for time in each poem of *Four Quartets* uses its horizontal aspect to describe human’s commonplace experience of time and its vertical aspect to describe a more transcendental experience of time. In “Burnt Norton,” this manifests as two symmetrical circular, horizontal trajectories with opposing agency that stand for the childlike and then adult experience of time, while the linear aspect that goes through both of circular trajectories stands for ego-driven contemplation beyond the past upwards and meditation beyond the future downwards. In “East Coker,” both circular trajectories and the axis that goes through them feature again, but here they are all ego-driven, the horizontal

trajectories stand for one's experience of familiar rather than personal past, and the upwards direction of the axis is abandoned, although the downwards path remains the same. This pattern changes dramatically in "The Dry Salvages," as the poem is vastly driven by time rather than the ego, the hypothetical horizontal trajectories are linear rather than horizontal, and the axis at the center denies any movement upwards, as it is reserved for the saint, or downwards, which here means nothing but death. "Little Gidding" fuses and simplifies all these patterns, as it offers a horizontal ego-driven trajectory that both describes a circle and implies progression towards the central axis (which is depicted in this investigation as a spiral) and a vertical time-driven trajectory down towards the same point, which stands for a consciousness of death and the self that transcends time. When seen together, the poems that make up *Four Quartets* shift focus from a more vertical to a more horizontal depiction of time, favoring a commonplace experience of temporal existence that integrates and redeems its more transcendental notions.

The theory on the conceptual metaphors that make up the most common representations of time for everyday speech argue that these are vastly horizontal, more frequently linear and time-driven, and allow combination without any loss in understanding. This assertion fits with the horizontal aspect of the primary metaphoric system for time of each poem, and it suggests that those of the latter two poems are more directly linked with that of "The Dry Salvages" being the closest to everyday speech of them all. Though vertical representations of time are mentioned as underdeveloped and hardly used in conceptual metaphor theory for English, orientation is the only caveat for the vertical aspect of the primary metaphoric system for time of each poem in the series, again suggesting that the latter poems have a simpler and more direct link to everyday speech because of their time agency. Finally, the secondary metaphors for time that support the primary system all correspond to conceptual metaphors. From the perspective of conceptual metaphors, *Four*

Quartets is directly connected to everyday speech in the horizontal aspect of its primary metaphoric system for time and its secondary supporting metaphors, while, though it behaves in strikingly similar ways, its vertical aspect is absent from everyday metaphors for time in English.

Experiments on the mental habits that underlie the metaphors used for time in English mostly support conceptual metaphor theory, but found that ego-moving metaphors are slightly more frequent in English than time-moving metaphors and that the bias towards linear representations over circular ones is more severe. These findings support the assessment that *Four Quartets* progressively strengthens its connection to the representations of time found in everyday speech, but peaking in “Little Gidding” rather than “The Dry Salvages” due to the ego-agency of the horizontal aspect of its primary metaphoric system for time. Moreover, anthropologists, psychologists, and linguists have studied languages like Mandarin or Sesotho that do feature combined metaphoric systems for time with vertical aspects in everyday speech. These languages favor time-moving representations that behave gravitationally, moving from the past downwards to the future, mirroring those throughout *Four Quartets* and refining their connection to everyday speech as the series progresses. Investigations also suggest that exposure to these metaphors for time in other language’s everyday speech influences the mental habits of English speakers which, in turn, affect the way they approach the topic in speech. If this is the case, the progressively stronger connection to patterns found in everyday speech in *Four Quartets* would fulfill a more efficient form of training on its readers to consider time through more complex vehicles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Literary scholars looking to analyze *Four Quartets* would do well to try to avoid the religious bias that has hindered the study of the series before. Despite Eliot being a transparent Christian whose political drive was explicit, this work is rooted in a multitude of other sources that have been historically ignored in favor of traditional Christian and counter-Christian readings. Readers will find that even the fourth movement of each poem, the most explicitly Christian one, has plenty of technical and thematical aspects yet to be fully explored in the light of literary criticism.

Metaphor scholars looking into the representations of time in the poems should keep in mind that different movements approach time in different ways, orientations, agencies, and trajectories, as this could facilitate systematic study. Also, because of the poems' high level of complexity, little attention has been given to how ordinary people react to them, which prompts empirical study as well as studies in the effect of its metrics and prosody. By that same token, it has become apparent that intercultural and multilingual studies could provide much depth to the understanding of both how *Four Quartets* transmits its notions on time and why the metaphors in the series are akin to those evident in other languages and cultures.

Finally, both researchers in literature and cognitive psychology should find that interdisciplinary study of poetry can be incredibly beneficial. Literature must be what it is for a reason, an uncovering what that reason is profits our understanding of both texts and ourselves. While there is a clear movement towards interdisciplinary study between the fields of psychology and linguistics, the most complex product of language, literature, has mostly not been addressed save from very niche approaches. New and diverse voices interpreting our literature should have a place in revealing how literature reveals our own humanity.

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