

“Forgotten Wars:” War in the Writings of T. S. Eliot

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This thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in substantially
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Abbreviations

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| ASG | <i>After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy.</i> |
| C1 | <i>The Criterion, Vol. 1.</i> |
| C2 | <i>The Criterion, Vol. 2.</i> |
| C4 | <i>The New Criterion, Vol. 4.</i> |
| C5 | <i>The New Criterion/ The Monthly Criterion, Vol. 5.</i> |
| C6 | <i>The Monthly Criterion, Vol. 6.</i> |
| C7 | <i>The Monthly Criterion, Vol. 7.</i> |
| C8 | <i>The Criterion, Vol. 8.</i> |
| C9 | <i>The Criterion, Vol. 9.</i> |
| C10 | <i>The Criterion, Vol. 10.</i> |
| C11 | <i>The Criterion, Vol. 11.</i> |
| C12 | <i>The Criterion, Vol. 12.</i> |
| C13 | <i>The Criterion, Vol. 13.</i> |
| C14 | <i>The Criterion, Vol. 14.</i> |

- C15 *The Criterion, Vol. 15.*
- C16 *The Criterion, Vol. 16.*
- C17 *The Criterion, Vol. 17.*
- C18 *The Criterion, Vol. 18.*
- CP1 *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition: Apprentice Years,
1905–1918.*
- CP2 *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition: The Perfect Critic,
1919–1926.*
- CP3 *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition: Literature,
Politics, Belief, 1927–1929.*
- CP4 *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition: English Lion,
1930–1933.*
- CP5 *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition: Tradition and
Orthodoxy, 1934–1939.*
- CPP *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot.*
- FTOD *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts
Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound.*

- IMH* *Inventions of the March Hare.*
- L1* *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Vol.1, 1898–1922.*
- L2* *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Vol.2, 1923–1925.*
- L3* *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Vol.3, 1926–1927.*
- L4* *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Vol.4, 1928–1929.*
- L5* *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Vol.5, 1930–1931.*
- L6* *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Vol.6, 1932–1933.*
- L7* *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Vol.7, 1934–1935.*
- NTDC* *Notes towards the Definition of Culture.*
- P1* *The Poems of T. S. Eliot, Vol. 1.*
- P2* *The Poems of T. S. Eliot, Vol. 2.*
- SE* *Selected Essays.*
- SE3* *Selected Essays, 3rd edition.*
- TCC* *To Criticize the Critic and Other Writings.*
- UPUC* *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism.*

Abstract

Drawing on a large number of newly-published materials, my study, first of all, explores the connection between war, as both a literary theme and historical circumstance, and Eliot's writings, and casts light on the transformation of both the degree to which war shapes Eliot's writings and the ways in which Eliot responds to war in his writings. As a timely contribution to Eliot scholarship, my thesis aims at complicating the existing understanding of Eliot's writings, suggesting political corollaries to the personal, psychological, aesthetic, or philosophical issues that previous critics have explored in depth. In general, the organisation of chapters in this thesis will follow a historical sequence, and each chapter will correspond with one particular stage in the development of Eliot's writings. In total, there are four chapters in this thesis. Drawing upon Eliot's wartime biography and correspondence during the First World War, the first chapter explores Eliot's wartime writings in relation to their historical context, and suggest that, while the War affected young Eliot's life, war, as a literary theme, also made its presence felt in his writings, sometimes in rather obscure ways. The second chapter scrutinises Eliot's post-WWI writings between 1919 and 1925, and suggests the ways in which his post-war writings signal both a reflection of the First World War and an observation of the disintegrated Europe in the aftermath of the War. The third chapter investigates the ways in which Eliot sought intelligent debates on political theories as responses to the feverish political climate of the time in a series of cultural conversations that Eliot participated or formed in the *Criterion*, and argues that the *Criterion's* involvement in the discussion of post-war

European cultural politics shows not only the War's impact on the ensuing intellectual debates in interwar Britain, but also that "[a] war of cultures" (CP3 346) was created on the pages of the *Criterion*. The fourth chapter focuses on Eliot's writings after 1939, particularly the wartime *Four Quartets* and the post-war *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*. First of all, it explores *Four Quartets* in relation to wartime England during the Second World War, investigating the ways in which Eliot's three wartime quartets are "patriotic" poems. On the other hand, this chapter explores Eliot's *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, and suggests that Eliot advocates the means of "cultural reconstruction" in a war-torn society after the Second World War. By doing so, I aim to show the way in which war, especially the Second World War, contributes to the formation of Eliot's cultural theory in the late 1940s.

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Introduction

Eliot's writings have not often been considered in the context of war, yet he lived through the two world wars in England, where he also observed both military conflicts, such as the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922 and the Spanish Civil War, and the cultural conflicts between the East and West, Fascism and Communism, humanism and religion, classicism and romanticism, nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the inter-war period. By and large, Eliot's writings have manifested a connection with the theme of war. As early as January 1905, war, as the backdrop of the story, appears for the first time in Eliot's short story "The Birds of Prey," published in *Smith Academy Records*, in which Eliot describes an encounter between a seriously injured soldier and a vulture.¹ Afterwards, the running imagery of war, though often implicit, is extensively used in his poetry, particularly in some of his most widely-known poetic *tours de force* after 1918, such as "Gerontion," *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets*. Although the implication of war imagery is often obscure in his poetry, Eliot's attitudes towards war are more explicit in his non-poetic writings. He wrote a series of perceptive reviews, essays, editorials, and broadcasts, which signalled his political philosophy in a war-damaged world, while orchestrating several heated debates in *The Criterion* regarding the development of the contemporary cultural politics in Europe. He also commented on war in a number of letters with his families, friends, and colleagues. Thus, it could be argued that war is

¹ See *CPI* 3.

not only an important medium and meaningful context to understand Eliot's writings, but sometimes an "objective corrective" that expresses Eliot's "particular emotion" (*CP2* 125), as well.²

While war signifies a violent historical crisis for the contemporary literary world, it is also a constructive force for literary creation. Take literary modernism's relation to the First World War as an example. On the one hand, the War altered the course of literary modernism by both claiming the lives of many modernist artists and affecting the arts of those who survived. In his study, Milton Cohen (166-9) includes a list, entitled "Modernist Casualties of the First World War," presenting the names of those who were killed and severely wounded in military actions, imprisoned, and exported to native country, and those who died from war wounds and influenza epidemic, suffered mental or physical breakdown, or fled their homelands to neutral countries.³ In this sense, "modernism itself became a war casualty: it survived, but profoundly changed" (Cohen 165). Sometimes, one encounters a "proposition" in war writing that "war defeats language, as though words themselves have been blasted to smithereens or else suffer from combat fatigue" (McLoughlin, "War" 17). However, the War led to a revival of poets' creativity at the same time, as Max Plowman remarks in *A Subaltern on the Somme* (1928), "art lives by all that war destroys" (220).⁴ "From its start," Modris Eksteins notes, "the war was a stimulus to the imagination," and

² In "Hamlet and His Problems" (1919), Eliot asserted that "[t]he only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative,'" namely, "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion" (*Sacred*, 85-6).

³ See also Tate, "First" 163-5.

⁴ *A Subaltern on the Somme* was published under the pseudonym "Mark VII."

“[a]rtists, poets, writers, clergymen, historians, philosophers, among others, all participated fully in the human drama being enacted” (208). It forms some of Modernism’s most characteristic features, as Malcolm Bradbury has noted that “[m]any critics have seen the war as [...] the apocalypse that leads the way into Modernism as violation, intrusion, wound, the source of psychic anxiety” (193-4). On the other hand, as Trudi Tate pointed out, “much modernist literature had a strong interest in the politics and problems of its day,” and “attempted to bear witness to the war,” trying “to tell truths that could not easily be expressed elsewhere and marks a groundbreaking period in the history of war writing” (“First”, 162). Likewise, Kate McLoughlin’s *Authoring War: The Literary Representation of War from the Iliad to Iraq* (2011) also observed the ways in which a series of modernist writers met the challenge of representing war – the problems of epistemology, scale, space, time, language, and logic, in their writings by practising a wide range of literary devices, although her book is not an exclusive examination of the relationship between modernism and war. In this sense, war and literature were closely associated with each other, as Wyndham Lewis wrote in 1914 that “[w]ar and art in those days mingled” (*Blasting*, 67). In recent years, Randall Stevenson’s *Literature and the Great War, 1914-1918* (2013) again made this point clear by scrutinising the ways in which literature and the Great War were implicated with each other.

At the same time, war is an important context of Eliot’s writings. A number of previous studies have justified the importance of context in the research of Eliot’s social-political criticism. Lawrence Rainey’s *Institutions of Modernism* (1998) and

Marina MacKay's *Modernism and World War II* (2007) have pointed out the importance of historical particularity in the interpretation of war and modernist politics.⁵ In the case of Eliot, Russell Kirk's *Eliot and His Age* (1971), for example, explored Eliot's editorials in the *Criterion* in relation to the contemporary social and political issues. Likewise, Jason Harding's *The Criterion: Cultural Politics and Periodical Networks in Inter-War Britain* (2002) calls for "a sympathetic consideration of the journal's treatment of political affairs" so as to unearth "Eliot's editorial determination" (177). In another book, Harding recognises Eliot's social-political involvement in his prose, and stresses the necessity of contextualising Eliot's writings, since they "cannot be divorced from the circumstances of their immediate composition and reception," or "a formidable barrier" will appear "between him and new readers" (*T. S. Eliot*, 1). Similarly, Vincent Sherry's *The Great War and the Language of Modernism* (2003) associates World War I and the development of literary modernism during the war, reconstructing the latter's political context, and argues that modernists, including Eliot, developed a language in which a reality is shown in the objective expression of feeling by contradicting the logic of liberalism. All of these previous studies shared Fredric Jameson's notion that one must "[a]lways historicize" (9) in the interpretation of literary works. Thus, drawing upon the previous studies, this thesis will discuss Eliot's writings in relation to the context of war, including both military wars and intellectual polemics. By doing so, I do not suggest that Eliot's writings are the reportage of their particular history, as it is

⁵ See Rainey, *Institution* 4 and MacKay 9.

an approach that has been criticised by Eliot. On 30 April 1956, Eliot remarked in a lecture at the University of Minnesota Williams Arena, later published as *The Frontiers of Criticism* (1956), that knowledge “about a poet’s period, the conditions of the society in which he lived, the ideas current in his time implicit in his writings, the states of the language in his period” was “a necessary preparation for understanding of the poetry,” but it “can only lead us to the door” and should not be confused “with understanding his poetry” (18-9). Although Eliot’s words give a warning of considering poetry as history, they equally offer an opportunity of understanding his poetry as part of a broader political allegiance.

A number of previous studies have explored the interconnection between Eliot’s writings and war, but so far the majority of them have focused on the connection between war and some of Eliot’s “major” poems, particularly *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets*. In “T. S. Eliot: *The Waste Land*” (2006), David Chinitz explores a series of references to war in *The Waste Land*, and points out that “[t]he Great War, still in 1922 an open wound, is a continual ominous presence in the background of *The Waste Land*” (326). Chinitz’s point of view is a continuation of the point of view held by many previous studies. As Tom Paulin puts it, Eliot’s writings were “impelled by the currents and extremities of the social moment, pushed and pulled by history” (15). John Xiros Cooper similarly points out that *The Waste Land* “arrives in the world already armed with an attitude towards it” (*Politics*, 71), as a poem “always bear the marks of the social world and bears also identifiable attitudes towards that world, even if these are deflected through the literary and the aesthetic” (*Politics*, 69).

On this issue, both Harriet Monroe and Valentine Cunningham give a more affirmative response. Monroe considers that the poem “gives us the malaise of our time” (326), while Cunningham argues that the literary waste land “Eliot put before the world in 1922, was itself, of course, generated out of an immediate response to the War,” since “it was a vision that rapidly proved indispensable to the post-war sense of the city, of modern life: it became the touchstone, the most convenient shorthand way of defining the modern plight” (52). Likewise, Jay Winter (200) suggests that the apocalyptic images in *The Waste Land* remind us that the poem can be understood as a literary response to the Great War and its aftermath. After its publication in America, Burton Rascoe promptly hailed it as “perhaps the finest poem of this generation,” since it

gives voice to the universal despair or resignation arising from the spiritual and economic consequences of the war, the cross purposes of modern civilization, the cul-de-sac into which both science and philosophy seem to have got themselves and the breakdown of all great directive purposes which give joy and zest to the business of living. (8)

Peter Childs even considers that *The Waste Land* “records an emotional aspect of a Western crisis, characterised by despair, hopelessness, paralysis, angst and a sense of meaningless shown on a spiritual, cultural and personal level” (185).

Likewise, many previous studies have explored the various war allusions in each section of *Four Quartets*, signalling a connection between the Second World War and

the poem.⁶ In *Burnt Norton*, the passage of “Appeasing long forgotten wars” reminds readers of Chamberlain’s policy of appeasement in the war context. Commenting on this line, Sebastian Knowles believes that the poem has been allowed “to be considered as a poetic response to war” (102). In *East Coker*, Stephen Spender suggests that the Miltonic beat (“O dark dark dark”) is a response to “the contemporary situation” (“Year’s”, 140), or rather the wartime blackout.⁷ As for *The Dry Salvages*, Angus Calder (*Myth*, 145-8) suggests a connection between this quartet and the exploits of the British Navy.⁸ In *Little Gidding*, the images of “the dark dove with the flickering tongue” and “[a]sh on an old man’s sleeve” have drawn readers’ attention to their connections with the Blitz in London. As F. O. Matthiessen notes, “[t]he content of *Little Gidding* is most apparently under the shadow of the war [...] the ‘dark dove’ is the bird that haunts now all our skies; its ‘flickering tongue’ is the airman’s fire of destruction” (171-3). For some scholars, the presence of war allusions in *Four Quartets* becomes one of the reasons for the success of this poem, since they “wove memories [...] into an experience of London at war, [...] combined a Londoner’s attempts at the contemplative life with many records of acute personal observation” despite the fact that the poem “barely hinted that there was a war on” (Sencourt 148). In *T. S. Eliot and the Ideology of Four Quartets* (1995), Cooper emphasizes that Eliot’s poetic career was saved by the war:

⁶ See Gardner, *The Art of T. S. Eliot* 46-7.

⁷ See also Bergonzi 5.

⁸ Calder highlights the connection between each quartet and its specific moment: *East Coker* with the Phoney War and the Army in training, *The Dry Salvages* with the exploits of the British Navy, *Little Gidding* with the Blitz. See Calder, *T. S. Eliot* 133-4 and 145-60.

Eliot's eminence in the 1940s was most solidly sustained, even with all his personal accomplishments, by something beyond his control, the evolution of the historical situation itself. It was a situation that had reached bottom with the war and had taken down with it the concluding aspirations of the younger generation. (108)

In general, many previous studies, in exploring the war allusions in *Four Quartets*, suggest that the poem is a response to the catastrophe in history. According to Michael North, the development of *Four Quartets* was connected to "the rhythms of wartime routine," while "each section was also tied to its specific moment in the course of the war" (121). Knowles has also demonstrated the ways in which the last three *Quartets* are shot through with allusions to wartime events, and how they spoke with moving urgency to contemporary readers.⁹

On the other hand, some previous studies often focus on the relationship between Eliot's writings and a particular war. Sherry, for instance, explores the manifestations of the decadent sensibility in Eliot's poems before 1923, arguing that the Great War transformed Eliot's early experimentation with decadent forms and themes into a "historically enriched poetics of literary Decadence" ("Where", 96). Cooper's *T. S. Eliot and the Ideology of Four Quartets* examines the public context of Eliot's writings in the late 1930s and the 1940s, and suggests the ways in which Eliot's

⁹ Knowles (100-31) explores Eliot's responses in the latter three *Quartets*, particularly *Little Gidding*, to the Second World War in the fourth chapter of his book, *A Purgatorial Flame: Seven British Writers in the Second World War*.

cultural strategies from the politically-turbulent 1930s to the war-ravaged 1940s led to the almost immediate canonization of *Four Quartets* after its publication during the Second World War. However, as Eliot's involvement with war has undergone a continuous transformation in the trajectory of his intellectual development, it will be very necessary to exhibit that transformation, as well as its context. Among the previous studies, Carl Krockel's *War Trauma and English Modernism: T. S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence* (2011) is the only monograph that offers a detailed investigation of Eliot's lifelong involvement in war. In his book, Krockel explores the ways in which the two world wars exerted a huge impact on not only the immediate participant on the front-line, but also British culture in the twentieth century, arguing that Eliot's writings from 1910s onwards were involved in a consideration of war which is caused by both "the anxiety of anticipating trauma" and "directly experiencing its impact" (20). Krockel's methodology of combining the impact of war and Eliot's response in his "major" poems, such as *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets*, presents it as a model that I wish to emulate in this thesis. However, I would like to further interpret a series of Eliot's "minor" wartime writings, which Krockel passes over in his book, as I believe that Eliot's "minor" wartime writings sometimes had a closer link to a series of particular historical events.

Thus, my thesis will explore the war imagery in Eliot's writings in relation to his biographical involvement with war from his early writings to the late writings, presenting the transformation of his attitudes towards war between the mid-1910s to the late 1940s. In my thesis, I do not limit myself to works that overtly thematise

political issues, and seek in particular to show political dimensions of poems that have generally not been considered as war-related. At times, especially in analyses of his early works in 1910s, I will be deliberately selective with quotations drawn from Eliot's poems in order to convey the complex range of interpretations available by a close examination of individual passages. However, this careful selection may also render me guilty of obfuscating, or even contradicting, the overall "meanings" of some of Eliot's poems and too neatly explaining away the offence it engendered. In viewing Eliot's writings from within such political contexts, I do not wish to displace the principal understanding of those writings or supplant other interpretations. I am not claiming that all of Eliot's works were written with political goals in mind, although the shadow of war was sometimes cast in his writings. Nor do I suggest that war is the determinative factor in Eliot writings. However, I believe that it is an undervalued one. One reason, *inter alia*, is that the lack of first-hand materials limits the critical scope of the previous studies. As has been briefly introduced, Eliot's engagement in the discussion of war often took place in his prose. However, a large quantity of his prose works – at least more than seven hundred pieces – still remained uncollected at the beginning of the twenty-first century.¹⁰ Those published only constitute a small portion of Eliot's prose oeuvre, which aggravates the difficulty of understanding the writings of Eliot, who is one of the most prolific prose writers

¹⁰ Donald Gallup's *T. S. Eliot: A Bibliography and A Preliminary Hand-list of the Literary Manuscripts in the T. S. Eliot Collection Bequeathed to King's College, Cambridge* by John Davy Hayward in 1965 list many of those uncollected entries. Nonetheless, they are still unable to cover those items which still remain restricted and inaccessible after Eliot's death.

among his contemporaries.¹¹ It is very possible that the integrity and the coherence of a study regarding war and Eliot's writings will not be guaranteed, when it is lacking in the first-hand research materials.¹² A number of insightful critics have already foreseen the potential importance of those unpublished essays. Eric Sigg spotted the danger that "[l]eaving such a huge body of Eliot's prose unexplored means that significant dimensions not only of the man but of his poetry will remain hidden" (viii), and "a good deal of the poetry may be misread [...] and much of Eliot's prose will make less sense [or] little sense at all" (Sigg vii-iii). Apart from Sigg's warning of misinterpretation, Gail McDonald predicts that "attention to more of the prose than that collected in *The Sacred Wood* or *Selected Essays* will serve to complicate the Eliot of tradition, hierarchy, and canon" (209). Likewise, Ronald Schuchard's *Eliot's Dark Angel* emphasises that, in order to study Eliot, "we need every scrap of his writing" (216). Schuchard writes at the end of book that

endless essays and monographs on Eliot fail to make an impact at the
forward line, or sink to the bottom of the sea of print, because their links

¹¹ Schuchard once referred to Eliot as "a Prose General of our age" (*Dark*, 215) given the total amount of Eliot's prose. According to Jewel Spears Brooker (*CPI* xix), the prose by Eliot includes hundreds of reviews and essays contributed to periodicals, commentaries in the *Criterion*, letters to the press, lectures and addresses, introductions, prefaces, and forewords to books and to translations of his works in foreign languages, testimonials and other contributions to domestic and foreign newspapers, and public broadcasts published or excerpted in the Listener. It starts from his stories published in the *Smith Academy Record* as a schoolboy in 1905, and finishes with his *Harvard College Class of 1910: Fifty-fifth Anniversary Report* in late December 1964.

¹² As Schuchard noted in a speech, entitled "Brief report on The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot and The Letters of T. S. Eliot," for the Ninth T. S. Eliot International Summer School at Little Gidding on 9 July 2017, around ninety percent of existing studies on Eliot's writings had not been aware of around ninety percent of Eliot's writings.

are cut to the archives and vast stores of research materials on which significant breakthroughs depend. (215)

Schuchard's statement is not only based upon the common practice of literary criticism, but upon Eliot's own criticism of Charles Baudelaire as well. According to Eliot, "[t]o understand Baudelaire you must read the whole of Baudelaire" and take advantage of "every scrap of his writing," since "nothing that he wrote is without importance" (qtd. in Schuchard 216).¹³

In recent years, the publication of a large number of new materials – including Eliot's letters, prose, poems, and biographies – offers an unprecedented chance to refresh our memories with Eliot's life, renew our understanding of his writings, and re-evaluate his intellectual development. Mostly with the help of the T. S. Eliot Editorial Project, seven volumes of Eliot's letters have been published by Faber and Faber, offering a precious opportunity for me to become more familiar with his life and work between 1898 and 1935. Five volumes of Eliot's prose have also been published by Johns Hopkins University Press, while a new annotated edition of Eliot's complete poems – *The Poems of T. S. Eliot, Vol. 1-2* – were published by Faber and

¹³ In 1907, Eliot started reading Baudelaire, who "combined morbidity with extreme self-consciousness, [...] who raised the imagery of the metropolis to a high degree of intensity and then wrapped it around himself so that it became an echo chamber for his own suffering" (Ackroyd 33). From Baudelaire, Eliot learned that "the new source of new poetry might be found in what had been regarded hitherto as the impossible, the sterile, the intractably unpoetic" (*TCC* 126), while what a poet needed to do was "to make poetry out of the unexplored resources of the unpoetical" and "turn the unpoetical into poetry" (*TCC* 126). According to Schuchard's annotation, this statement is contained in the opening paragraph which was deleted when the essay was collected and reprinted as "Baudelaire in Our Time" in *For Lancelot Andrewes* and subsequently in *Essays Ancient and Modern* (1936).

Faber in 2015. Besides, Robert Crawford's new biography of Eliot, *Young Eliot: from St. Louis to The Waste Land*, the first part of a two-volume book project, was published by Jonathan Cape in 2015. All of those materials, along with the previously-published ones, enable this study to have "a new precision" and "a greater human context" (Schuchard, *Dark* 216) to re-evaluate the development of Eliot's involvement with the theme of war in relation to his writings. Thus, this thesis will discuss the connection between war and Eliot's writings by drawing upon Eliot's poetry, prose, dramas, editorials, correspondence, interviews, public speeches, and broadcasts, because they "form a set of parallel texts, and they should be read to discover their connections with one another" (Sigg vii-iii).

Drawing on a large number of newly-published materials on Eliot, my study, first of all, explores the connection between war and Eliot's writings, and casts light on the transformation of both the degree to which war shapes Eliot's writings and the ways in which Eliot responds to war in his writings. As a timely contribution to Eliot scholarship, my thesis aims at complicating the existing understanding of Eliot's writings, suggesting political corollaries to the personal, psychological, aesthetic, or philosophical issues that previous critics have explored in depth. In general, the organisation of chapters in this thesis will follow a historical sequence, and each chapter will correspond with one particular stage in the development of Eliot's writings. In total, there are four chapters in this thesis. Drawing upon Eliot's wartime biography and correspondence during the First World War, the first chapter explores Eliot's wartime writings in relation to their historical context, suggesting that, while

the War affected young Eliot's life, war, as a literary theme, also made its presence felt in his writings, sometimes in rather obscure ways. The second chapter scrutinises Eliot's post-war writings between 1919 and 1925, and suggests the ways in which his post-war writings signal not only a memory of the First World War, but also a reflection of a disintegrated Europe in the aftermath of the War. The third chapter investigates the ways in which Eliot sought intelligent debates on political theories as responses to the feverish political climate of the time in a series of cultural conversations that Eliot participated or formed in the *Criterion*, and argue that the *Criterion's* involvement in the discussion of the post-war European cultural politics shows not only the War's impact on the ensuing intellectual debates in interwar Britain, but also "[a] war of cultures" (CP3 346) was created on the pages of the *Criterion*. The fourth chapter focuses on Eliot's writings after 1935, particularly the wartime *Four Quartets* and the post-war *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (1948). First of all, it explores *Four Quartets* in relation to wartime England during the Second World War, investigating the ways in which Eliot's three wartime quartets are "patriotic" poems. On the other hand, this chapter will also explore Eliot's *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, and suggests that Eliot advocates the means of "cultural reconstruction" in a war-torn society after the Second World War. By doing so, I aim to show the way in which war, especially the Second World War, contributes to the formation of Eliot's cultural theory in the late 1940s.

Chapter One

“Wrapt in the old miasmal mist:” Eliot and the First World War

This chapter questions the point of view that Eliot’s poems during the First World War were “silent about the war” (Spear 41). So far, a number of anthologies of the First World War poetry have excluded Eliot’s poems from their collections. Neither Jon Silkin’s *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry* (1979) nor Tim Kendall’s *Poetry of the First World War* (2013), for example, includes any of Eliot’s poetic work. One of the few exceptions is Andrew Motion’s *First World War Poems* (2004), a Faber and Faber collection of World War I poems. Motion includes one of Eliot poems in his book, but the poem chosen by Motion is “Triumphal March” (1931). It is true that “Triumphal March” can be related to the Great War, as the list of weapons in the poem suggests “the munitions surrendered or destroyed by the Germans after Versailles” (G. Smith, *T. S. Eliot’s* 162). However, the poem was written in the 1930s, expressing a troubled feeling towards the signs of another war. On the other hand, many previous studies have rarely associated Eliot’s writings during the First World War with the theme of war. Both George Parfitt’s *English Poetry of the First World War* (1990) and Patrick Quinn and Steven Trout’s *The Literature of Great War Reconsidered: Beyond Modern Memory* (2001), for example, explore a series of major literary works during the Great War, but they do not take Eliot’s writings into account. However, the exclusion of Eliot’s wartime writings between 1914 and 1918 in the previous poetry collections or academic studies is understandable. Firstly, Eliot was not a combatant during the Great War. Nor did he visit any real battlefield on the Western Front.

Secondly, his wartime writings did not take war as a principal theme. Thirdly, his poems were very different from the poetic works of his contemporary war poets, such as Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen and Ivor Gurney. However, through readings of a number of newly-published materials on Eliot's life and writings during the Great War, a connection between Eliot's writings during the Great War and the theme of war became increasingly suggestible. Thus, as a timely contribution, this chapter initially explores the ways in which Eliot was involved in the War after he settled down in London, and then contextualises Eliot's wartime writings in the contemporary history in an attempt to suggest that war has become a literary theme, though not the principal one, in Eliot's writings during the Great War.

A Non-combatant's Imagination of the Front

When the Great War broke out in the summer of 1914, Eliot was attending a summer school in Marburg, Germany. When he was in Marburg, the young American sojourned in the house of the Pfarrers, with whom he discussed "the Balkan Question" (*LI* 52). It is unknown whether Eliot's discussion of the contemporary European politics was only a casual talk or whether Eliot was truly interested in the political issues of the Balkans, but it is certain that his life in Germany was affected by the War. Due to the outbreak of the Great War, the summer school was inevitably cancelled, and Eliot, as a foreign national, had to leave Germany. On 21 August 1914, he arrived in London. After his arrival, he often talked about the War and the contemporary European politics in his letters to his families and friends. On 23 August 1914, Eliot

told his mother that he never expected the war would be escalated so quickly, since he never thought “that England would declare war too” (*LI* 56). On 7 September 1914, he commented on Germany’s military movement in a letter to his brother Henry.

I am anxious that Germany should be beaten; but I think it is silly to hold up one’s hands at German “atrocities” and “violations of neutrality”. The Germans are perfectly justified in violating Belgium – they are fighting for their existence – but the English are more than justified in turning to defend a treaty. (*LI* 60)

It is clear from his correspondence that, after Eliot settled in wartime London, “from which almost all its young men were withdrawn, and only the sick and unfit, the elderly, the women, the workers, and a few pacifist intellectuals – outcasts – remained,” he started to observe the War “from the estranged angle of a non-participant” (Gordon, *Imperfect* 136). In wartime London, Eliot’s early observations about the War were primarily influenced by his friends. On 14 October 1914, Eliot told Eleanor Hinkley that he had a meeting with Bertrand Russell, and was interested in Russell’s comments on the diplomatic policy of Germany.¹ According to Eliot, Russell believed that

the Germans made the same mistakes in their war making that he had always found in their scholarship – where, said he, a German writer had always read every book under the sun except the one which counted: so in

¹ According to Atkin (56), although Russell’s pacifism was transformed slightly during the War, his opposition to the war was firm and fundamental.

war they were careful to provide their soldiers with forceps for cutting barbed wire but managed their diplomacy in just such a way as to unite everybody against them. (*LI* 69)

In another letter to Hinkley, Eliot recalled a meeting with some cubist artists, who “discuss poetry, art, religion, and the war, all in quite an intelligent way” (*LI* 84).

In wartime London, it does not take a long time for the War to leave a deeper impression on the young American student. On 8 September 1914, Eliot told Hinkley that the War was “so real” that it “has been something which has left a very deep impression on [him]” (*LI* 62). Although the War becomes increasingly “real” to Eliot, the world around him seems to become more and more unreal. Eliot found that “some of the towns” where he had visited had become battlefields “about which they have been fighting,” and imagined that some of his friends “must be fighting each other” (*LI* 62). In a later letter in April 1917, Eliot (*LI* 193) briefly introduced the wartime experiences of his friends and relatives who were fighting during the War. In the letter, he acknowledged that he knew two of his friends, Harold Peters and Leon Little, were serving in the United States naval reserve at the time, and one of Eliot’s cousins, George Parker, was also in the military. With the feeling that the once-familiar world had been transformed by the War into a different space, Eliot found it difficult to either “write interestingly about the war” or “adopt a wholly partisan attitude, or even to rejoice or despair wholeheartedly” (*LI* 62), since he felt unable to find an appropriate expression to describe the ongoing War. Eliot’s inability to write about the War might

be a common phenomenon at that time. John Gould Fletcher (188), for example, observed in December 1916 that no poet at the time was ready to respond honestly to wartime feeling and experience due to the domestic partisan patriotic fervour. On the other hand, the British government's suppression of news from the front during the Great War did not leave much space for Eliot to imagine the Great War, either. During the early stage of the War, the British government carried out a series of policies of strict censorship. At the outset of the War, Allied military leaders "prevented newspaper reporters from visiting the front and exercised a powerful censorship of whatever was published about the fighting" (Buitenhuis xvi). According to Randall Stevenson (24), the Press Bureau was established on 6 August 1914 to censor articles submitted by newspapers, ensuring they matched the terms of the Defence of the Realm Act. Meanwhile, the Press Bureau was "also responsible for channelling information from the War Office and the Admiralty – for [...] almost all that newspapers had available, as their own correspondents were banned from the Front" (Stevenson 24). The ban "was lifted by mid-1915" (Stevenson 24), and the War Office organized visits for a few British writers, such as Arnold Bennett, Conan Doyle, and Rudyard Kipling, under close supervision, to the "war zone" later. However, according to Peter Buitenhuis (xvi) and Jan Mieszkowski (100), the War Office still concealed the real conditions of trench warfare from the public. Hence, Eliot was not likely to know many details of what was happening at the Front then, although he surely "knew the gloom, the privation, and the deadness of London in those war years" (Gordon, *Imperfect* 136).

In October 1914, Eliot moved to Merton College, Oxford, to continue his study of F. H. Bradley's philosophy under the supervision of Harold Joachim, one of Bradley's disciples. While he was conducting his doctoral research at Oxford, Eliot (*LI* 95) complained about weather, food, and the atmosphere there. As a consequence of being stuck in a country at war and a town that he did not like, Eliot was in a mood of dissatisfaction. He wrote a letter to Conrad Aiken on 25 February 1915, complaining that "the War suffocates" him, while he did not "know [his] own plans for the future" (*LI* 95). In wartime England, Eliot felt uncertain about his future, since everything, particularly the future, became unperceivable in the midst of war. Two months later, his frustration was gradually replaced by concern. On 4 April 1915, he told Isabella Stewart Gardner that the War was "very real and very frightful to [him]," as he knew "the country and people so recently" (*LI* 101). Compared with his compatriots, Eliot's residence in wartime England becomes a unique experience, which enables him to observe the War from the perspective of an outsider. In April 1916, he mailed his doctoral thesis to Harvard, entitled "Experience and the Objects of Knowledge in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley," and Eliot (*LI* 156) was informed by James Haughton Woods nearly two months later that his dissertation had been accepted. Although he was expected to return to America to take his *viva voce*, Eliot did not do so. In retrospect, it is still uncertain whether Eliot had a plan to take a trip to America, but, if he did, he had to face the disrupted wartime transportation and the risk of being sunk by a German submarine.

It could be suggested that Eliot's wariness of German submarines is signalled in

one of his wartime writings, “Mr. Apollinax” (1916), as Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (*PI* 434) suggest a link between the image of “submarine” in “Mr. Apollinax” and the fear of torpedoes in the new annotated edition of Eliot’s collected poems by listing a number of Eliot’s letters with his families during the Great War. The poem was published in September 1916, and was generally considered to be finished in the late 1915.² Written in England, the poem recalls a tea-party at Harvard where both Eliot and Russell were guests. It is a reminiscence of his days in America, while it is also a reminder of his inability to return to his home country under the wartime circumstances. Apart from its allusion to other themes, the poem has included an association with its historical context, particularly the marine conflict between Britain and Germany during the First World War. In the first stanza, Mr. Apollinax laughs heartily when he was “[i]n the palace of Mrs. Phlaccus” or “at Professor Channing-Cheetah’s” (*CPP* 31):

His laughter was submarine and profound
Like the old man of the sea’s
Hidden under coral islands
Where worried bodies of drowned men drift down in the green silence,
Dropping from fingers of surf. (*CPP* 31)

In the passage, Mr. Apollinax’s “submarine and profound” laughter reminds the speaker of the old man of the sea who is “hidden” beneath the water, where the “worried bodies of drowned men drift down in the green silence,/ Dropping from

² In a letter to Edward J. H. Greene on 18 October 1939, Eliot wrote that “*Mr Apollinax* is late 1915” (qtd. in *PI* 434). However, there are some different opinions about the date of its completion. Gordon, for example, believes that this poem must have been finished by January 1915, while Rainey argues that it was finished in April 1915. See *PI* 434.

fingers of surf.” On the one hand, this passage can be understood as a description of a shipwreck scene. In a previous study, Edward J. H. Greene (qtd. in *PI* 441) suggests that the source of the underwater scene is likely to be Arthur Rimbaud’s “*Le Bateau ivre*” (“The Drunken Boat”), in which Rimbaud wrote “Dévorant les azurs verts; où, flottaison blême/ Et ravie, un noyé épensif parfois descend” (“Devouring the green azures; where, entranced and pallid flotsam, a dreaming drowned man sometimes goes down”) and “Et je voguais, lorsqu’à travers mes liens frêles/ Des noyés descendaient dormir, à reculons!” (“And I was scudding along when across my frayed cordage drowned men sank backwards into sleep!”). However, Eliot denied the connection between “Mr. Apollinax” and “*Le Bateau ivre*” after he read Greene’s typescript, and penned in the margin of Greene’s work that he was “unaware of this” (qtd. in *PI* 441) when he was writing “Mr. Apollinax.” Although Eliot denied the connection between his poem and Rimbaud’s “*Le Bateau ivre*,” he did not deny that the passage of “the old man of the sea’s” implies a shipwreck scene. It is evident that the scene of shipwreck had been depicted in one of his unpublished earlier poems, “The Engine.” By comparison, “The Engine” has a more explicit implication of a shipwreck scene, as Ricks (*IMH* 299) notes that the scene of a “ship goes down” (*IMH* 90) alludes to the sinking of *Titanic*, *Lusitania*, and the *Sussex*. Likewise, Graham Nelson’s “*The Waste Land* drafts, ‘The Engine’ and the sinking of the *Titanic*” (1997) also suggests a connection between Eliot’s poetry and the sinking of the *Titanic*.

On the other hand, the juxtaposition of the word “submarine” and the image of the “drowned men” allows this passage to be considered in the contemporary context, since it reminds readers of the prevailing fear of the German submarines in England during the War. In the First World War, military submarines were used as both weapons against enemy’s naval warships and economic warfare tools, enforcing a naval blockade against enemy’s supply line. On 7 May 1915, German submarine SM *U-20* sank the liner RMS *Lusitania*, which claimed 1198 lives, including 128 American civilians. That event caused widespread outrage across the Atlantic Ocean, and “was widely used for propaganda by both sides” (Darracott and Loftus 53). Based on the tragic event, Fred Spear, an American poster artist, published a poster, entitled “Enlist,” in Boston in June 1915. Spear’s poster depicts the drowning of a mother and a child, while he highlights the word “Enlist.”

It is unknown whether Eliot had ever seen Spear’s poster, but he was arguably aware of the subsequent impact of the sinking of RMS *Lusitania*, which will be explored in my later analysis of “A Cooking Egg” (1919) in this chapter. In general, the attack deeply shocked the Allies, and spread a fear among sea travellers throughout the war. In July 1915, when Eliot planned to sail for America to join his parents at East Gloucester, and visit Harvard’s Philosophy Department to discuss his returning for the doctorate, Vivien declined to accompany him due to her fear of a German submarine attack.³ When he was in Torquay in January 1916, Eliot wrote that the signs of war had been spread to “this remote western country – a torpedo boat

³ See *PI* 434.

from time to time, and a naval officer at the hotel who goes out in a motor boat, looking for submarines” (*LI* 140). Apart from Eliot and Vivien, Eliot’s other family members were also conscious of the threat posed by German submarines. On 24 March 1916, *Sussex*, a cross-English Channel passenger ferry, was torpedoed by SM *UB-29* on a voyage from Folkestone to Dieppe. This incident aroused a widespread reaction in America, and was mentioned in Eliot’s mother’s letter to Russell on May 1916.⁴ In 1916, it is clear that Eliot was wary of travelling by ship, and his concern over the wartime transportation can be felt in several of his letters. On 3 May 1916, he told J. H. Woods that the wartime sea transportation “has been so irregular during the war that I might have foreseen what occurred – my boat postponed for five days at the last moment” (*LI* 150). Likewise, he complained to Woods in March 1917 that he did not “trust the fruit of so much labour to the submarines in the Channel” (*LI* 187). Eliot also told his father on 13 June 1917 that he liked “to think of you at Gloucester soon,” because “[t]he submarines won’t go there” (*LI* 204). Taking those letters into consideration, the image of the underwater scene in “Mr. Apollinax” was possibly derived from Eliot’s consciousness of the threat posed by the German submarines during the War.

Apart from its allusion to the marine conflict during the First World War, the image of the “worried bodies of drowned men drift down in the green silence, / Dropping from fingers of surf” (*CPP* 31) also suggests an attention to the theme of human body in Eliot’s poetry. As Christie Buttram has explored in her doctoral thesis,

⁴ See *LI* 152.

Eliot's writings have a complex, troubled, and persistent preoccupation with human body. In this poem, the lifeless, powerless, and hapless bodies of the drowned men are "worried" by the current in silence. On the one hand, it evokes an element of what John Keats referred to as "easeful Death" (219).⁵ On the other hand, it suggests a reflection of the fragility of human body in the War. In the cold sea water, the bodies of those drowned men are "seized" by the current, drifting. While their drifting alludes to an uneasy feeling, their "worried" feeling seems to suggest that they are still able to feel the unspeakable agony and hopelessness when they are carried away by the peaceful water in silence. In general, the "worried" feeling of those drowned men echoes Eliot's gloomy attitudes towards the War at the time. In late 1915 or early 1916, Eliot's perplexity was turned into sadness when he heard the death of Jean Verdenal, a former medical student and one of Eliot's *alter egos* in France. Verdenal served as a combat medic in the French army, and was sent to the Dardanelles in early 1915. On 2 May 1915, "he was killed while tending a wounded soldier on the battlefield" (Gordon, *Imperfect* 137). Eliot mentioned Verdenal's death in a letter to Aiken on 10 January 1916. He lamented that "Jean Verdenal ha[d] been killed," and said that he felt "very blue about the war" (*LI* 137). Feeling sad about his friend's death, he hoped "that the war will be over" (*LI* 150). In 1917, Eliot dedicated his first poetry collection *Prufrock and Other Observations* to Verdenal. However, as Lyndall Gordon points out, "[t]he wording does not acknowledge Eliot's indebtedness to

⁵ As Michael O'Neill points out, Eliot "seem[ed] less questioning than assured in his dismissal of Romanticism" in his early writings, but his "anti-Romanticism masks a powerful affinity with Romantic poetry" (60).

Verdenal,” but is “a gesture towards the war and its sacrifice – with which Eliot personally had little to do” (*Imperfect*, 137).

Eliot’s downcast feeling towards the War arguably came through in “The Hippopotamus” (1917). According to Ricks and McCue (*PI* 521), the poem was finished in 1917, and was first read to the public at a poetry reading at Sybil Colefax’s house on 12 December 1917. It has often been considered as both Eliot’s early poetic exploration of religious themes in terms of its biblical references, and a satirical poem questioning the moral principles of modern religion because of its juxtaposition of the gross mammalian body of a physical hippopotamus and the spiritual Church.

According to Grover Smith, “the hippopotamus” represents “the weakness of the natural man, lukewarm in religious zeal but more acceptable to God than a disingenuous episcopacy” (*T. S. Eliot’s*, 39), while the Church is the advocate of “the hypocritically austere” (40). On the other hand, “The Hippopotamus” is the first poem in a series of “quatrain” poems, including “Sweeney Among the Nightingales,” “Whispers of Immortality,” “Mr. Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service,” “A Cooking Egg,” “Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar,” and “Sweeney Erect.” They mark a change in Eliot’s style, as they represent a reaction to his previous methods:

[t]o the confessional aspect of the monologues they oppose the studied reticence of impersonal ironies and, in freeing Eliot from his former stylistic habits, these poems helped him to develop some of his most characteristic techniques: the abrupt juxtaposition, the reliance on temporal

oppositions, the rapid shifts in point of view, the impersonal voice and the more tightly controlled rhythms. (Levenson, *Genealogy* 163)

Commenting on Eliot's turning to "quatrain" poems, Cohen speculates that Eliot's return to "rhyme and regular strophes" in 1917 was likely to be a result of the wartime political climate, since "[i]n a wartime climate of extreme nationalism and xenophobia, modernism's international character, elitism and abstract experimentation proved easy targets" (Cohen 165). I agree with Cohen's point of view, but I would like to add that, apart from the rhyme and regular strophes, a series of images imply an imagination of the contemporary wartime front, although the image of hippopotamus, possibly the most important image in the poem, is not one of them, and that the implication of those images could partially explain the ironic attitude towards the Church in this poem.

The first implication of the front line is the image of "the mud" in the first stanza, in which the speaker observes a "broad-backed hippopotamus," which "[r]ests on his belly in the mud" (*CPP* 49). Later, the speaker makes it clear that the hippopotamus ascends from "the damp savannas" (*CPP* 50). Although "savannas" have a potential eastern African or South American resonance, their damp or marshy landscapes, I argue, are evocative of the famous, and infamous, "No Man's Land," an area of unoccupied land between the trench systems of the belligerent armies in the Great War. Due to the poor weather condition in winter, this area was often in a muddy and miry condition, which is similar to the condition of the place where the hippopotamus is

resting in the poem. Likewise, another allusion to the battlefield scene is in the second stanza, in which the speaker makes a comparison between the fragile “[f]lesh and blood” (*CPP* 49) and the solid foundation of the Church.

Flesh and blood is weak and frail,
Susceptible to nervous shock;
While the True Church can never fail
For it is based upon a rock. (*CPP* 49)

In the first half of this passage, the speaker points out the fragility of the “[f]lesh and blood.” Their weakness, or frailty, is not only closely related with their corporeal body, but also signalled by their mental susceptibility to “nervous shock,” a phenomenon shared by many soldiers who fought in the Great War.

On the one hand, war, as “the most radically embodying event in which human beings ever collectively participate” (Scarry 71), exerts a destructive impact on soldier’s corporeal bodies. In 1936, Walter Benjamin concluded in “The Storyteller” (1936) that “under the open sky [...] in a force field of destructive torrents and explosions, was the tiny, fragile human body” (144). It is likely that Eliot shared this idea, as he was also aware that the soldiers were suffering physical hardships on the front line. His sympathy to those who were fighting in the trench is suggested in one of his contemporary prose works. In August 1917, Eliot, under the pseudonym of Muriel A. Schwarz of 60 Alexandra Gardens, Hampstead, N. W., sardonically asked in *The Egoist* whether an article written by Lewis had cast a slur on “the cheery philosophy of our brave boys in the trenches” (qtd. in Sencourt 67), when he was commenting on *The Better ‘Ole*, a musical comedy by two wartime officer comedians,

Captain Bruce Bairnsfather and Captain Arthur Eliot.⁶ Given the strict wartime censorship and the fact that Eliot was a non-combatant, his knowledge of the frontline battlefield probably came from those who returned from the front, such as his brother-in-law, Maurice Haigh-Wood.⁷ Maurice was an important source of Eliot's knowledge of the front. After Maurice graduated from Sandhurst Military Academy, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion, Manchester Regiment, Lincolnshire, on 11 May 1915. After Maurice was sent to France with his troop, he wrote several letters to the Eliots, describing the battlefield scenes. On 18 November 1915, Eliot told his mother about Maurice's front-line experiences:

[i]t seems very strange that a boy of nineteen should have such experiences—often twelve hours alone in his 'dug-out' in the trenches, and at night, when he cannot sleep, occupying himself by shooting rats with a revolver. What he tells about rats and vermin is incredible – Northern France is swarming, and the rats are as big as cats. (*LI* 132)

In September 1916, Maurice described the gory scenes on the Western Front in a letter to Eliot. On 17 June 1917, Eliot forwarded an extract of that letter to the editor of *The Nation*, who published it a week later. According to Maurice,

[p]erhaps you are tempted to give them a picture of a leprous earth, scattered with the swollen and blackening corpses of hundreds of young

⁶ See also Schuchard, *Dark* 104.

⁷ According to Bond (24), the leading national newspapers did not regularly publish casualty lists until the later stages of the war due to censorship.

men. The appalling stench of rotting carrion mingled with the sickening smell of exploded lyddite and ammonal. Mud like porridge, trenches like shallow and sloping cracks in the porridge – porridge that stinks in the sun. Swarms of flies and bluebottles clustering on pits of offal. Wounded men lying in the shell holes among the decaying corpses: helpless under the scorching sun and bitter nights, under repeated shelling. Men with bowels dropping out, lungs shot away, with blinded, smashed faces, or limbs blown into space. Men screaming and gibbering. Wounded men hanging in agony on the barbed wire, until a friendly spout of liquid fire shrivels them up like a fly in a candle. (*CPI* 547-8)⁸

Maurice's words gave Eliot a vivid description of the fragility of soldiers' bodies, and arguably became an important source for Eliot's imagination of the battlefield in his following wartime writings. In "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service" (1918), for example, although the image of "[t]he wilderness" that "is cracked and browned" symbolises a drying oil painting, its juxtaposition with the image of "the unoffending feet" remind readers of the wartime battlefield and the scattered corpses of the fallen soldiers on the Front, alluding to the cruelty of war and war's traumatic effect on human bodies which has been fully illustrated in the previous letter.

On the other hand, war also inflicts a torture on soldier's mental health. During the War, a great number of soldiers were affected by the "repeated shelling" (*CPI* 548)

⁸ See also *LI* 205.

on the Western Front. Many of them suffered from shell shock, a common psychological illness caused by prolonged exposure to active warfare. According to Ben Shephard, by December 1914 a large number of British soldiers “were being evacuated from the British Expeditionary Force in Europe with ‘nervous and mental shock,’” and “[s]ome 7-10% of all officers and 3-4% of all ranks [...] were being sent home suffering from nervous or mental breakdown” (21). As Wyatt Bonikowski has demonstrated, the phenomenon of shell shock has been described in the modernist novels, such as Rebecca West’s *The Return of the Soldier* (1918), Ford Madox Ford’s *Parade’s End* (1924-1928), and Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). In “The Hippopotamus,” the image of “nervous shock,” I suggest, might also exemplify Eliot’s imagination of the Western Front.

However, Eliot’s imagination of the front is primarily associated with his intention of satirising the modern Church.

While the True Church can never fail
For it is based upon a rock. (*CPP* 49)

In this passage, the image of a church on a rock is a biblical reference, which is an affirmation of the stability of the Church.⁹ However, it also alludes to an innuendo about the modern Church when it is juxtaposed with the previous description of the fragility of human body and mind. During the War, when the human bodies were mutilated by the weapons of destruction, and when their minds were traumatised by the fear of bombardment, the Church seemed to be unaffected and continued to

⁹ See *Matthew* 16: 17-8.

“gather in its dividends,” refreshed by “fruits of pomegranate and peach [...] from over sea” (*CPP* 49). The image of “dividends” has a source in Thomas Hood’s comments on the charge of two shillings to see Poets’ Corner at Westminster Abbey: “The profitable Abbey is/ A sacred ’Change for stony stock, / Not that a speculation ’tis – / The profit’s founded on a rock” (qtd. in Child 289).¹⁰ For the speaker, the pecuniary motives have, to some degree, degraded the Church from a sacred institution to a corrupted organisation. Besides, the juxtaposition between the Church and the image of “pomegranate” again subtly implies a satirical attitude toward the Church, as the image of “pomegranate,” possibly a word-play, reminds readers of the explosive grenade, which was widely used in the Great War. The etymology of the word “grenade” is derived from the Old French word, “pomegranate,” in that the shape of a grenade resembles that of a pomegranate. The Mills bomb, the first modern fragmentation grenade, was used by British front-line troops during the War. According to Brian Murdoch (32), grenades were used on all fronts, and were mentioned in some English wartime propaganda poems which appeared in “trench magazines.” If the image of “pomegranate” symbolises a destructive weapon, its juxtaposition with the Church seems to suggest that it is impossible for the Church to restore their strength and vigour by refreshing itself with “pomegranate” (*CPP* 49). In “The Hippopotamus,” another example that satirises the modern Church is the image of “quiring angels” (*CPP* 50). In the poem, “quiring angels” are around the “Hippopotamus,” singing “[t]he praise of God, in loud

¹⁰ See also *PI* 524.

hosannas” (*CPP* 50). Ostensibly, this passage presents a harmonious scene of a group of angels surrounding the “hippopotamus,” praising God. However, that is not the case, because Eliot chose the word “quiring” instead of the word “choiring.” His choice of words creates a foregrounding effect, and the first two letters of the word “quiring” remind readers of the image of “quacks” in one of Eliot’s earlier poems, “A Fable for Feasters” (1905). It seems to suggest that the angels around the “hippopotamus” are like the “monks” in “A Fable for Feasters,” who are “the quacks” (*CPP* 587), since they are “quiring” instead of “choiring.”

In the final stanza, the speaker’s satire on the modern Church is suggested with a description of the environment around the Church.

While the True Church remains below
Wrapt in the old miasmal mist. (*CPP* 50)

“[T]he True Church” is surrounded by the harmful vaporous exhalation, which suggests a corruptive influence from the external. By locating the Church in a “miasmal” atmosphere, Eliot reaffirms his satire on the Church in this poem. However, I suggest that the image of “miasmal mist” in this passage may allude to poisonous gas when the context of the Great War is taken into account. During the War, all of the major belligerents used lethal gases, such as chlorine and phosgene, as an effective weapon in military actions, often on a large scale. The use of poisonous gases caused a large number of casualties on the battlefield at the time, while it also became a literary theme in the contemporary writings, such as Wilfred Owen’s “Dulce et Decorum est” (1917).

In retrospect, Eliot possibly knew that the poisonous sulphuric gases were used in the War. At the same time, he was familiar with the major chemical components of poisonous gas, as he mentioned them in one of his post-war prose works, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919). In the essay, Eliot emphasizes that the originality in literature is compatible with a poet's learning from the literary tradition and the literary predecessors in that "the whole of the literature of Europe [...] has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order" (CP2 106). In order to indicate the role of a poet in the process of writing, he used a metaphor of catalyst: "[w]hen the two gases previously mentioned [oxygen and sulphur dioxide] are mixed in the presence of a filament of platinum, they form sulphurous acid" (CP2 109). It is clear that Eliot's analogy is not correct in that there is an error with the product of the chemical reaction.¹¹ However, the chemicals in this analogy, particularly "sulphur dioxide" and "sulphurous acid," have close connections with the production of poisonous sulphurous gases in the Great War. Sulphur is an important, perhaps the most common, component in the production of poisonous gases, such as Mustard gas, also known as sulphur mustard. It was first used in World War I by the German army against British and Canadian soldiers near Ypres in 1917. Later, the rumour that the German army planned to use mustard gas bombs to attack Britain caused a panic. On 10 September 1917, *The Times* published an official statement of the Secretary and

¹¹ After his mistake was pointed out by P. W. Robertson, Eliot admitted to being wrong, and replied to Robertson on 26 May 1926 that he has changed his "mind on many points since the book appeared, but on none more definitely than on the use of scientific analogies," since "[t]hey convey to the hasty or ignorant reader an impression of precision which is misleading and even meretricious" (L3 212-3). Besides, this mistake was also observed in an anonymous review of his *Selected Essays* in the *Criterion* in October 1932. See C12 167.

War office, entitled “Mustard Gas,” which aimed to quash the rumour that the ordinary gas mask did not “give complete protection against this gas” (3). Before mustard gas was deployed in the war, “sulphur dioxide” had already been used by the Germans in the Second Battle of Ypres against the 1st Canadian Division on 24 April 1915. On 26 April, *The Times* reported German’s use of “asphyxiating gases in his attacks upon the Allies,” and explained the “nature of the asphyxiating gas” (10) in “The Attack North Of Ypres.”

The appearance and the effect produced are exactly those feeding a wood fire with sulphur, the yellow vapours of which mingling with the white smoke giving the described appearance, while the sulphur in burning emits volumes of sulphur dioxide, which, being a heavy gas of over twice the weight of air, drifts with the wind for a considerable distance with but little diffusion. [Besides,] [s]ulphur dioxide is a true asphyxiant, four parts in 10000 of air rendering it unbreathable, and its effect may be imagined from the choking produced by the inhalation of the fumes from one of the old-fashioned sulphur matches. (10)

On 30 April 1915, *The Times* published another report “The Poisonous Gas Zone,” in which it condemned Germany for its violation of international law, and listed the types of the gases, including “chlorine, vapour of formol, nitrous vapours, and sulphurous anhydride, and a gas not yet determined” (10). In the following three years,

the news regarding military sulphurous gases were often mentioned in *The Times*.¹² In 1923, Eliot acknowledged that he often “read a number of newspapers from the various countries every day” (*L2* 255), though that might be a result from his later job at Lloyds. It is unknown whether Eliot often read newspapers during the First World War, but, considering the large amount of reports regarding poisonous gas during the War, I would like to include newspaper reports, particularly those in *The Times*, as an “equalled” (Wilkinson 24) historical source in this study, and speculate that it is possible for Eliot to gain knowledge of the lethal gas, though limited, through newspapers during the War.¹³ If that is the case, when he was writing “the True Church” is “wrapt in the old miasmal mist,” Eliot possibly suggested not only his intention of satirising the degradation of the modern Church, but also the idea that the degradation of the Church was closely related to the ongoing war.

Furthermore, two of his following poems of 1918 also suggest an imagination of the Front. The first poem is “Sweeney Among the Nightingales,” which was written and published in *Little Review* in September 1918.¹⁴ In 1920, Eliot once considered this poem as one of “the best that I have ever done” (*L1* 441). The whole poem, for Eliot, has “an atmosphere of suspense and sultriness like the time of the air-raids in London” and is like “a piece of still life, the meaning of which one does not formulate; one simply estimates the way the painter has used planes and angles” (*CP4* 843). It

¹² For samples of *Times* reports on military sulphurous gases between 1915 and 1918, see “Another Summit Captured” and “Another Defeat In Verdun Zone.”

¹³ I agree with Glenn R. Wilkinson’s assertion that contemporary newspapers are “valuable as a historical source to access these attitudes of actual warfare” (25).

¹⁴ See *PI* 540.

features a figure named Sweeney, who was considered by Eliot as both the “most original thing” (qtd. in Schuchard, *Eliot’s* 99-100) he had ever written. Sweeney is also the most consistently identified figure in a series of Eliot’s poems, including “Sweeney Among the Nightingales,” “Mr. Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service,” “Sweeney Erect,” *The Waste Land*, and the “abortive” (L7 230) *Sweeney Agonistes*. With the prototype of Sweeney, many previous studies have been at variance, but most of them have agreed on Sweeney’s Irish origin. In the medieval Irish legend, “Sweeney” is the name of the Mad Sweeney (*Suibhne*), a pre-Christian Irish, who is cursed by Ronan and later metamorphosed into a bird. In analysing the prototype of Sweeney, most of previous studies have related it with Eliot’s biography. In “King Bolo and Others,” Aiken (21) suggests that Sweeney’s archetype is inspired by an Irish ex-pugilist, with whom the young Eliot took boxing lessons in America.¹⁵ This assertion has been further developed by Crawford, who argues that, before it is “boosted by Tom’s knowledge of the Irish-accented Boston where as a Harvard student he had gone for boxing lessons,” the name “Sweeney” is “associated with manliness in Dr F. L. Sweany’s St Louis” (*Young*, 297). Other interpretations regarding Sweeney’s prototype include a man who Eliot “first saw in a bar in South Boston” (Matthiessen 105) and Joel Walker Sweeney, a nineteenth-century American banjoist.¹⁶ In this chapter, I partially agree with Sherry’s assertion that, like Agamemnon, “Sweeney is a returning soldier” (“Where”, 97). According to Sherry,

¹⁵ In 1953, Eliot told E. M. W. Tillyard that his picture of Sweeney “was of a retired professional boxer who kept a pub” (qtd. in *PI* 800).

¹⁶ Chinitz (*Cultural*, 105-6) explored Eliot’s relation to popular culture, and speculated that Eliot’s Sweeney could be Joel Walker Sweeney, a nineteenth-century American banjoist.

Marshall McLuhan once told him in 1974 that Eliot had acknowledged that “the model for Sweeney was an Irish-Canadian airman, billeted in London during the war” (“Where”, 103). Whether Eliot made the previous acknowledgement is unknown, but I suggest that the image of Sweeney in “Sweeney Among the Nightingales” alludes to a wounded soldier, whose humanity was gradually overtaken by a bestial status in a war.

The boundary between human being and animal is an important theme in this poem, as a series of images, such as “Apeneck Sweeney” and “Rachel *née* Rabinovitch/ Tears at the grapes with murderous paws” (*CPP* 56), *en bloc* suggest an intricate and complex connection between the two different, if not opposite, states. In the opening stanza, Sweeney’s body is associated with a series of bestial characteristics.

Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees
Letting his arms hang down to laugh,
The zebra stripes along his jaw
Swelling to maculate giraffe. (*CPP* 56)

His head looks like an ape, while his jaw has stripes of zebra and spots of giraffe. Sweeney’s simian appearance in “Sweeney Among the Nightingales” is consistent with the description of his “[g]esture of orang-outang” (*CPP* 42) in Eliot’s other Sweeney poems, such as “Sweeney Erect” (1919). According to Ricks (*IMH* 298), it is possible that Eliot borrows the image of “orang-outang” from Kipling’s short story, *Betran and Bimi*, in which Betran has

a great orang-outang dot thought he was a man. [...] He had his room in dot house—not a cage, but a room—mit a bed and sheets, and he would go to bed and get up in der morning and smoke his cigar und eat his dinner mit Bertran, und walk mit him hand-in-hand [...] and he talked to Bertran, und Bertran comprehended. [...] Und he was always politeful to me except when I talk too long to Bertran und say nodings at all to him. Den he would pull me away—dis great, dark devil, mit his enormous paws—hush as if I was a child. He was not a beast, he was a man. (338-9)¹⁷

Unlike the bestialised Sweeney, Kipling's orang-outang is a humanised beast, whose behaviour is almost the same as that of a man. The orang-outang sleeps in a bed, walks with Betran hand in hand, and is even capable of smoking a cigar. It is almost as civilised as his master, but nonetheless its "enormous paws" always remind us that the civilised orang-outang is still a primate *per se*. The image of "paws" recurs in Eliot's "Sweeney Among the Nightingales," in which a female "Semitic" figure named Rachel n é Rabinovitch is tearing at grapes with her "murderous paws" (*CPP* 56). In the previous studies, the image of Rachel's "murderous paws" has often been taken as evidence to charge Eliot of misogyny, mostly because her "paws" were described by Eliot as "murderous."¹⁸ A similar image of the bestialised female figure

¹⁷ Eliot taught Kipling's "Betran and Bimi" in one of his English 26 lectures at Harvard in the spring semester of 1933. See *CP4* 762.

¹⁸ Eliot often made misogynist remarks on women in his writings, such as a sarcastic description of the "scribbling" Fresca in the manuscript of "The Fire Sermon," which subtly echoes Nathaniel Hawthorne's notorious statement on female writers – "a d – d mob of scribbling women" (304). See *FTOD* 27. Similar examples can also be found in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (see Lamos 79), "Portrait of a Lady" (see Lamos 87), "Conversation Galante," "Hysteria" (see Moody 39),

can also be found in “Whispers of Immortality” (1918), in which there is another bestialised female figure Grishkin. On the one hand, her name can be associated with animals, as Jeffrey Perl claims that “Grishkin (griskin with a Russian accent) means ‘the lean part of the loin of a bacon pig’” (“T. S. Eliot’s”, 353). On the other hand, Grishkin is juxtaposed with the image of a “couched Brazilian jaguar” (*CPP* 52), and her “magnificent animality, whose powerful physical presence, is vital [...] and a million miles from serving as a reminder of mortality” (Raine 12). However, one is also able to see evidence of misogyny in Eliot’s catalogue of Grishkin’s physical attributes – particularly the references to her body odour: “so rank a feline smell” (*CPP* 53).

However, when the image of “Apeneck Sweeney” is contextualised in the Great War, the protagonist’s simian look alludes to the appearance of a soldier wearing a gas mask. As has been mentioned, all the major belligerents carried out the gas attacks during the First World War, and the gas attacks resulted in heavy casualties among

“Whispers of Immortality” (see Raine 12), and the unfinished *Sweeney Agonistes* (see Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar 37). In his letters, he repeatedly complained about “the feminization of modern society” (*LI* 198) and modern literature in his letters (see also *LI* 104; *LI* 204; and *CP3* 593). Besides, he excluded women from the *Criterion* Club. See *L5* 2. In general, the charge of Eliot’s misogyny is an issue that has been subject to extensive criticism and revision by many Eliot critics. North considers that women in Eliot’s writings have become a “type” (*Political*, 98), which is symbolised by the female “typist” in *The Waste Land*. “In Eliot’s abhorrence for women,” Gabrielle McIntire argues, “women hold a synecdochic and charged symbolic place for an over-all human physical grotesque” (90). Later, Marianne DeKoven notes that the “vicious representations of women have been allowed to define Eliot’s relationship to the feminine” (192). However, Richard Badenhause explored the transformation of Eliot’s attitude towards women – Eliot’s attitude towards women “alternated at times among fear, disgust, worship, fascination, hostility, attraction, sympathy, and even understanding” (“T. S. Eliot Speaks”, 195) – and suggested that Eliot’s relationship to the feminine is far more complex than critics usually concede. I will not join in this debate in this thesis, as it is not its major concern.

both the Allies and the Central Powers. As a countermeasure to the attack of poison gas, a variety of gas masks and gas helmets were employed on the front line during the War. At the same time, the image of gas mask was widely acknowledged among the public on the Home Front. Since 26 March 1915, advertisements for gas masks have been published in *The Times*.¹⁹ Postcards with the photos of British army officers wearing gas masks were also sent back from the Western Front, thus the general public in the United Kingdom would not be unfamiliar with the image of a gas mask at that time.²⁰ When a soldier is wearing a gas mask, his face is hidden from both his enemies and his companions, and “the changing appearance of soldiers seemed to confirm a hardening inhumanity at the time” (Stevenson 213). Besides, as Virginia Richter points out, “[t]he feeling of horror and abjection” evoked by the literary representation of apes in nineteenth-century texts was “transferred from the simian to the human figure” (117) in around 1900 and “it is humanity itself that causes anthropological anxiety” in a series of modernist fictions. Drawing on Richter’s observation, I speculate that the bizarre and somewhat bestial masks in Eliot’s poetry could be a response to the danger posed by the war, since soldiers have to “degrade” themselves into animalistic creatures so as to survive the frequent poison gas attacks. During the War, the human beings were degraded to what Julia Kristeva called the *abject*, epitomised by the animalistic image of Sweeney in this poem. Neither man nor matter, neither wholly human nor bestial, Sweeney becomes a

¹⁹ For an example of advertisement for gas mask in *The Times*, see “Gas Bombs.”

²⁰ See *Postcards from the Trenches: Images from the First World War*, 96-7. The postcards collected in this book were acquired by the Bodleian Library from John Fraser.

powerful example of the *abject*, and “confronts us [...] with those fragile states where man strays on the territories of animal” (Kristeva 12). This phenomenon has been noted by many war poets in the First World War. Siegfried Sassoon observed that gas masks turned his companions into “grotesque, goggled-faced creatures” (382). Likewise, Edmund Blunden considers that the introduction of gas masks symbolised “the change that was coming over the war, the induration from a personal crusade into a vast machine of violence” (53). In “Sweeney Among the Nightingales,” Sweeney’s posture resembles the sub-human creature with a mask, and its juxtaposition with the image of “arms” allows his identity to be interpreted as a soldier, while his soldier image could also be suggested in the following lines. According to Sherry, the “zebra stripes along his jaw” invite us to recall “the creases of fat cut into the neck by the tight, stiff collar of the military dress uniforms that were worn at this time” (“Where” 97). He is correct in seeing the connection between the image of the “zebra stripes” and Sweeney’s identity as a soldier, but he did not explain why “the creases of fat cut into by” the collar of military uniform swelled “to maculate giraffe” (CPP 56). As those images are juxtaposed and the latter is transformed from the former, a connection between them could be established, and I suggest both the “zebra stripes” and the blotches on a giraffe are allusions to Sweeney’s wounds, which have swollen to scabs.

The identification of Sweeney as a wounded soldier can be elicited from the two allusions to female nurses in this poem. The first one is the title of this poem – “Sweeney Among the Nightingales.” Superficially, the juxtaposition of “Sweeney”

and “the Nightingales” alludes to the story of the Mad Sweeney, in which the mad king Sweeney becomes a bird. Sherry (“Where”, 97) explores the Hellenistic association of “Sweeney among the Nightingale,” pointing out that Sweeney’s identity has been deepened by the mythic double. Besides, other images, such as “the horned gate,” the “cloth,” the “nightingale,” and “the bloody wood,” allude to this poem’s connection with its Greek origin. However, in contextualising the poem in the Great War, the image of the nightingales in the title is evocative of the female army nurses during the War by referring to the name of Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), who was considered by many as the founder of modern nursing, and one of the most famous nurses in the history of nursing. By pluralising the surname of Florence Nightingale, the title alludes to a connection between a wounded soldier and a group of female nurses.

The second allusion to female nurses appears in the third stanza, in which “[t]he person in the Spanish cape/ Tries to sit on Sweeney’s knees” (*CPP* 56). The identity of the nurse is made clear by the speaker in the seventh stanza, in which he refers to “[t]he person in the Spanish cape” (*CPP* 56) as “the lady in the cape” (*CPP* 56). On the one hand, “the lady in the cape” shares a similar rhythmic and structural pattern with that of “The Lady with the Lamp,” which is Florence Nightingale’s nickname.²¹ On the other hand, “the Spanish cape” worn by the lady alludes to the uniforms worn by the female army nurses, though a Spanish cape is longer than a nurse uniform cape. During the Great War, the nurses of the Queen Alexandra’s Imperial Military Nursing

²¹ Florence Nightingale received that nickname during the Crimean War (1853-1856).

Service, commonly known as the QAIMNS nurses or QAs, are a unit of the British Army, and they went to France with the British Expeditionary Force in August 1914. When they were on duty, the QAs often wore a “short scarlet cape” (Piggott 47), and the red-fringed cape had become one of the symbols of army nurses. By November 1918, “10404 trained nurses had enrolled” (Piggott 46) and their efforts were praised highly during the war. The efforts of army nurses had been praised highly as well during the War. On 5 January 1918, *The Times* published “Army Honours” with a subtitle “Decorations for Nurses,” in which there is a long list of the names of nurses (two full pages). These decorations were awarded by the King “in recognition of their very valuable services during the war” (2). A similar article, entitled “Nurses’ Services In The War,” was published on 2 August 1918. Like the QAs, a large number of British Red Cross voluntary nurses, also known as Voluntary Air Detachment (VAD), helped to transport and provided medical care for the wounded during the War.²² However, the VAD nurses’ uniforms did not include a cape. It is possible that Eliot knew the nurses’ contributions during the War due to his connections with the British Red Cross. “By December 1917,” according to Gordon, “Eliot was reading his poems under the auspices of the Red Cross to fashionable society in the Mayfair drawing-room of Lady Colefax” (*Imperfect*, 143). Nearly a decade later, Eliot’s *The Monthly Criterion* published “Two of the Red Cross,” an essay written by Anna Lenah Elgstrom, translated from Swedish by John Mortensen, in May 1927. Besides, the image of the VAD nurse appeared nearly thirty years later in Eliot’s *The Cocktail*

²² Agatha Christie was a VAD nurse during the First World War.

Party (1949), in which Celia Coplestone becomes a VAD nurse after her failed affair with Edward Chamberlayne. Although Eliot received funding from the British Red Cross, it is still unknown whether he was familiar with the uniform of a QAs nurse or a VAD nurse. However, the resemblance between the image of “the Spanish cape” and the cape worn by the QAs nurses allows us to associate the poem with the context of the War.

Like “The Hippopotamus,” “Sweeney Among the Nightingales” continues to pay attention to the relationship between war’s destructive impact and soldiers’ corporeal bodies, and its focus is principally on the degrees to which war reduces the human beings into a state of bestiality. In “Sweeney Among the Nightingales,” the allusions to Sweeney’s identity prefigure the bestial status of “[t]he silent man in mocha brown,” who “[s]prawls at the window-sill and gapes” (*CPP* 56). In the fifth stanza, the speaker described a “silent man” who is wearing a brown outfit. However, his bizarre, somewhat clumsy, behaviour of spreading out his arms and legs at the window-sill enables readers to call into question his true identity, or rather, whether the silent man in mocha brown is a human being. The answer is given in the next stanza, in which “[t]he silent man in mocha brown” is described as a “silent vertebrate in brown” that “Contracts and concentrates, withdraws” (*CPP* 56). In the fifth and sixth stanzas, the speaker uses different words to refer to the object in brown, and the juxtaposition of “[t]he silent man in mocha brown” and “[t]he silent vertebrate in brown” implicitly suggests that the “silent man” and the “silent vertebrate” are in fact one man. In this sense, the speaker blurs the boundary between a “man” and a “vertebrate,” or rather,

between human beings and animals. In the poem, the silent man could be a human, while his behaviour of sprawling and gaping resemble the actions of a “vertebrate,” say, a lizard. However, it could be a vertebrate as well, while it is still referred to as a “silent man.” At the same time, the speaker repeats that the silent man/vertebrate is in a brown outfit/ skin in both stanzas. The repeated image of brown outfit/ skin is evocative of the uniforms of the British soldiers during the First World War. During the War, British soldiers used to wear “drab” uniforms, and their light olive-brown colour is similar to the image of “mocha brown” in this poem, though mocha brown is a colour which is slightly darker than drab. As has been discussed in this chapter, both soldiers’ corporeal bodies and mental health were endangered by the cruelty of war when they were located in a harsh environment. In front of the threat posed by war, soldiers’ humanity was to some extent deprived, as they followed the orders of concentrating and withdrawal and were not able to control their fate. In this sense, they were like “[t]he silent man in mocha brown,” being degraded into a semi-human/semi-bestial condition, becoming “someone indistinct” (*CPP* 57).

In “Sweeney Erect,” an imagination of the battlefield can also be suggested. “Sweeney Erect” was published in *Art and Letters* in the summer of 1919, but it was considered to be finished between 1917 and 1918.²³ Despite being a wartime poem, the major theme of “Sweeney Erect” is not war. The poem starts with the speaker’s depiction of a majestic picture of a mythic shore, which suggests the poem’s connection with classical Hellenistic culture.

²³ See *PI* 497.

Paint me a cavernous waste shore
Cast in the unstilled Cyclades,
Paint me the bold anfractuous rocks
Faced by the snarled and yelping seas.

Display me Aeolus above
Reviewing the insurgent gales
Which tangle Ariadne's hair
And swell with haste the perjured sails. (*CPP* 42)

However, the image of “the insurgent gales” in the second stanza is considered by Sherry as an allusion to the contemporary Irish insurrection. According to Sherry, the image of “the insurgent gales” invites readers to associate it with “the insurgent Gaels” (*Modernism*, 255). In addition, the juxtaposition of the protagonist Sweeney and the description of his rising from the sheets in steam again suggests a connection with the Easter Rising in 1916. The Easter Rising was an armed insurrection in Ireland during Easter Week in 1916. The Rising was mounted by Irish republicans to end British rule in Ireland and establish an independent Irish Republic while the United Kingdom was heavily engaged in the First World War. It began on 24 April 1916, and lasted for six days. With vastly superior numbers and artillery, the British army quickly suppressed the Rising. According to William Manchester (110-1), the Rising succeeded in bringing physical force of republicanism back to the forefront of Irish politics. I agree with Sherry's assertion that “Sweeney Erect” contains allusions to the Easter Rising in Ireland, but I would like to offer more evidence to support his point of view. If the action of rising from sheets is made by Sweeney, he will in a way become a representative of the insurgent Gaels, who staged an uprising in April 1916. Besides, the passage includes another clue to the evocation of the Easter Rising is the image of

orang-outang. As has been mentioned in the previous section, Eliot's "orang-outang" is likely to be a reminiscence of the "orang-outang" in Kipling's short story, *Betran and Bimi*. Kipling's story has a link with Germany, as the "orang-outang" lives in Germany. Likewise, the Easter Rising also had some connections with Germany, since it is a rebellion which Germany attempted to help. According to Manchester (110), the Germans send a shipment of arms to Irish separatists, but the ship was intercepted on its way to Ireland. In this sense, the image of "orang-outang" perhaps can be understood as a very implicit allusion to the conspiracy between Ireland and Germany during the Great War.

Drawing upon Sherry's association between this poem and Irish politics, I would like to further suggest that the poem might have a more complex, though subtle, connection with the theme of war. On the one hand, "Sweeney Erect" retains the image of apeneck Sweeney which appears in "Sweeney Among the Nightingales." In the third stanza "Sweeney Erect,"

Morning stirs the feet and hands
 (Nausicaa and Polypheme).
Gesture of orang-outang
 Rises from the sheets in steam. (*CPP* 42)

In the morning, "the feet and hands" are stirred, while the anti-hero protagonist Sweeney "[r]ises from the sheets in steam" with the gesture of an orang-outang. In this passage, the description of his simian posture suggests a connection between the image of orang-outang-like Sweeney and the image of apeneck Sweeney in "Sweeney Among the Nightingales." Although the image of Sweeney could have a different

symbolic meaning in “Sweeney Erect,” it still suggests a possibility that we could arrive at an understanding of the image of “Sweeney Erect” by taking its symbolic meaning in “Sweeney Among the Nightingales” into consideration. As has been explored in this chapter, the image of apeneck Sweeney is evocative of the appearance of a soldier wearing a gas mask. Although Sweeney’s facial appearance does not look like an ape any more in “Sweeney Erect,” his simian posture implies that those two figures might be the same person, or at least belong to a group of persons with similar characteristics. In this sense, the image of orang-outang-like Sweeney could also be assumed as an allusion to the image of soldiers. On the other hand, the connection between “Sweeney Erect” and the theme of war is suggested by the image of “steam” (*CPP* 42), whose gaseous state reminds readers of the image of “miasmal mist” in “The Hippopotamus.” If we take the historical context into consideration, the image of “steam” then implies a similar meaning to that of “miasmal mist,” alluding to a literary representation of poisonous gas in the Great War.

As has been mentioned, Eliot was never a combatant during the First World War, but it was possible for him to learn the knowledge of the Front from newspaper reports. Thus, by taking this possibility into consideration, I would like to further explore the poem’s connection with its historical context, particularly the Irish involvement with the Great War, and use *The Times*’s reports on the Gas Attacks at Hulluch of April 1926 to showcase a way in which “Sweeney Erect,” particularly its third stanza, can be read as an imagination of a gas attack on the Front during the War. However, by offering the Gas Attacks at Hulluch as an example, I do not mean that this specific

historical event is the source of the third stanza of “Sweeney Erect.” Instead, what I would like to suggest is that there is a similarity between what Eliot wrote in his poem and what actually happened during the War, and, after taking some specific historical events into consideration, we can structure a nuanced understanding of the subtle and complex relationship between Eliot’s poetry and the theme of war.

The Gas Attacks at Hulluch were two German cloud gas attacks on British troops, 27-29 April 1916, during the Easter Rising. Just before dawn on 27 April, the 16th Division was subjected to a cloud gas attack near Hulluch. According to Christopher Duffy (101), the 16th Division is an Irish division. It moved to France in December 1915, joining the British Expeditionary Force on the Western Front. In January and February 1916, it moved to Loos, where they suffered greatly in the Battle of Hulluch. By the end of May 1916, it had lost 3491 out of a total of 10845 men on the Loos sector, including heavy casualties from bombardment and a heavy chlorine and phosgene Gas attack at Hulluch in April. *The Times* reported this battle in “Gallantry Of Irish Division” on 29 April 1916, in which it quoted a telegraphic dispatch received from General Headquarters in France: “[e]arly this morning the enemy tried to enter our trenches at two points north of Roclincourt, after exploding five mines, followed by artillery and trench-mortar bombardment. The enemy was successfully repulsed” (8). Besides, the report praised the gallantry of the Irish Division as well: “[t]he day has passed quietly in the neighbourhood of Loos since the gallant fighting of the 16th Irish Division broke up the German attack delivered there yesterday under cover of gas” (8). In the same issue, *The Times* published another report “The Attacks

in France,” in which it repeated its praise of the 16th Irish Division, and said German armies “came on under cover of gas discharges and gained a momentary footing in our trenches,” but “the 16th Irish Division counter-attacked and drove them out” (8). Two days later the Germans began another gas attack but the wind turned and blew the gas back over the German lines, causing a large number of German casualties. According to James Edward Edmonds (195-6), the 16th Division lost 442 men on 27 April, and the total British casualties between 27 April and 29 April were 1980, of whom 1260 were gas casualties, 338 being killed.²⁴ Later, Major William Hoey Kearney Redmond issued an appeal of reinforcement, published as “Deeds Of An Irish Division” in *The Times* on 17 October 1916, in which he praised the heroic endeavour of the 16th Irish Division and gave a more detailed report of the gas attacks on April 27 and 29:

The division withstood on April 27 and 29 two very severe attacks, in which the enemy used poison gas in its most concentrated form. On the latter of these two occasions the division suffered heavy casualties, but Providence was on our side for, the wind suddenly changing, the gas blew back over the German trenches where the Bavarians had already massed for attack. Taken by surprise, they left their front line and ran back across the open under the heavy and well-directed fire of our artillery. (“Deeds,” 9)

²⁴ The casualties include those of the 15th Division, which is a Scottish infantry division.

As has been mentioned, the first gas attack took place before dawn (at around 6am) on 27 April, when many soldiers were still sleeping. It could be imagined that when the German gas mines were exploded and the following artillery bombardment started, the Irish soldiers were woken up with a start, and the whole trench was very likely to be in a chaos.

Eliot's description of the bedroom scene in the morning – “[m]orning stirs the feet and hands” (*CPP* 42) – echoes, to some degree, the chaotic trench scene on 27 April 1916. This line is immediately followed by a pair of abrupt parentheses, in which there are two Odyssean characters – “Nausicaa and Polypheme” (*CPP* 42). The former helps the shipwrecked Odysseus, while the latter alludes to the Cyclops Polyphemus, whose only eye was blinded by Odysseus. In “Sweeney Erect,” the appearance of these two Odyssean characters alludes to Sweeney's connection with classical Hellenistic tradition. On the other hand, they allude to the Irish soldiers' physical reaction to poison gas, since “Nausicaa” and “Polypheme” are evocative of “nausea” and “blindness,” which remind us of vomit and sore eyes, two common symptoms of mustard gas poisoning. When the poison gas, such as the chlorine and the phosgene, was blown by the wind to the Irish trench, the Irish soldiers were poisoned. However, nausea and sore eyes are physical pains that can only be felt by those soldiers themselves. They are not as visible as their stirred “feet and hands,” and that is perhaps why “Nausicaa” and “Polypheme” are placed in parentheses, which indicates the unspeakable physical agony. In the speaker's imagination, the Irish soldiers again are degraded into animalistic creatures, since all of them, no matter

whether they are poisoned or not, look like orang-outangs. For those who are quick enough to put on their gas masks, their appearances are transformed into dehumanised creatures, which have been mentioned in the previous sections. For those who have been poisoned, they lost the control of their own bodies and act like frenzied apes – in a “gesture of orang-outang” – due to the physical agony. Because of the war, their bodies are reduced into a bestial status, which has been prefigured by “the snarled and yelping seas” (*CPP* 42) in the first stanza. For many Irish soldiers of the 16th Division, the morning of 27 April is indubitably a nightmare, since “Aeolus,” the God of the winds, blew the poison gas to their trenches, and woke them up “in steam.” The poisonous “steam” and the physical reactions of the Irish soldiers in the Gas Attacks at Hulluch are suggested in Eliot’s “Sweeney Erect,” which again shows his interest in the war and his contemplation of the human physicality in the context of the War. Another implicit allusion to the poisoned soldiers, though not Irish soldiers, can be found in one of Eliot’s other wartime poems, “Mr. Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service,” in which the image of “[t]he young” who “are red and pustular” (*CPP* 54) also resembles the image of an injured soldier whose body is bleeding and blistered by poisonous gas.

Besides, “Sweeney Erect” also alludes to the theme of Irish politics, as it alludes to the confrontation between two political views, the unionist and the nationalist, among Irish people during the Great War. On the one hand, the image of “the insurgent gales” suggests an armed insurrection, which represents many Irish people’s longing for ending British rule in Ireland and establishing an independent Irish Republic. On

the other hand, in associating the poem with the theme of war, the scene of Sweeney rising in the morning steam echoes what Irish soldiers went through in the Gas Attacks at Hulluch of April 1916. Those voluntary Irish soldiers were fighting to protect the sovereignty of the United Kingdom. According to Kevin Passmore, “[b]y 1914 nationalism was a mass force in the major multinational states,” and “[t]he Irish were the most nationalist of the nations in the British Isles” (80). At the outbreak of the war, “Irish people, whether unionist or nationalist, on the whole opted to support the war” (Pennell 231). According to David Fitzpatrick (386), around 200,000 Irish soldiers, most of whom were volunteers, fought in World War 1, and nearly one quarter of them died. By juxtaposing the allusions to those two nearly contemporary historical events, Eliot touched on the theme of Irish politics in his poetry and suggests a consideration of the divided opinions among Irish people during the War. In retrospect, it is true that Eliot rarely discussed Irish politics in his writings of the 1910s, but he showed a clear interest in the recent development of Irish politics in the early 1920s. In March 1922, he alluded to the recent Irish political movements in “The Three Provincialities,” in which Eliot commented on both the connections between literature, nation, and language, and their connection with the recent Irish political tendencies. Eliot also wrote that “more recently, in accord with political tendencies, Irish writers (mostly of minor importance) have reassembled in Dublin” (*CP2* 390). Those writers assembling in Dublin include James Stephens, Lennox Robinson, Sean O’Casey, and Pádraic Ó Conaire. The political tendencies, which were mentioned by Eliot, included the signing of the Anglo-Irish treaty in December 1921, and the establishment of Ireland’s

Provisional Government and the Irish National Army in January 1922, which escalated violence between members of the nationalist Irish Republican Army and the Royal Irish Constabulary, and resulted in the full-fledged civil war in June 1922.

The Home Front and Mr. Eliot's "Service"

While some of Eliot's writings during the Great War suggest his imagination of the battlefield, some of the images and passages in his poems could also be interpreted as implicit descriptions of the wartime Home Front when they are contextualised in history. According to Adam Piette, the First World War was "the active realization of the folk nightmare of the war-zone quest and its terminal space-time" ("Zones", 39) for the contemporary western world. Drawing upon Piette's point of view, I suggest that the war-zone nightmare was realised not only on the Western Front, but also on the so-called Home Front. As a resident in the United Kingdom, it is fair to say that Eliot, as an American, had a good opportunity to witness what happened on the British Home Front. Unable, or perhaps unwilling, to return to America, Eliot settled down in London and made a living by teaching in schools during a time of national crisis. In September 1915, Eliot started his first teaching position at High Wycombe Grammar School. However, he resigned at the end of the autumn term, and started working for Highgate Junior School. According to Gordon, Eliot "loathed school-mastering but stuck to it" (*Early*, 82) until Christmas 1916, when he gave up his job at Highgate Junior School. Eliot's tutorial work in London might enable him to form his initial impression on the life and people in England. In October 1916, Eliot's application was

approved by the University of London Joint Committee for the Promotion of Higher Education for Working People, and shortly afterwards he began a series of tutorial classes on English literature at Southall. According to Schuchard, Eliot letters related to his Extension courses “show not only what ‘immense pleasure’ his teaching brought to him in a difficult personal life but how deeply affected the twenty-eight-year-old American was by the war-torn lives of his working-class students” (*Dark*, 26). In the first year, he gave twenty-four lectures on modern English literature to twenty-four working-class students.²⁵ His lectures on modern French literature included some brief discussion on the theme of war. In the sixth lecture, he focused on the topic “Before and After the War: Questions for the Future,” trying to introduce Henri Bergson’s influence on other French philosophers before the war and then highlight the “[i]nfluence of the war” on the “contemporary tendencies” before he gave his “[f]orecast of French thought after the war” (*CPI* 475).²⁶ He also listed some “recent publications of French men of letters in connexion with the war” (*CPI* 476), including Loisy’s *War and Religion*, Barrès’s *Pages Choisies*, Romain Rolland’s *Above the*

²⁵ In 1974, Schuchard reconstructed “the details of Eliot’s teaching experience” from 1915 to 1919, and argued that Eliot’s Extension lecturing was “[o]ne of the most significant aspects of his experience during that formative period” (163). For more information on the syllabuses and reading lists of Eliot’s courses, see Schuchard, “T. S. Eliot as an Extension Lecturer 1916-1919” (May 1974) 163-73; Schuchard, “T. S. Eliot as an Extension Lecturer 1916-1919” (August 1974) 292-304; and W. E. Styler 53-4.

²⁶ In October 1910, Eliot arrived in Paris for a year to study French literature and philosophy at Sorbonne. This turns out to be “a profoundly formative experience” (Moody 6) for his intellectual development. In January and February 1911, Eliot attended Bergson’s weekly lectures at the *Collège de France*, and was intrigued by Bergson’s valorization of subjectivity and by his account of the relation of consciousness to time and memory. Afterwards, Eliot continued to scrutinize the implications of his views on time, memory, intuition and consciousness from the period when he wrote “Rhapsody on a Windy Night” in March 1911 to his later exploration of these notions in *Four Quartets*. Later, he acknowledged that he had experienced a “temporary conversion to Bergsonism” (Eliot, *Sermon* 5).

Battle, André Suarès's *Péguy*, *Nous et eux*, and Lasserre's *Le Germanisme et l'esprit humain*. However, Eliot's wartime Extension courses were unavoidably affected by the War. After the publication of the syllabus of his second-year University of London tutorial classes, Eliot learned that one of his students was summoned to the war at the end of 1916, while the war, illness, and other misfortunes had reduced the number of students to fifteen. Ultimately, only twelve students remained at the beginning of the second term.

In retrospect, the years from 1915 to 1918 were particularly difficult for Eliot. On the one hand, Eliot had to cope with financial pressures as a result of his marriage with Vivienne Haigh-Wood, whom he married on 26 June 1915. In order to make a living in London, Eliot was busy with both his teaching works and reviewing a number of books for a variety of journals.²⁷ In a letter to Aiken, Eliot complained about his financial situation in London, and wrote that he was desperately in need of money – “What I want is MONEY!\$!£!!” (*LI* 121). From 1916 to 1919, Eliot published dozens of book reviews and essays in a variety of journals, ranging from the politically oriented *New Statesman* to the more literary *Egoist* and *Athenaeum* to the purely philosophical *International Journal of Ethics* and the *Monist*. Some of the

²⁷ According to Peter White (93-4), Russell introduced Eliot to Sydney Waterlow, one of the editors of the *International Journal of Ethics* in 1915. Through Waterlow's connections, Eliot came to be involved with the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Westminster Gazette*, and the *New Statesman*. In early 1916, Russell also introduced Eliot to Philip Jourdain, the British correspondent of the *Monist*, a journal of philosophy and science. In the following years, Eliot reviewed a number of new publications in metaphysics, ethics, anthropology, sociology and religion for those periodicals. With the help of Pound, in May 1917 Eliot became the assistant editor of the *Egoist*, which allowed him to “develop considerably as a prose stylist” and “a critical voice” (White 97).

articles written at the request of *The International Journal of Ethics* are war-related. In January 1918, he reviewed a series of war-related essays in *The Hibbert Journal*, including Harold Begbie's "National Training: The Moral Equivalent for War," Edward M. Chapman's "Enforcing Peace," J. A. Hobson's "Is International Government Possible?" and L. P. Jacks's untitled review of *Our Ultimate Aim in the War* (1916) by George Gilbert Armstrong. Besides, he had to look after Vivien, who suffered from serious health problems and mental instability. On the other hand, Eliot seemed to lose his voice as a poet during that period. In 1916, he published four poems: "Conversation Gallante," "La figlia che piange," "Morning at the Window," and "Mr. Apollinax." The first two date back to his time at Harvard, while the other two were written at Oxford in 1915. They not only signal the influence of the French literature Eliot studied, but also show a link with his early writings, such as "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1917) and "Portrait of a Lady" (1917), in the light of the topic, form, feeling, and stylistic framework. It is clear that Eliot was conscious of the block of his inspiration, as he told Henry in 1916 that he felt "'J. A. P.' is a swan song" (*LI* 165). According to Denis Donoghue, "Eliot wrote a few poems in French at a time when he was writer-blocked in English," and "[t]he foreign language released him from the oppression of his own" (20). During the War, Eliot started writing poetry in French – "Le Directeur," "Mélange Adultère de Tout," "Lune de Miel," "Dans le Restaurant," "Petit Epître," and "Tristan Corbière" – and his attempt to write poetry in French has been considered by Sherry as an attempt to challenge "the liberal rationalism of the previous centuries" (*Great*, 17). Perhaps, Eliot managed

to challenge the past liberal rationalism, while finding his voice as a poet again in his French poems. However, his attempt is ephemeral, as he did not publish any poem in French after that. I suggest that the War may play a more important role in Eliot's retrieving of his poetic inspiration, although the theme of war serves only as a side show in his wartime writings. It offers Eliot both a strange situation in wartime London which he had never experienced and a literary theme which he had never consciously explored before.

It could be argued that Eliot's observation of the wartime Home Front in London is suggested in "A Cooking Egg" (1919). The poem was published in *Coterie* in May 1919, and has been widely considered to be written in 1917.²⁸ On 4 February 1946, Eliot told Norman Furlong that "A Cooking Egg" was "sentimental" (qtd. in *PI* 507) poem. It starts with the epigraph: "*En l'an trentiesme de mon aage/ Que toutes mes hontes j'ay beues*" (In the thirtieth year of my life, when I drank up all my shame). Coincidentally, when Eliot wrote this poem in 1917, he was around thirty years old. Being nearly thirty years old, Eliot was resident in a nation at war, while both his marriage and his career exerted huge pressure on him. He married in order to settle down in England, but his marriage, as has been mentioned, was problematic from the very beginning, instead of giving him comfort and ease. At the same time, he started a career in England, but it did not develop in a way as he had wished. In this sense, the epigraph is like Eliot's self-confession, alluding to his complex sentiment at the time. Besides, the epitaph also alludes to an implicit association between the poem and the

²⁸ See *PI* 507.

poet, and the association is continued in the first two stanzas, in which the speaker recalls that

Pipit sate upright in her chair
Some distance from where I was sitting;
Views of Oxford Colleges
Lay on the table, with the knitting.

Daguerreotypes and silhouettes,
Her grandfather and great great aunts,
Supported on the mantelpieces
An Invitation to the Dance. (CPP 44)

In the opening line, Eliot uses the verb “sate” to describe Pipit when she was sitting “upright in her chair.” His choice of word here is different from what he often did in other poems, in which Eliot usually used the word “sat” or “sit” when he referred to an action of “sitting,” such as, “I sat upon the shore” (*CPP 74*) in *The Waste Land*. In this sense, the word “sate” is foregrounded. By doing so, Eliot succeeds in creating a parallelism between the speaker’s visual observation and psychological movement, as the word “sate” not only is an archaism of the verb “sat,” which describes Pipit’s body posture, but also implies a meaning of satisfying a desire. The implied meaning of the word “sate” is echoed in one of the deleted stanzas in the earlier draft, in which the speaker’s attention is attracted by Pipit’s body:

When Pipit’s slipper once fell off
It interfered with my repose;
My self-control was somewhat strained
Because her stockings had white toes. (*P2 344*)

Like Prufrock, the speaker “I” in “A Cooking Egg” was distracted by female body parts. After he saw Pipit’s “white toes,” his “repose” was “interfered” and his

“self-control was somewhat strained.”

With regard to the prototype of Pipit, she was considered by other critics as “a little girl, an innamorata, a female relative, or an old nurse” (qtd. in *PI* 507), but I speculate that Eliot’s first wife Vivien is also an important figure behind Pipit, though the image of Pipit is more amenable and contained than Vivien. Firstly, the first two syllables of their names, “pipi” and “vivi,” share a similar structure. Secondly, the italicised lines in the first two stanzas allude to a connection with Vivien. According to Peter Ackroyd (61), Scofield Thayer introduced Eliot to Vivien at Magdalen College, Oxford, in March 1915. Thus, Oxford is the place where they met, and this is echoed in the third line of the first stanza (“*Views of Oxford Colleges*”). Besides, Ackroyd (61) notes that it was well-known among Eliot’s friends that Vivien liked dancing. Perhaps, that is also echoed in another italic line in the poem – “*An Invitation to the Dance.*” On 26 June 1915, the young couple were married at Hampstead Register Office in London without informing their parents, but their marriage turns out to be a disaster for both of them. Later, Eliot gave a rueful assessment: “I came to persuade myself that I was in love with her simply because I wanted to burn my boats and commit myself to staying in England. And she persuaded herself [...] that she would save the poet by keeping him in England.” He concluded grimly: “To her the marriage brought no happiness [...] to me, it brought the state of mind out of which came *The Waste Land*” (*L1* xix).

It could be suggested that Eliot hopes to find his “Peace” from his marriage, and

his hope echoes that of the speaker of “A Cooking Egg.” In an unpublished stanza in the earlier draft, the speaker writes that he

[...] wanted Peace here on earth,
While I was still strong and young;
And Peace was to have been extended
From the tip of Pipit’s tongue. (*P2* 344)

For the speaker, his “Peace” was supposed to come from “the tip of Pipit’s tongue,” but he has become aware that he will not gain it from Pipit. In the rest of stanzas, the speaker turns his attention to observe the present, which is shown in the use of the present tense of the verbs, and signals a transformation of his attitude towards Pipit. In the fifth and sixth stanzas, the speaker seems to lose interest in Pipit, since Lucretia Borgia’s “anecdotes will be more amusing/ Than Pipit’s experience could provide,” and “Madame Blavatsky will instruct me/ In the Seven Sacred Trances” (*CPP* 44). The transformation of the speaker’s attitude towards Pipit, in many ways, prefigures the development of Eliot’s marriage with Vivien. In 1915, in a state of erotic despair, and apparently still a virgin, Eliot impulsively married the flirtatious, neurotic Vivien, and descended into a miserably entangling marriage, which was constantly shaken by medical and psychological crises.²⁹ After they married, Eliot suffered from recurring impotence due to his health problem, while Vivien had an affair with Russell.³⁰ The

²⁹ Eliot confessed that he was still a virgin in December 1914. Later, he recalled that he was simply “too shy and unpractised” to engage in a “flirtation or mild affair” (*LI* xix). Vivien was nervous and high-strung, and often suffered from headaches, cramps, and an irregular and over-frequent menstrual cycle. Besides, she never wanted to have children. On May 14 1936, she told Maurice that “I never had any children in my life, I thank God, and never wished to” (qtd. in *L6* 563).

³⁰ Eliot believed that Russell “had no good influence on Vivienne,” since Russell “excited her mentally, made her read books and become a kind of pacifist, and no doubt was flattered because he thought he was influencing her. [...] Unfortunately, she found him unattractive” (*L6* 563).

crises culminated in Eliot's mental breakdown in 1921 – “entering the whirlpool” in *The Waste Land's* phrase – followed by a tentative, half-achieved sense of renewal and recovery. In 1934, Eliot legally separated from Vivien, who had become increasingly unbalanced.³¹ In 1938, Vivien was confined by her brother to an asylum, where she died in 1947.

Apart from the speaker's troubled feeling towards his relationship with Pipit, this poem contains another important connection with the contemporary world, which was suggested in the first stanza of “A Cooking Egg.” According to the speaker, there is a piece of “knitting” (*CPP* 44) on the table. I suggest that the image of “knitting” can be deemed an allusion to the War. During the War, both the British Royal family and the British government appealed for the voluntary “knitting” work due to the high demand of the army. At the outset of the War, *The Times* published a number of articles, all of which were entitled “How to be Useful in War Time,” teaching Britons how to contribute to the country.³² In some of the articles, knitting for soldiers and injuries were mentioned, and it arguably had a far-reaching influence among the female volunteers. In a *Times* article “Knitted Comforts For The Troops,” Sir Edward Ward “urge all who can knit to make as many knitted comforts as possible [...] for general distribution to the troops,” and “appeal to all workers to make a supreme

³¹ On March 14 1933, Eliot told Ottoline Morrell his plan for “a break” (*L6* 563). Eliot wrote that he “should prefer never to see her again,” and he did “not believe that it can be good for any woman to live with a man to whom she is morally [...] unpleasant, as well as physically indifferent” (*L6* 563). On 16 October 1933, Eliot (*L6* 664-5) informed Vivien of his financial arrangement after they live apart.

³² Between 6 August and 29 October 1914, *The Times* published a series of “How to be Useful in War Time” articles.

effort to enable me to meet it by knitting steadily for the next three months at least”

(3). On the other hand, there was a shortage of knitted products in England during the war, which resulted in the dramatic increase in the price of knitted products. Therefore, a large number of families knitted their garments by themselves. It is clear that Eliot was aware of this phenomenon in 1917, since he told his father that “I suppose everyone is busy at home with knitting” (*LI* 234). In this sense, the knitting “on the table” serves as a reminder of the war in the poem, and suggests that “A Cooking Egg” is related with its historical context. If so, the “Peace” that the speaker “wanted [...] here on earth” (*P2* 344) is evocative not only the speaker mental “Peace,” but also the world “Peace.”

Following the speaker’s earnest appeal for “Peace,” he says

I shall not want Honour in Heaven
For I shall meet Sir Philip Sidney
And have talk with Coriolanus
And other heroes of that kidney.

I shall not want Capital in Heaven
For I shall meet Sir Alfred Mond.
We two shall lie together, lapt
In a five per cent. Exchequer Bond. (*CPP* 44)

In the section of “Honour,” the speaker associates the “Honour in Heaven” with both Sir Philip Sidney and Coriolanus, which suggests that the “Honour” he “shall not want” is the Honour of being a brave soldier in the war, since both Philip Sidney and Coriolanus are allusions to the “heroes of that kidney” (*CPP* 44): Sidney was a keenly militant Protestant, who “died, according to popular legend, heroically at the battle of

Zutphen” (*PI* 509) in 1586; Coriolanus alludes to both the legendary Roman general Gaius Marcius Coriolanus and the protagonist in William Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*.³³ Similarly, the speaker does not want “Capital in Heaven,” since he “shall meet Sir Alfred Mond” (*CPP* 44). This passage explicitly associates itself with the context of wartime economy, since the juxtaposition of Sir Alfred Mond and “Exchequer Bond” suggests the wartime British government’s economic policies. According to Sherry, Sir Alfred Mond was “the signal figure of war economics” (*Great*, 182), who was a prominent Jewish Anglo-German M. P. (1906-1923) and a member of David Lloyd George’s cabinet (1916-1922).³⁴ After the outbreak of the War, the British government issued wartime loans in order to fund the war, and increased the interest rate to five per cent in January 1917. It is possible that this policy has become an literary image in “A Cooking Egg,” and I suggest that the appearance of the historical figures and events reflects both Eliot’s troubled attitudes towards the War and his growing anxiety about the future, since both the wartime militarism, which was propagandised in the name of “Honour,” and the increasing rate of “Exchequer Bond”

³³ Sir Philip Sidney is in the syllabus for a tutorial class in modern English literature for the Extension lectures between 1918 and 1919, in which Eliot listed Fulke Greville’s *Life of Sir Philip Sidney* in the reading list for his students. See *CPI* 756. With regard to Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*, Eliot thought highly of “the tragic successes which culminate in Coriolanus,” and he argued that “Coriolanus may be not as “interesting” as Hamlet, but it is, with *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare’s most assured artistic success” (*CP2* 124). In *The Waste Land*, Eliot also alluded to *Coriolanus* in “What the Thunder Said” – “Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus” (*CPP* 74).

³⁴ Drawing on the Jewish origin of Sir Alfred Mond, Anthony Julius argued that “A Cooking Egg” suggested Eliot’s anti-Semitism, because the poem “drew on an anti-Semitic tradition that characterized Jews as dishonourable and money-grubbing, and as foreign and unpatriotic” (137). However, I believe that Mond is chosen because of his public position rather than his Jewishness. On the other hand, Eliot not only knew the policies of some British politicians, but also maintained good connections with several, such as Sir Arthur Salter and Herbert Asquith. The examples of Eliot’s acquaintance with political figures can be found in Eliot’s letters and envelopes. See *P2* 159 and *LI* 312.

confirm, time and again, the disappointing fact that the war will not come to an end in the near future.

Eliot's observation of the wartime Home Front is also implied in the last three stanzas.

The red-eyed scavengers are creeping
From Kentish Town and Golder's Green;

Where are the eagles and the trumpets?

Buried beneath some snow-deep Alps.
Over buttered scones and crumpets
Weeping, weeping multitudes
Droop in a hundred A. B. C.'s. (*CPP* 45)

Christine Froula considers them as a depiction of "the real world," which suggests "the loss, or state theft, of ordinary people's everyday hopes in an overburdened, war-ravaged world" (221). Drawing upon Froula's point of view, I contextualise those passages in the history, and argue that they echo the anti-German riot in east London in May 1915. The riot was triggered by newspapers' reports of a series of atrocities committed by German armies during the War, including "the burning in an aeroplane shed of 40 British soldiers," "the crucifixion of Canadian officers" ("Rioting" 10), and German submarine SM *U-20* sinking the liner RMS *Lusitania* on 7 May 1915. *The Times* reported the riot at length in "Rioting In London" on 13 May 1915.

The anti-German rioting which began in London on Tuesday was resumed with increased violence yesterday and outbreaks continued to occur in all parts of the metropolitan area until late at night. Shops belong to tradesmen

of German or Austrian birth were attacked, wrecked, and plundered by angry crowds. The amount of damage cannot be estimated, but it is asserted that in the Camden Town and Kentish Town districts alone 150 shops were attacked. (10)

It can be seen from this report that Kentish Town is among the most affected areas in London during the riot, though it did not mention Golders Green. Besides, the article also points out that

[i]n the Kentish Town district a score of bakers' and confectioners' shops were wrecked and looted by an excited crowd. [...] English bakers, fearing that the crowd might attack their shops in mistake, in several instances hung out Union Jacks from their windows. (10)

It is not clear whether Eliot witnessed the riots in 1915, but it is still possible for him to gain the knowledge of the riots from newspaper reports. As has been reported, “a score of bakers' and confectioners' shops were wrecked and looted by an excited crowd” in “the Kentish Town district” (10) during the riot. This is similar to the scene in “A Cooking Egg,” in which the “red-eyed scavengers” creep “[f]rom Kentish Town and Golder's Green,” while “weeping multitudes/ Droop in a hundred A. B. C.'s” (CPP 45). In the poem, the images of the creeping “red-eyed scavengers” and “weeping multitudes” could be understood as metaphors for the angry crowd, while the image of “a hundred A. B. C.'s” means the Aerated Bread Company, “an endemic

teashop, found in all parts of London” (*PI* 515).³⁵ When the images of “red-eyed scavengers,” “Kentish Town,” and “A. B. C.’s” are juxtaposed in the poem, they echoed what had been reported in the newspaper.

Besides, the poem’s implication for the anti-German riot in east London is also suggested in the one-sentence stanza.

Where are the eagles and the trumpets? (*CPP* 45)

This stanza contains only one sentence, which is an inserted question between other quatrains. In this stanza, the speaker is looking for “the eagles and the trumpets.” The images of “eagles and the trumpets” have been widely considered as allusions to “Hannibal and his Carthaginian army crossed the Alps into Italy in Oct 218 through deep snow” (*PI* 515). However, I suggest that the image of “the eagles” could be a metaphor for tradesmen of German birth or shops of German association, as the image of eagle was on the coat of arms of Germany during the First World War, and the speaker of this stanza is the “red-eyed scavengers” instead of the speaker “I.” When those “red-eyed scavengers” are creeping on the street, they are shouting “Where are the eagles and the trumpets?” The juxtaposition between them invites readers to imagine the riotous scene in Kentish Town, where the mob crept in the street, shouting “where are the Germans?”

The last three stanzas’ allusion to the contemporary history suggests Eliot’s

³⁵ In retrospect, it is clear that Eliot knew the Aerated Bread Company, since he mentioned it in a letter to Virginia Woolf in March 1933. See *PI* 516.

observation of the wartime Home Front and his doubt about the contemporary partisan patriotic fervour in England. It could be argued that Eliot had started to pay attention to the rise of the partisan patriotic fervour in England in one of his earlier poems. On 30 September 1914, Eliot told Aiken that he had written a “war poem” (*LI* 64), entitled “UP BOYS AND AT’EM!”

Now while our heroes were at sea
They pass’d a German warship.
The captain pac’d the quarterdeck
Parading in his corset.
What ho! They cry’d, we’ll sink your ship!
And so they up and sink’d her.
But the cabin boy was sav’d alive
And bugger’d, in the sphincter. (*LI* 64)

The poem takes its title from the line “up, boys, and at ’em!” in Kipling’s *The Outsider* (1900), which was a rallying cry attributed to the Duke of Wellington.³⁶ Eliot claimed that “UP BOYS AND AT’EM!” had never been accepted by any publisher, since they unanimously thought that it “paid too great a tribute to the charms of German youth to be acceptable to the English public” (*LI* 64). As an obscene parody of a patriotic poem, this poem suggests a satirical effect that signals the way in which the War was oversimplified in the contemporary literary opinion. It is possible that, when Eliot was writing “A Cooking Egg” in 1917, he still held a sceptical attitude towards the contemporary partisan patriotic fervour in the belligerent country. On 11 April 1917, he criticised false patriotic fervour in St Louis in a letter to his family:

It will be very interesting to hear from you how St Louis is taking the affair

³⁶ See *P2* 251.

(I take the society meetings, national anthems, etc. for granted – I mean what the different nationalities really feel, and what the lower classes think). I can imagine the mob breaking the windows of Faust’s Restaurant, and sacking the Anha üser-Busch, and Mr Busch giving a million dollars toward national defense. (*LI* 192)³⁷

According to Kendall, “[e]very war, no matter how distant, is everyone’s war” (*Modern*, 107). As a non-combatant, Eliot’s words become his fields of action, and his wartime writings implicitly, and delicately, explored a series of social phenomena at wartime Home Front London, alluding to both his attention to the contemporary war and the association between his writings and the theme of war. Resident in wartime Britain, Eliot was given an unprecedented opportunity to observe a real war from the perspective of a displaced outsider. Besides, it could be argued that he even had a plan to enlist himself during the First World War. On 1 February 1917, the United States government declared to break off diplomatic relations with Germany. This news immediately gave Eliot a hope that the war would come to an end soon. Two days later, he told his father that

the situation has unsettled and disturbed me. I thoroughly approve of Wilson’s action, and support it with full sympathy. I am waiting for the occasion of actual declaration of war, as nothing seems to be gained now by any other course. (*LI* 175-6)

³⁷ Faust’s was a German-owned restaurant, while Anha üser-Busch was a big brewery. Both of them were located in St. Louis. See *LI* 193.

On 21 March 1917, he complained to his sister Charlotte that the “political topics are barred in letters” in England due to the war, and “it is a great annoyance,” since he was “violently interested in the subject at present” (*LI* 182). Disturbed by the contemporary war-time situation, Eliot also complained about the impact of war on his career as a writer. “[U]nder war conditions,” he wrote, “it is impossible to make an all-the-year-round living by writing and lecturing” (*LI* 182). He told Woods on 23 March 1917 that his life in London at the time “simply consists in waiting for the war to stop” (*LI* 188). Later, his feeling of the war became increasingly gloomy and pessimistic, after he learned that some of his acquaintances were killed in the war. In a letter to his mother on 13 May 1917, Eliot wrote about the death of both his colleagues’ brother and “the fiancé of one of Vivien’s friends” (*LI* 199). Besides, Eliot also mentioned that Karl Culpin, one of his Oxford friends, had been severely wounded. In June 1963 Eliot recalled that Culpin was killed “on his first day in the trenches” (qtd. in *LI* 199). Finding the world had become “a complete nightmare,” Eliot felt that he was living in an “unreal” (*LI* 189) era. In June 1917, Eliot told his father that it is unreal for him to see the war enthusiasm, because he “see[s] the war partly through the eyes of men who have been and returned, and who view it [...] as something very sordid and disagreeable which must be put through” (*LI* 203). This negative feeling was later registered in Eliot’s 1930 “Commentary” that “[p]erhaps the most significant thing about the war is its insignificance; and it is this insignificance which makes it so acutely tragic” (*C9* 183). Although more and more Britons had recognized the nature of War, their life had already been greatly changed

by the War. On 1 April 1918, Eliot wrote that “in England the sentimental heroic phase is gone, but there are very few people who have been able quite to preserve values and stick to their own business” (*LI* 258).

In September 1918, “Mr. Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service” was published in *Little Review*. According to Rainey (*Revisiting*, 198-9), the poem was written between March and August 1918.³⁸ On the one hand, “Mr. Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service” suggests that the modern Christian Church has been corrupted by the development of Unitarianism and parasitic materialism, such as the Hebraic materialist culture, which has dissociated the soul from the body of Christ, and creates an unbridgeable gap between “the Flesh” and “the Word.”³⁹ Guided by the epigraph, a quotation of Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* – “Look, look, master, here comes two religious caterpillars” (*CPP* 54), some critics highlighted the anti-Semitic implication in this poem, which is carried over into the following stanzas.

Polyphiloprogenitive
The sapient sutlers of the Lord
Drift across the window-panes.
In the beginning was the Word.

In the Beginning was the Word.
Superfetation of τό ἔν,
And at the mensual turn of time
Produced enervate Origen. (*CPP* 54)

³⁸ Rainey analysed the paper on which it was typed, and argued that this poem was written between March and August 1918.

³⁹ According to Gordon, Eliot resented the “Sunday morning services conducted by his cousin Frederick May Eliot, who [...] was ordained as a Unitarian minister” (qtd. in *PI* 534). Besides, when Herbert Howarth suggested that this poem brought Unitarianism “under withering scrutiny,” Eliot wrote in the margin that “nothing to do with Unitarianism” (qtd. in *PI* 534).

Reflecting on the word “polyphiloprogenitive,” George Monteiro (20-2) points out that this word has been commonly perceived as associated with the “drifting” Jews. However, Bryan Cheyette adds that what relates the Jewishness to the “sutlers” is nothing but their “supposedly Hebraic proliferation of empty, meaningless words, rather than their racial Jewishness” (342-3), which prefigures Eliot’s criticism against “free-thinking Jews” (ASG 20). When the materialist Jewish sutlers in the first stanza is coupled with “τό ἔν,” symbolised by the self-castrated “enervate Origen” (CPP 54) in the second stanza, the poem offers two contrary versions of God, which are synthesised in the painting of the “Baptized God” in the third stanza.

A painter of the Umbrian school
Designed upon a gesso ground
The nimbus of the Baptized God.
The wilderness is cracked and browned

But through the water pale and thin
Still shine the unoffending feet
And there above the painter set
The Father and the Paraclete. (CPP 54)

The feet of the “Baptized God” are “pale,” “thin,” and “unoffending.” According to Crawford (*Savage*, 116-20), it hardly allows them to compete for attention with the great hams of Sweeney, which bespeak a persistent, unreflecting violence and sexuality, having the virtue at least of being unreflective rather than Christian attenuation.

Sweeney shifts from ham to ham
Stirring the water in his bath. (CPP 55)

The muscular Sweeney shifting from “ham to ham” in his bath contrasts sharply with

the “unoffending feet” of the “Baptized God,” which “shine” “through the water.” In “Mr. Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service,” Sweeney’s muscular body highlights the increasingly insecure foundation of the modern Christian Church, which has become more concerned with “piaculative pence” than with “penitence.” Besides, the mocking juxtaposition of the “polyphiloprogenitive” “sapient sutlers” and the polymathic “masters of the subtle school” also suggest the corruption of the modern Church in this poem.

However, I suggest that, apart from its religious implication, the epigraph alludes to the image of a tank, since both the word “caterpillars” is evocative of the caterpillar tracks of a tank and the physical appearance resembles the shape of a tank. According to Kenneth Macksey and John Batchelor (24-5), the tracked vehicles, developed by the Holt Manufacturing Company whose trademark was “Caterpillar” in 1910s, had been used by the British army to haul heavy weapons in the early 1910s before it was equipped for the early tanks, such as Tritton No. 1 and Mark I. On 15 September 1916, tanks (British Mark I) were first deployed by the British army at the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, which was a part of the Battle of the Somme, and they were originally used as a response to the stalemate that trench warfare had created on the Western Front.⁴⁰ After being deployed in the war, tanks quickly gained fame among both the British and German troops, and were introduced to the British by newspapers. On 16 September 1916, *The Times* published an article, entitled “The Mysterious ‘Tanks,’” introducing British army’s latest military weapon. On 25 October 1916, *The*

⁴⁰ See Macksey and Batchelor 24.

Times quoted a German officer, calling tanks “Devil’s Chariots” (“Devil’s”, 7). Two days later, one of the special correspondents of *The Times* humorously wrote in “The ‘Tanks’” that “If you must have some particular animal to compare them with, they perhaps resemble in general contour a toad more than anything else; a toad rather elongated towards its hinder end” (8). Afterwards, news about tanks was often mentioned in *The Times*, and the first photograph of the tank was published by *The Daily Mirror* on 22 November 1916.⁴¹ Apart from newspapers, Trudi Tate (*Modernism*, 138-9) notes that metaphors of the tank also turn up in some contemporary popular fiction, such as ‘The Pink-Tailed Tank’ (1917) and Escott Lynn’s *Tommy of the Tanks* (1919).

On the other hand, I argue that there is an underlying text in “Mr. Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service,” since the word “service” in the title “Mr. Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service” can suggest not only a ceremony of religious worship on Sunday morning, but also the military service in the armed forces. Crawford suggests that the title of this poem “invites us to relate it to its author,” alluding to Eliot’s “reading in Plotinus and in theology, as well as on other preoccupations including art history and Renaissance drama (*Young*, 297). I agree with Crawford on the point that the title of this poem is of biographical interest, but I argue that the title also echoes Eliot’s idea of enlisting in the U.S. military. Before 1918, although Eliot felt interested in the war, he did not have any plan to participate in the war. Eliot worried about Vivien’s illness,

⁴¹ For the first published photograph of tank, see “‘Hush, Hush’ – A Tank Goes ‘Galumphant’ into Action on the Western Front.”

and decided that he would not join in the army unless he was called up. However, Eliot started to be interested in the idea of joining in the US army in 1918, as he believed that his “brains and qualifications [...] would be useful, if [he] could have a rank high enough to support me financially” (*LI* 283-4). On 2 August, Eliot cabled Henry to inquire about his chances of a military or naval training commission if he returns to America, and told Lewis that he was trying to get into US Navy three days later. On 25 August, Eliot told Henry that he had had a medical examination and been passed fit for *limited* service, with which Eliot was happy. However, Vivien clearly was not. “It was a shock to both of us that Tom was graded so high in the medical exam,” Vivien wrote earlier to Mary Hutchinson, “I did not realise until then how much I had *counted* on his being passed quite *UNFIT*” (*LI* 276).⁴² Ezra Pound also worried that Eliot “was likely to be took for the Army” (qtd. in *LI* xxviii). He told John Quinn that he went to the Embassy “to point out if it was a war for civilisation (not merely for democracy) it was folly to shoot or have shot one of the six or seven Americans capable of contributing to civilisation or understanding the word” (qtd. in *LI* xxviii).⁴³ It is in this month that four of his poems were published in *The Little Review*, including “Sweeney Among the Nightingales,” “Whispers of Immortality,” “Dans le Restaurant,” and “Mr. Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service.” On 26 October, Eliot left Lloyds bank after US Navy Intelligence had sent for him. However, due to a protracted affair of bureaucratic delays and conflicting accounts of what he had to do

⁴² After US’s declaration of war against Germany, Vivien feared that Eliot, “as an American [...] would have to fight” (Crawford, *Young* 275). See also Crawford, *Young* 192.

⁴³ Eliot met Pound in September 1914, shortly after the outbreak of the war. As a potential ally, Pound considered Eliot’s arrival on the literary scene as a *deus ex machina*. See Levenson, *Genealogy* 148.

to enlist, Eliot was not successfully enlisted, and returned to Lloyds bank on 9 November. He told St John Hutchinson the next day that that had ended his “patriotic endeavours” (*LI* 297). Eliot was correct, since the Armistice was signed on 11 November, 1918.

Chapter Two

“An old man driven by the Trades:” Eliot in the Post-war Years 1919-1925

On 13 November 1918, Eliot wrote that he was “glad” to see “the war is ended” (*LI* 299). However, it did not take a long time for him to realise that the wartime conditions had not truly come to an end in late 1918, as he witnessed the short-lived promise of seeing “the satisfaction of the peace negotiations along Wilson lines” (*LI* 312) at the Paris Peace Conference was quickly succeeded by the perpetual threat of descent into chaos “with divided victors, unrepentant losers, and a shattered global economy” (Fink 285). During the post-war period, as Spender has noted, Eliot’s writings had a “haunted imagination – haunted by real fears and fantasies” (*T. S. Eliot*, 20). “Many of these fears and fantasies,” according to Alexander Smith, “must have been the product of his personal life,” while “others concerned Europe as Eliot saw it [...] from the perspective of his desk at Lloyds Bank” (113). As a result of his job at Lloyds Bank from 1917 to 1925, Eliot was able to reach a great deal of first-hand information about the progress of the Peace Conference and the details of economical clauses in the Treaty of Versailles. In retrospect, he was clearly aware that “the features of the post-war world” had not emerged until “about the year 1926” (*CPI8* 271), as he knew the post-war Europe was still overshadowed by the legacies of the Great War: several armed conflicts in eastern Europe, the Near East, and Northern Asia, were still ongoing, while a cold war between victors and the vanquished centred on the enforcement of the peace settlement. Thus, taking Eliot’s working experiences

at Lloyds Bank as an important context, this chapter explores Eliot's post-war writings between 1919 and 1925, and suggests that the Great War was still made present in Eliot's post-war writings from 1919 to 1925, while they demonstrate an contemplation of both the ironic nature of the post-war peace treaty and the disintegration of Europe in the aftermath of the War.

Eliot and the Paris Peace Conference

In March 1917, due to "a combination of chance, economic necessity and desperation" (Ackroyd 77), Eliot started working for the Colonial and Foreign department of Lloyds Bank, tabulating and filing balance sheets of foreign banks. In March 1919, Eliot was transferred to "a new department" (*LI* 330) at the Bank's head office. Later, he was "in charge of settling all the pre-War debts between the Bank and the Germans" (*LI* 444). Eliot was excited about his new post, as he believed that it was "an important appointment" (*LI* 444) for his career. In retrospect, Eliot's job at Lloyds Bank is also a turning point to his writing career. On the one hand, it enables him to relieve his financial stress, while securing his independence as a writer. In March 1919, Eliot wrote that

I only write what I want to – now – and everyone knows that anything I do write is good. I can influence London opinion and English literature in a better way. I am known to be disinterested. [...] There is a small and select public which regards me as the best living critic, as well as the best living poet, in England. (*LI* 331)

Being proud of being “disinterested” (*LI* 331), Eliot was satisfied with what his new position at Lloyds benefits him. For one time, he even held the idea that he was a little banker – “un peu banquier” (*CPP* 47) – when he was in London in 1917. On the other hand, Eliot’s job at Lloyds Bank enables him to approach the first-hand information about the Peace Conference and the economic clauses in the Treaty of Versailles, offering him an opportunity to have a deep insight into the disintegration of the post-war European political scenario. After the signing of the Peace Treaty, Eliot started working on German debts with reference to the economic clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. In January 1923, Eliot was promoted to the head of the Intelligence Department, dealing with German “[d]ebts under the Peace Treaties” (*L2* xvii). As a result, he became specialised “in the Economic Clauses of the Peace Treaty” (*CP2* 300). Besides, Eliot was also familiar with the contemporary economic development in the European Continent. In July 1923, Eliot re-joined the colonial and foreign department, and was assigned to “edit a daily sheet of commercial and financial extracts from the foreign press and to write a monthly article on foreign exchange, which appeared (anonymously) in *Lloyds Bank Monthly*” (*Winton* 39) till he left Lloyds Bank in November 1925.

While working for Lloyds Bank, Eliot continued to write poetry, review books, and prepare lectures. According to the recollections of his colleagues at Lloyds Bank, when Eliot was working in the daytime, he “often in the middle of dictating a letter, break off suddenly, grasp a sheet of paper, and start writing quickly when an idea came to him” (*Winton* 40). As a consequence, there has often been a heated

discussion regarding whether Eliot's working experiences influenced his writings in the previous studies. As some critics have noted, there might be a connection between Eliot's writings and his job at Lloyds Bank. Eleanor Cook, for example, argues that Eliot's writing of this period "speaks back to the very history that conditions it" (*Against*, 3). Likewise, Harding agrees that Eliot's values and beliefs were at the time "sophisticated responses to specific socio-cultural conditions, as well as to extreme political and economic crises" (*Context*, 4). Alexander Smith also provides a similar conclusion in this regard. He believes that, through Eliot's job at Lloyds Bank, the Treaty of Versailles "influenced Eliot's poem directly" (A. Smith 85). This is a point of view that I would like to follow in this thesis, because, in Eliot's writings, one can easily find a number of clues in relation to his work at Lloyds Bank, such as the images of the City, streets, churches, clients, and even some technical terms of banking. J. R. Winton (39), for example, points out that there are two places where Eliot used his knowledge of banking in his poetry. The first one is the abbreviation "C. i. f." in the section of "Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant" (*CPP* 68), while the other is the image of "Bradford millionaire" (*CPP* 68), who has been widely interpreted as an implication of a customer of Lloyds bank at the time. Drawing upon those previous studies, I suggest that Eliot's writings in the late 1910s, particularly those written during the Paris Peace Conference and after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, imply an observation of the post-war European politics and a reflection on the role of the United States, Eliot's home country at the time, in both the Great War and the Peace Conference.

As has been pointed out by many previous studies, “Gerontion” has a close connection with its historical context. As the introductory poem in Eliot’s *Poems* (1920), “Gerontion” was finished in the summer of 1919.¹ According to C. K. Stead, the poem can be read in two ways: it can be read as “an entirely self-enclosed Symbolist poem of the extreme Mallarméan variety, a verbal event, a musical structure, creating its own reality as it goes,” while it can also be deemed as a poem which “invites us to measure” the “world” it creates “against our general sense of life, or reality,” or “historically against the facts of its own time and place” (*Pound*, 74). Stead’s interpretation highlights the poem’s achievement in creating an independent reality in itself, but it seems to isolate the poem from its history at the same time. By comparison, Crawford’s reading pays more attention to the context behind the poem. As Crawford notes, the poem drew on “worries about a wasted life, which his father’s death intensified,” while “it was fed, too, by failure to fight in the war; by a sense of utter exhaustion; by trepidation about how the peace might turn out; by ongoing anxieties about sex, religion and death” (*Young*, 314). In this thesis, I am fully aware of the complexity of the sub-text of this poem, and I would like to associate “Gerontion” primarily with its historical context, exploring the ways in which the poem implies Eliot’s observation of the post-war Europe, particularly the Peace Conference and the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922, and his reflection on the ironic nature of the Peace Conference in Paris.

¹ It is dated “July 1919” in the manuscript copy made by Nancy Cunard. However, Gordon argues that “Gerontion” was written between May and June 1919 (*Imperfect*, 165). See *PI* 467 and Sharpe 61.

Some previous studies have explored the relationship between “Gerontion” and its specific history. Edward Brunner, for instance, argues that the poem hybridises the memory and the present, and “steps directly into the postwar moment” (146). After the War, “the enormous loss of life and squandering of resources had been accompanied by a weakening or disappearance of many assumptions about the values of ‘civilisation’” (Sharpe 78).² As Leonard Woolf pointed out, the War had “destroyed [...] the bases of European Civilization” (48), while the years between the wars finished it off. As the speaker of this poem, Gerontion’s monologue sounds like a desiccated voice of both post-war Europe and a declining civilisation, suggesting its connection with the particular historical context in the post-war Europe. As Spender argues, “Gerontion” is “an objective poem,” which is “written in the belief that the decline of civilization is real, that history is, as it were, now senile” (*Destructive*, 142). Likewise, David Perkins remarks that Gerontion is “less a character than a historical phase of the European mind” (*From*, 498). In February 1944, Eliot denied that he was “thinking about declining civilisation” when he was writing the poem, although he conceded that “Gerontion” does expressed “a mood, its variations and associated or evoked memories” (*PI* 468). But nonetheless, the reflection on a declining civilisation was still made present in the poem, as it had already been absorbed into the specific history on which the poem was composited. In this sense, I do not think that the understanding of “Gerontion” can be separated from its historical context. On the other hand, the consideration of a piece of poetic work as both “an art” and “a social

² Around fourteen million people died as a result of the First World War. See Gilbert xv.

document” was an idea held by Eliot in the late 1910s and the early 1920s. In 1920, Eliot wrote that poetry is “primarily an art, [...] a means of communicating those direct feelings peculiar to art,” but at the same time it is also “a social document” (CP2 205). Thus, I think that, in order to understand “Gerontion,” to associate it with its historical background becomes allowable, and even indispensable.

First of all, the poem suggests Eliot’s contemplation upon the past War. In the opening passage of “Gerontion,” the speaker says,

Here I am, an old man in a dry month,
Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain.
I was neither at the hot gates
Nor fought in the warm rain
Nor knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving a cutlass,
Bitten by flies, fought. (CPP 37)

He confesses that he did not engage in “the martial or creative activities of his contemporaries,” while he “is so lost in the contemplation of the futility of history and the worthlessness of action that he remains immobile and alone” (Ackroyd 93). As has been mentioned in the previous chapter, Eliot was a non-combatant in the War, although he wished to enlist himself in 1918. In this sense, the speaker’s implied identity as a non-combatant reminds readers of that of Eliot’s, while tempts them to speculate that the old man’s words are Eliot’s own confession. In this passage, a series of images – “the hot gates,” “the warm rain,” “the salt marsh,” the “cutlass,” and “flies” – could all be interpreted as descriptions of the battlefield. When it comes to the image of “the hot gates,” it has often been interpreted as the battle at Thermopylae, which was led by the Roman general Gerontius. Gerontius’s army failed to mount a

proper defence against the Goths at Thermopylae (“hot gates”), which was the same battlefield where Gerontion did not fight. Then, the speaker also acknowledges that he did not fight “in the warm rain” or “in the salt marsh,” either. Contextualised in its specific history, those two images allude to speaker’s imagination of two past wars. With regard to the image of “the warm rain,” its warmth indicates that it might be different from the normal “rain” due to the difference between their temperatures, and it is evocative of the flying bullets, which fell to the ground in the same way as the rain drops does. When it is juxtaposed with the image of “the salt marsh,” the poem again offers its imagination of the front, because the marshy landscape alludes to the muddy Western Front in the First World War.

Moreover, Eliot suggests another connection between “Gerontion” and the theme of the Great War in a later passage through the images of the “cunning passages” and “contrived corridors” (*CPP* 38). Those two images have often been understood as symbols of the notorious trenches in World War One, when this passage is contextualised in its history. For a large number of the First World War soldiers, trenches might be an important part of their war memories. As Siegfried Sassoon recalled, “[w]hen all is said and done, the war was mainly a matter of holes and ditches” (444). On the 90 miles of British front, there were over 25000 miles of trenches, in which 7000 men were killed or wounded daily. As Paul Fussell observes, “most of the time [the soldiers] were not questioning,” but “sitting or lying or squatting in place below the level of the ground” (51). For those soldiers, the trenches appear as a labyrinth with two muddy walls on each side of them. As has been pointed

out by Eric Leed (75-80), the image of the labyrinth was a common metaphor for the wartime trench system, and that metaphor recurred in the writings by combatants on both sides of No Man's Land. In late 1916, the trenches started to be engraved on the imagination of the metropolis in wartime London, and, "[g]radually, in the third and fourth years of the war, the new trench reality began to establish a public presence" (Hynes 189).³ Perhaps, Eliot heard of the war-time dugouts, as they had already been described in one of his earlier poems, "In silent corridor of death."⁴ According to Crawford (Young, 277), Eliot had been a reader of war poems for several years. In Pound's 1915 *Catholic Anthology* his work had appeared alongside pieces including T. E. Hulme's "Trenches: St Eloi" with an ending containing an image of trench warfare – the smell "Of the alleys of death/ Of the corridors of death" (qtd. in Crawford, Young 277).⁵ Similarly, Bernard Bergonzi (qtd. in *PI* 478) suggests that the image of the "contrived corridors" alludes to a strip of land taken from Germany by the Versailles Treaty, which was mentioned in "The Polish Corridor along the Vistula to the sea," published in *The Times* on 21 March 1919. Besides, in associating the poem

³ See also Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* 36-51.

⁴ See *PI* 275-6.

⁵ Hulme served as an artillery officer in the First World War, and was killed in action in September 1917. See Sencourt 64. His influence on Eliot remained deep, leading the younger man to consider more highly the qualities of reason, order and authority. Allen Austin (94), Schuchard ("Eliot", 1083-94), Douglas Mao (14-6), and Rebecca Beasley's *Theorists of Modernist Poetry: T. S. Eliot, T. E. Hulme, Ezra Pound* have explored the ways in which that Eliot's social ideas were influenced by Hulme, who argued for the necessity of order and discipline for man based upon the idea of original sin. On October 6 1930, Eliot told Emily Hale that Hulme's *Speculations* was "a kind of symbol of the whole of the first phase of modern poetry in England: say from about 1909," and "Hulme was an extraordinary man, who has had a great *stimulating* influence on many of us (his views on Humanism and Original Sin are the starting point for Herbert Read and myself, and Ivor Richards and Ramon Fernandez know his work etc.)" (*L6* 780).

with the theme of war, the speaker ponders over the nature of war in the poem. For him, the “whispering ambitions” (*CPP* 38) of History is ironically accompanied with vanities, and it is caused by our false heroism.

[...] Unnatural vices
Are fathered by our heroism. Virtues
Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes. (*CPP* 38)

The influence of “our heroism” is so ironic that it fathers “[u]nnatural vices,” while the virtues are ironically caused by “our impudent crimes.” In this passage, the speaker satirises the nature of war, in which all the virtues are in essence “impudent crimes.”

Apart from its reflection of the past War, the poem also shows an awareness of what was happening at the time. After his recollection of the past battles, the speaker turns his focus from the past to the present.

My house is a decayed house,
And the Jew squats on the window sill, the owner,
Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp,
Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London. (*CPP* 37)

The speaker’s house is “a decayed house,” whose owner is a Jew, who “squats on the window sill.” According to Paul Connerton (73), squatting is a political posture, since power and rank are commonly expressed through certain postures relative to others; from the way in which people group themselves and from the disposition of their bodies relative to the bodies of others, we can deduce the degree of authority which they are thought to enjoy or to which they lay claim. In this sense, the image of the

squatting Jew is evocative of his connection with the decadence of his house. Moreover, by associating the Jew with three European cities – Antwerp, Brussels, and London – the speaker seems to suggest that the decadence has already been prevailing in contemporary Western Europe, where

Signs are taken for wonders. ‘We would see a sign!’
The word within a word, unable to speak a word,
Swaddled with darkness. In the juvencence of the year
Came Christ the tiger (*CPP* 37)

This passage alludes to Matthew 12: 38-9 – “Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there will be no sign given.”⁶ In this sense, the promise that “[w]e would see a sign” satirically suggests that the sign will not be shown, since the generation had become “evil and adulterous.”

Thirdly, Eliot reflects the post-war Peace Conference in Paris in “Gerontion.” The first instance of such implication is in the third passage of the poem, in which the speaker falls into the memory of a “depraved May” (*CPP* 37).

In depraved May, dogwood and chestnut, flowering judas,
To be eaten, to be divided, to be drunk
Among whispers; by Mr. Silvero
With caressing hands, at Limoges
Who walked all night in the next room;
By Hakagawa, bowing among the Titians;
By Madame de Tornquist, in the dark room
Shifting the candles; Fr älein von Kulp
Who turned in the hall, one hand on the door.
Vacant shuttles
Weave the wind. (*CPP* 37-8)

⁶ This passage also alludes to a sermon of Lancelot Andrewes in 1618.

This passage depicts a cosmopolitan scene in “depraved May,” but I suggest that this passage implies the severe punishment imposed on Germany at the Paris Peace Conference. According to Margaret MacMillan (463), the German delegation was summoned to the Trianon Palace Hotel in early May 1919. They were presented with the draft of the Treaty of Versailles, in which the interest of Germany was greatly exploited. The Treaty stripped Germany of 25,000 square miles of territory and a population of around seven million, while German’s overseas possessions were reduced to the “mandates,” which were chiefly under control of Britain and France. A huge number of reparations were imposed on Germany as well. As the First Lord of Admiralty Eric Geddes summed up, the victorious allies “squeezed the German lemon until the pips squeak” (qtd. in Henig 2). According to Eric Hobsbawm, “every party in Germany, from the Communists on the extreme left to Hitler’s National Socialists on the extreme right, concurred in condemning the Versailles Treaty as unjust and unacceptable” (36). At the same time, many critics in the Allied camp, as Carole Fink points out, also “condemned the peacemakers for economic ineptitude, ubiquitous violations of self-determination, and vindictive treaty articles that impeded reconciliation between victors and vanquished” (288). John Maynard Keynes, for example, charged the Allies in *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919) with the imposition of punitive war reparations that impaired “the delicate, complicated organisation, already shaken and broken by war, through which alone European people can employ themselves and live” (1-2). Eliot introduced Keynes’s *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* to his mother in 1919, and perhaps shared

Keynes's criticism against the Allies' punitive punishment on Germany, as he "realise[d] how terrible the condition of central Europe is" (*LI* 428) when he was "occupied [...] with the application of some of the minor financial clauses of that treaty" (*L6* 177). In this sense, I speculate that Germany was like the "dogwood and chestnut, flowering judas," which were "eaten," "divided," and "drunk" by the Allies, who were whispering about how to maximize their benefit from Germany and other defeated countries. I also speculate that those whispers, including Mr. Silvero, Hakagawa, Madame de Tornquist, and Fräulein von Kulp, allude to the delegates of the Allies: it is clear that Mr. Silvero, Madame de Tornquist, and Fräulein von Kulp are European names, while Hakagawa is a Japanese name, the only Japanese name ever written in Eliot's poetry. In this sense, the name Hakagawa is foregrounded. Considering the poem was written in the summer of 1919, the foregrounded Japanese name is evocative of the Japanese delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, headed by Marquess Saionji Kinmochi. In the poem, Hakagawa was "bowing among the Titians," which suggests his visit to Europe. However, it is ironic that one of the primary purposes of Japanese delegation in Paris was to rob Germany of its overseas colonies, particularly those in China, instead of enjoying the European artist masterpieces at Versailles.

At the conference, the disorientating reversal of victory and the transformation of peace into something both sordid and uncanny were suggested by the speaker's murmur at the beginning of the following passage: "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?" (*CPP* 38) It is clear that, after the speaker draws his attention back from

his memory, he feels that “such knowledge” is unforgivable. Again, Eliot implies that his disappointment was related to the Paris Peace Conference, in which Eliot noticed the “cunning passages” and “issues” in “History.” As has been mentioned above, the image of “cunning passages” could be a reference to the trench system on the Western Front in the First World War. However, apart from its meaning of a spatial passageway, it also has the meaning of a textual work, which is obliquely evocative of the signing of the Treaty, reminding readers of the substance of the Treaty, and meditating on history’s deceptions and the ironic nature of the Peace.

The other instance which suggests this poem’s connection with the Peace Conference can be found in the passage below.

These with a thousand small deliberations
Protract the profit of their chilled delirium,
Excite the membrane, when the sense has cooled,
With pungent sauces, multiply variety
In a wilderness of mirrors. (*CPP* 38)

In this passage, there is a specific literary echo of Ben Jonson’s *Sir Epicure Mammon*. However, it could also be argued that the image of “a wilderness of mirrors” suggests the Hall of Mirror, *Galerie des Glaces*, where the representatives of the formal signing of the Treaty took place. On June 28 1919, the Treaty was formally signed in the Hall of Mirror, and the connection between “a wilderness of mirrors” and the Hall of Mirror has been implied by many previous studies. Hugh Kenner (133), for example, argues that the “wilderness of mirrors” represents the Hall of Mirrors, where the representatives of the formal signing of the Treaty took place. Likewise, Sherry

also tries to contextualise this passage in its historical context. Sherry considers the “wilderness of mirrors”, as well as the descriptions of history’s “cunning passages” and “contrived corridors” as the room where “history repeats in receding series” and to a treaty and ceremony that was “an insidious trick of perspective” (*Great*, 3).⁷ This passage starts from “a thousand small deliberations” and ends up in “a wilderness of mirrors,” both of which are evocative of the innumerable political and territorial issues debated at tedious length by scores of diplomats in the Peace Conference. In the Hall of Mirror, the peacemakers’ conducts are like “the operations” (*CPP* 38) of the spider in the poem, which kills its prey after exhausting them. At the same time, they are also like “the operations” of the weevil, which destroys crops and causes famine. While the Peace Conference was in progress, there was a blockade against Germany and its allies. The blockade was carried out after the Armistice, which later caused a disastrous famine in Germany and its allies. It is clear that Eliot was struck during the aftermath of the war by the “destitution” and “starvation in Vienna” amid “the ‘Balkanisation’ of Europe” (*LI* 425). However, the cold-blood “spider” does not seem to care about their starvation, since they only focus on exploiting as much as the interest from their prey. Hence, the speaker’s question is not a question, but a denunciation. At the same time, the cruelty of the spider also gives a reference to the inhumane nature of the peace conference.

The speaker is arguably aware that the natures of both the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty are “Trades” (*CPP* 39).

⁷ See also Paulin 15 and Stan Smith 103-4.

Gull against the wind, in the windy straits
Of Belle Isle, or running on the Horn,
White feathers in the snow, the Gulf claims,
And an old man driven by the Trades
To a sleepy corner. (*CPP* 39)

Although it is a “peace” conference, it is full of sordid trade of interest. The victors occupied and divided the territory of the defeated, and this is suggested by the image of “Belle Isle.” According to Ricks and McCue (*PI* 484), Eliot pointed out later that “Belle Isle” is an island off the coast of Labrador, north of Newfoundland which partly encloses the Gulf of St. Lawrence. As Crawford points out, when Eliot circulated his work among his literary friends, he “was uncertain [...] whether or not to mention ‘the windy straits/ Of Belle Isle’ – a nod towards those waters off the north-eastern United States where he had once sailed” (*Young*, 315). By keeping those lines, the poem’s “sense of exhaustion extends spectacularly from the deflected, masked and displaced personal origins of its immigrant author to the whole course of ‘History,” though “its awareness of ‘reconsidered passion’ is not directly autobiographical” (Crawford, *Young* 315). On the other hand, Belle Isle is also an island off the coast of Quiberon peninsula. Following its capture by an expedition sent out from England, the island was held by British troops from 1761 to 1763. Later, it was returned to France in exchange for Minorca as part of the Peace of Paris. Perhaps, the speaker has recognised the nature of the Peace Conference, so he says that “an old man” is “driven by the Trades/ To a sleepy corner” (*CPP* 39), in which the “Trades” are evocative of not only the winds, but also the trades between the victors at the Peace Conference. Therefore, “Gerontion” is an ironic text, which

echoes Eliot's attitude towards the post-war Peace Conference and the signing of Treaty of Versailles. As has been suggested, Eliot considered the post-war peace as a "bad peace," and, for Eliot, it is like what Douglas Muecke calls "irony of events" (102). "It is ironic," according to Muecke, "when we meet what we set out to avoid, especially when the means we take to avoid something turn out to be the very means of bringing about what we sought to avoid" (28).⁸ When a Peace Conference focuses on the "trades" of interest and fails to reach an effective treaty to maintain the order in Europe, it becomes an ironic event, which has been registered in Eliot's "Gerontion."

Furthermore, by taking Eliot's biographical account and its contemporary context into consideration, I argue that "Gerontion" suggests Eliot's interest in the military conflict between Greece and Turkey in May 1919, which is a result of both the long-existing territorial dispute between the two countries and the Paris Peace Conference. Some previous studies have pointed out a connection between the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922 and Eliot's poetry.⁹ However, most of them focused on *The Waste Land*, and overlooked the connection between "Gerontion" and the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922. On the one hand, the military conflict between Greece and Turkey is contemporaneous with the time when "Gerontion" was completed. The Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922, a war between Greece and the Turkish National Movement during the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire after World War I between May 1919 and October 1922, started with Greece's attack on

⁸ Irony is one of Eliot's University of London extension lectures topics – his lectures on George Meredith and Thomas Hardy – between 1916 and 1917.

⁹ See Roessel 171-6.

Smyrna. On 15 May, the Greek forces occupied Smyrna, and nearly two months later Eliot completed “Gerontion.”¹⁰ It is evident that Eliot knew the military conflict between Greece and Turkey due to his work at Lloyds Bank. On 8 January 1923, he mentioned “the Turkish question” in a letter to the Editor of *The Daily Mail*.¹¹ Nine months later, Eliot recalled that

[b]esides retaining what work there is left in connection with Enemy Debts under the Peace Treaties, I have to make myself a sort of authority on everything that goes on of financial and commercial interest in France, Belgium, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Roumania, and North and South America.
(L2 255)

In June 1933, he made plain in an address at Milton College that he “had to translate annual reports and balance sheets of Greek shipping companies” (CP4 820) when he was working at Lloyds Bank. As has been pointed out by many previous studies, Eliot suggests his knowledge of the Greek shipping companies and the military action in Smyrna in *The Waste Land*.

Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants
C. i. f London: documents at sight (CPP 68)

¹⁰ For records regarding Greek military movements in Smyrna, see Petsalis-Diomidis 208-9.

¹¹ After the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922, the Lausanne Peace Conference aimed to establish a new treaty between the Allies and Turkey to replace the Treaty of Sèvres. See CP2 430; In *T. S. Eliot and the Politics of Voice* (1987), Cooper (31) notes that *Daily Mail* was Eliot’s favourite newspaper. For Eliot, he expressed “cordial approval of” *Daily Mail*’s “attitude on nearly every public question of present importance” (CP2 430), such as Fascismo, the Ilford Murder, and the Turkey question.

The “Smyrna question,” according to Grover Smith, was “already of topical interest when *The Waste Land* was written” (*T. S. Eliot’s*, 87), and the prototype of Eugenides is “a real person whom Eliot had encountered in the course of his duties at Lloyds Bank” (Day 288). Besides, according to A. V. C. Schmidt, Eliot once told him that the Smyrna merchant he encountered in his Lloyds Bank days was in fact unshaven and “really had a pocketful of currants” (qtd. in *PI* 657). Considering Eliot’s work at Lloyds, the meeting between Mr. Eugenides and the client may have been occasioned by Eliot’s knowledge of how the Treaties bore on the Smyrna question. According to Valerie Eliot (*FTOD* 127), Eliot’s original plan was to use “Gerontion” as a preface to *The Waste Land*, but later he was convinced by Pound, and decided to keep it as an independent poem. In this sense, it is possible that the allusion to the crisis of Smyrna in *The Waste Land* can also be found in “Gerontion.”

On the other hand, it could be suggested that the images of Greece and Turkey both appear in the poem: the former is evoked by the title, while the latter is hid furtively in the final stanza. In his poems, Eliot often uses words, quotations, and images that have origins in Greek literature, history, myth and culture, but “Gerontion” apparently has a closer connection with the theme of Greece than the other poems do. This connection could be seen from the very beginning of the poem. In “Gerontion,” Eliot chose “Gerontion,” a word whose etymology is Greek, as the title, and his decision immediately drew close the connection between the two. It is true that, in the 1910s, Eliot often entitled his poems in foreign languages, such as “La figlia che piange,” “Le Directeur,” “Mélange Adultère de Tout,” “Lune de Miel,” and “Dans le

Restaurant.” But “Gerontion” is the only poem with a title in Greek in Eliot’s oeuvre. Besides, its Greek origin is also suggested in its unadopted title, “Gerousia,” which means the council of elders at Sparta.¹² Sherry is correct in seeing that the title to this poem conveys “a further dimension of interest” (Sherry, *Great* 177), and I suggest that the title of “Gerontion” alludes to its association with Greece in the aftermath of the War. When it comes to Turkey, the other belligerent, it is suggested in the final stanza of this poem, in which the poet juxtaposes the image of “the shuddering Bear” and the image of “the Horn” (*CPP* 39). The former alludes to the constellation of the Great Bear, while the latter implies the ends of a crescent moon, although it has usually been interpreted as the Cape Horn. When a group of stars and a crescent moon are juxtaposed in the poem, they are evocative of the national flag of Turkey.¹³ When the allusion to the Turkish national flag and the theme of Greece are juxtaposed, “Gerontion” could be read as a poem that shows awareness of the contemporary military conflicts between Greece and Turkey in 1919.

Apart from “Gerontion,” Eliot’s reflection on the post-war peace conference in Paris is also suggested in his other contemporary writings. In retrospect, Eliot, as an American national, clearly paid much attention to the role that America played at the Conference. Hence, in this section, I will specifically explore the images of

¹² The council was composed of the two kings and twenty-eight other members over 60 years age, elected for life. As a judicial body they hear cases involving death, exile, or disenfranchisement and could even put the kings on trial. See *PI* 469.

¹³ The design of the national flag of Turkey in 1910s is the same as the current design of the Turkish flag, which was adopted by Ottoman Empire in 1844. Besides, this study is fully aware that Turkey is not the only country whose national flag has the picture of a star and a crescent.

Europe-based American in Eliot's "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar," "Lune de Miel," and the unfinished *Sweeney Agonistes*, and imply that their odd experiences in Europe could be understood as an implicit representation of both America's invention in the First World War and President Woodrow Wilson's unsuccessful post-war peace negotiation in Paris. "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar" was first published in *Art and Letters* in the summer of 1919, and the Jamesian verse was considered by Eliot as one of "the best" (LI 441) that he had written by 1920. The poem's connection with the theme of America is mainly suggested by the link between the two male characters' prototypes and America. Some previous studies have explored Burbank's prototype. Crawford (*Savage*, 65), for example, considers that Burbank's prototype might be American horticulturalist Luther Burbank, who was famous for his contribution to cross-breeding. It should be noted that Luther Burbank's ideas "did not stop at plant life in the conventional sense but went on to deal with 'improving the human plant'" (Crawford, *Savage* 66), as the theme of human hybridity is suggested in this poem through Bleistein's mixed identity, a "Chicago Semite Viennese" (CPP 40). Drawing upon Crawford's interpretation on Burbank's identity as an American, I would like to give more attention to the consideration of the symbolic meaning of the image of "*Baedeker*." As an important belonging, the image of *Baedeker* suggests that Burbank was likely to be a foreign traveller, who took his travel guidebook and "crossed a little bridge/ Descending at a small hotel," where he met "Princess Volupine" (CPP 41). His experiences arguably could be understood as a recollection of the wartime battlefield. On 18 June 1919, *The*

Times published a letter of H. Brussels, entitled “On the Belgian Front,” in which Brussels reported that

“[i]t is curious to see at various places on the battle field a woman standing at the door of the humble shanties, labelled ‘Estaminet’ or ‘Bier,’ which represent the only form of rebuilding which has been attempted hitherto” (8).

As a description of the Western Front, this passage implicitly suggests a common phenomenon that the war has assaulted moral standards increasing the problem of prostitution. According to Eksteins, “brothels were soon regular appurtenances of base camps and of larger towns serving as rest quarters” (224) on the Western Front during the War. As possibly an American traveller who lodged in a battlefield hotel, the image of Burbank is evocative of the intervention of the United States in Europe. However, both his “[d]escending” and his fallen body suggest that he might be stuck in trouble, which is explicitly shown in the second stanza.

Defunctive music under sea
Passed seaward with the passing bell
Slowly: the God Hercules
Had left him, that had loved him well. (*CPP* 40)

The “music under sea” returns readers to the memory of the underwater scene in “Mr. Apollinax,” and the departure of Hercules, who had “loved him well,” seems to predict Burbank’s ominous future.

It could also be suggested that Burbank’s experiences allude to both America’s military movements in the First World War and its unsuccessful post-war diplomatic

negotiation. On 11 April 1917, the United States government, which was under the leadership of Woodrow Wilson's Democratic government, declared war on Germany, and sent its troops to the Western Front in the summer of 1917. In early 1918, Wilson issued his principles for peace, the Fourteen Points. In 1919, following armistice, he travelled to Paris to promote the formation of a League of Nations, and conclude the Treaty of Versailles. However, several of his Fourteen Points conflicted with the interests of the other powers, mainly French and British delegations. During the negotiations that led to the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, President Wilson was manipulated by the British Prime Minister Lloyd George and the French premier Georges Clemenceau into abandoning the idealistic principles which were to govern discussions about the political shape of Europe after the First World War. Instead, the Treaty of Versailles enabled Britain to achieve large territorial gains, while it helped France to realize its goal of imposing punitive reparations on Germany. It is clear that Eliot "focused more intently on American relations with Europe" (Crawford, *Young* 290) in 1918, and was supportive of Wilson's wartime foreign policies at the time, despite Wilson's Democratic background.¹⁴ When the United States just declared war on Germany, Eliot told his mother that he was

sure that it was the right thing, and had been expecting it for some little time. [...] I am pleased for several reasons, but chiefly because I think the war was so momentous as it was, that winding it up as a world war will be

¹⁴ Eliot's discussed Wilson's wartime foreign policies in "President Wilson: An unsigned review of *President Wilson, His Problems and His Policy: An English View*." See *CPI* 533-6.

the best chance now for a satisfactory conclusion. I wish that our country might have a chance to refresh its memory as to what war really is like, – now that it is such a very vivid thing to Europe. (*LI* 192-3)

For Eliot, America's entry into the Great War was a messianic event, since he believed that it would offer both a hope to draw an end to the war and "security for the continuance and development of Anglo-American harmony" (*CPI* 773). On 9 November 1918, *The Nation* published a letter written by Eliot, in which he called "attention to the conflict actually taking place between President Wilson and his domestic opponents," since it bore "not only on the coming peace conference, but on future Anglo-American relations" (*CPI* 772).¹⁵ In late 1918, he and Vivienne participated in the parade to welcome Wilson in London.¹⁶ However, Eliot's "approval of Wilson's motives and judgment did not survive the period of peacemaking" (A. Smith 84). In Eliot's Letter to his mother on 2 October 1919, Eliot believed that "Wilson made a grave mistake in coming to Europe" (*LI* 405), and complained in "London Letter, March 1921" that he could not believe that Vachel Lindsay was "treated with more respect than that with which Clemenceau and Lloyd George bonified President Wilson" (*CP2* 334). In this sense, it could be suggested that Eliot's dismay at peace-making was registered in "Burbank," in which the American, Burbank, "fell" (*CPP* 40) in Europe, though the action of falling also has a biblical

¹⁵ Henry Cabot Lodge, Republican senator since 1893 and at this time chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, successfully opposed President Wilson's attempt to make the United States a member of the League of Nations, arguing that it would threaten the country's political freedom.

¹⁶ Eliot (*LI* 311) wrote his mother a letter on 29 December 1918, describing the spectacular when Wilson arrived at the Buckingham Palace.

implication that it is a fall from state of innocence.

In the third stanza, the image of Istria consolidates this poem's connection with its contemporary context, since Istria, a coastal town of Austrian Empire, was given to Italy after the dissolution of Austria-Hungary.¹⁷ In September 1919, Eliot called into question the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference. For him, the Conference, as well as the ensuing Treaty, drew up several new European national boundaries, and marked

a bad peace, in which the major European powers tried to get as much as they could, and appease and ingratiate as far as possible the various puppet nationalities which they have constituted and will try to dominate. (*LI* 404-5)

It is clear that Eliot criticised the new European national boundaries created by the Treaty of Versailles. His criticism, I argue, was sustained in "Burbank," in which the speaker suggests his interest in the Baltic politics. In December 1923, Eliot published "Marianne Moore" in *The Dial*, in which Eliot pointed out that "a real aristocracy is essentially of the same blood as the people over whom it rules: a real aristocracy is not a Baltenland aristocracy of foreign race" (*CP2* 495).¹⁸ It is possible that Eliot's knowledge of the Baltenland comes from his work as a banker, since he "followed and occasionally reported on the currency movements of these countries in his

¹⁷ The Italian armies took over key points in Istria in November 1918. See Lederer 56.

¹⁸ Before the War, the "German Balts," had enjoyed an elite, landowning aristocracy in Latvia, a Baltic province of Russia. When Latvia (along with Estonia and Lithuania) broke away from Russia to become an independent state in 1917, and when Germany lost the war in November 1918, the agrarian, economic, and political status of the minority German Balts rapidly diminished. See *CP2* 499.

monthly 'Foreign Exchanges' column for the *Lloyds Bank Monthly*" (CP2 499). Perhaps, Eliot had already formed the idea in the late 1910s that the artificial creation of new nations would not help Europe retrieve the order. In January 1924, Eliot made this point very clear when he deplored "the outburst of artificial nationalities [...] all over the world", while arguing that "a genuine nationality depends upon the existence of a genuine literature, and you cannot have a nationality worth speaking of unless you have a national literature" (CP2 500).¹⁹

In the poem, Eliot's criticism of the Treaty is also infused into the description of another important figure, Bleistein, who is the protagonist from the fourth stanza to the seventh stanza. According to Ricks and McCue (PI 487), Bleistein is evocative of Bleistein and Company, a fur skin company in London, because the founder of this company, Mr. S. Bleistein, like "Bleistein with a Cigar," was famous for his smoking of Coronas, while the image of "[m]oneys in furs" (CPP 41) alludes to Mr. Bleistein's fur and skin business. In the poem, Bleistein is depicted as a "Chicago Semite Viennese" (CPP 40), alluding to the increase of the eastern European Jewish immigrants in America in the early twentieth century. According to the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*,

[f]rom the 1880s to the 1920s the Jewish population grew from 10000 to 225000, or from 2 percent to 8 percent of the general population. In 1900 about 65 percent of Chicago's Jews were of East European origin; in 1920

¹⁹ Eliot (L2 251-2) made that statement in an earlier letter to Ford on 11 October 1923.

about 80 per cent. (qtd. in *PI* 493)

Noticeably, Eliot did not think highly of the increasing Jewish immigrants in America, although he himself was an immigrant in London in a way. On 25 July 1930, Eliot told Clive Bell that

[y]our son is a sturdy sprout and I have read his verse with warm approval.

He seems to be almost the only one at Cambridge who has escaped the

Chicago Semite taint and who is uncontaminated by either Joyce, Lewis,

Pound, L'éger or myself. (*L5* 271-2)

David Spurr (273-7) observes that Jews are often used by Eliot as an opposite of natives: the former is a redemptive set of primitive and cultural values, while the latter alludes to diasporic and literary values. Sigg associates this attitude with Eliot's intellectual background, and suggests that "Eliot hostility toward urban immigrants is only one of a cluster of Mugwump responses typical of the educated Yankee classes" (147-8). However, Michael Tratner believes that "Eliot's fear of a swelling tide of mixed immigration also derived from his sense that when he searched for common American culture in immigrant neighborhoods, he found himself facing an alien world" (99).²⁰ Perhaps, Eliot was self-conscious when he was writing "Burbank," and the image of the Jewish Bleistein, which appears in in Eliot's other verses as well, such as the unpublished "Dirge," in which Bleistein "lies/ Under the flatfish and the squids"

²⁰ Tratner (99) takes "Preludes" as an example. The poem was written about Eliot's visits to North Cambridge and Roxbury, Italian and Jewish communities.

(*FTOD* 121), is often argued by many scholars as an instance of the contemporary anti-Semitism. A number of scholars argue that “Burbank,” as well as Eliot’s other verses, suggests his anti-Semitism.²¹ In this thesis, I have no intention to defend Eliot from the accusation of anti-Semitism, but I agree with Spender’s assertion that “I respect Eliot for not having tried to edit out of his early poems views which he himself later came to regard as reprehensible” (*T. S. Eliot*, 60). As a Chicago Semite Viennese, Bleistein has “[a] saggy bending of the knees/ And elbows, with the palms turned out,” and “[a] lustreless protrusive eye/ Stares from the protozoic slime/ At a perspective of Canaletto” (*CPP* 40). Bleistein’s body is grotesque, and it is even decomposed in “Dirge,” in which “Bleistein lies/ Under the flatfish and the squids” with his “lids” eaten by “the crabs” (*PI* 285). Besides, the juxtaposition between his grotesque body and Canaletto suggests that the classic European tradition has been infiltrated by the Jews, who have often been considered as a group of people “outside the tradition” (Asher, *Ideology* 41).²² As a consequence, the classical tradition “[d]eclines” (*CPP* 41), while the contemporary Europe has been symbolically

²¹ See Julius 97-110 and the second chapter of Ricks’s *T. S. Eliot and Prejudice*, 25-76. In January 2003, *Modernism/Modernity* published a series of articles regarding Eliot and anti-Semitism, including Schuchard’s “Burbank with a Baedeker, Eliot with a Cigar: American Intellectuals, Anti-Semitism, and the Idea of Culture,” six responses, and Schuchard’s ensuing reply. See Schuchard, et al., “Burbank with a Baedeker, Eliot with a Cigar: American Intellectuals, Anti-Semitism, and the Idea of Culture / A Response to Ronald Schuchard / My Reply: Eliot and the Foregone Conclusions” 1-70.

²² The motif of Jewish infiltration has been suggested in the Bolo verses, in which the Jewish doctor Benny poisons Columbo’s body with “Muriatic Acid” (*P2* 271). According to Jonathan Harris, Jews “were regarded as a poison in the body politic” (86) in the early modern Western Europe. He listed an example of Dr. Lopez, who had been accused of being conspired to poison the Queen on January 29, 1594. Afterwards, “a number of potent, phobic stereotypes about Jews were invoked in condemning Lopez, nearly all of which relate to his alleged method for attempting to dispatch the Queen – poisoning,” and “Jewish infiltration of the Christian body politic had been repeatedly coded in pathological terms on the continent and England since the medieval period” (Harris 82).

miniaturised in Rialto, which was the commercial centre of Venice in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*.²³

Besides, the decayed Europe in the text seems to suggest its relation to the contemporary downfall of the post-war Europe through Bleistein's body, since Bleistein's protrusive eyes suggest the speaker's eagerness to establish a connection between the text and the world. According to Mikhail Bakhtin, "protruding eyes" in literary works might imply an action of "looking for that which protrudes from the body, all that seeks to the shoots and branches, to all that prolongs the body and links it to other bodies or the world outside" (316-7). In this sense, the speaker turns his attention to the historical context in the seventh stanza, in which Princess Volupine "entertains Sir Ferdinand/ Klein" (CPP 41). When the image of Sir Ferdinand Klein is juxtaposed with "lights, lights" (CPP 41), an image which has often been associated with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, they allude to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, and the gun sparks in the assassin's pistol. Gavrilo Princip, the assassin, shot at least twice: he first shot Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg, in the abdomen, and then shot Archduke Franz Ferdinand in the neck, and the two shots are paralleled by the speaker in the repeated "lights" in the seventh stanza. By alluding to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the immediate cause of the First World War, the speaker seems to suggest a cause, among many, that leads to the "Time's ruins" (CPP 41). When contemplating "Time's ruins, and the seven laws," Burbank, the American, questioned himself "[w]ho clipped the lion's wings/ And

²³ See Act 1, Scene III, in which Shylock asks "[w]hat news on the Rialto?"

flea'd his rump and pared his claws" (*CPP* 41), which alludes to both his lament for the loss of classic European tradition and the uncertainty of his "visit" to Europe.

The way in which the image of the American was delineated in "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar" is similar with the description in "Lune de Miel," which was published in *Little Review* July 1917.²⁴ Although their nationalities are not pointed out in the poem, it could be suggested from the opening line – "Ils ont vu les Pays-Bas, ils rentrent à Terre Haute [The honeymooners have seen the Netherlands, and they return to Terre Haute]" (*CCP* 48) – that they are Americans. In this line, Terre Haute could be understood in two ways: it is the name of a city in Indiana, and it is the French word for "high ground."²⁵ This chapter prefers the first interpretation, since second interpretation of Terre Haute is not compatible with the implication of the following lines, in which the honeymooning couple take a rest in Ravenna, which is not far from the ancient Basilica of Sant'Apollinaire in Classe, and Ravenna is not a "high ground" in terms of its height above sea level. Although the title "Lune de Miel" means honeymoon, it is ironic that what the American couples experiences in Europe "are thoroughly divested of any romantic impulses or characteristics" (Raine 42). According to Donoghue, this poem is often "interpreted as a relatively crude satire on the triviality of modern tourism and modern sex" (21). In "Lune de Miel," Eliot's honeymooners are lodging for the night in a bug-ridden hotel in Ravenna before

²⁴ "Lune de Miel" is one of Eliot's French poems, in which the presence of four French writers – Laforgue, Apollinaire, Maupassant, and Flaubert – can be detected.

²⁵ On 5 March 1933, Eliot wrote a letter a letter to Virginia Woolf, in which he said "I have learnt how to pronounce Los Angeles and Albuquerque, but Terre Haute is beyond me" (*L6* 554).

setting off for Padua, Milan, Switzerland, and France.

Mais une nuit d'été, les voici à Ravenne,
A l'aise entre deux draps, chez deux centaines de punaises;
La sueur estivale, et une forte odeur de chienne.
Ils restent sur le dos écartant les genoux
De quatre jambes molles tout gonflées de morsures.
On relève le drap pour mieux égratigner. (CPP 48)

In a summer night, they rest at a place, where is the home to two hundred bugs, and is filled with a strong odour of a female dog. The American newly-weds lie on their backs and stretch out four fleshy legs, which are swollen with bits. Unlike the couples in some of Eliot's late poems, such as "How the Tall Girl and I Play Together," "How the Tall Girl's Breasts Are," "Sleeping Together" and "A Dedication to My Wife," the honeymooners' bodies are unclean and unpleasant, while their interactions in the hotel are lacking in harmony.²⁶ Their bodies, thus, are transformed into an ironic contrast to the purpose of their visit, alluding to the nature of their visit – a "misères" (CPP 48).

In addition, the frustration of American visitors is also sustained in Eliot's unfinished *Sweeney Agonistes*.²⁷ After Eliot completed *The Waste Land*, he "turns away for the first time from poetry as a private medium and consciously attempts to reach a popular audience by drawing on vernacular sources" (Chinitz, *Cultural* 107).²⁸

²⁶ The two "Tall Girl" poems are among the three poems that were discovered in notebooks handwritten for Eliot's second wife, Valerie. Together with another poem "Sleeping Together," they were collected in *Valerie's Own Book*. See *PI* 316-8. "A Dedication to My Wife" describes an ideal union of body, mind, and soul. In 1957, Eliot married Valerie Fletcher, who gave him "the first happiness" he had "ever known" (qtd. in *PI* 1061).

²⁷ This chapter focuses on the final scene in the first part, *Fragment of a Prologue*.

²⁸ Eliot "creates a unique blend of forms, incorporating vaudeville, music hall, melodrama, burlesque, jazz, and minstrelsy" (*Cultural*, 107) in *Sweeney Agonistes*.

He planned to write “another extended work in verse,” which fused “anthropological interpretations of literature” with “jazz-age songs and rhythms” (Crawford, *Young* 403).²⁹ *Sweeney Agonistes* is composed of two fragments, which were published in the *Criterion* in October 1926 and January 1927, respectively.³⁰ It is an inheritance of the previous “Sweeney” poems in terms of both its characters, such as Doris, Mrs. Porter, and Sweeney, and its memory of the War.³¹ In the first fragment, Sam Wauchope, a former lieutenant of “the Canadian Expeditionary Force” (*CPP* 119), comes to visit Doris with his friends, Captain Horsfall, Klipstein, and Krumpacker.³² According to their conversation, all the male characters in the scene, Wauchope, Horsfall, Klipstein, and Krumpacker, “were all in the war together” and “did” their “bit,” getting “the Hun on the run” (*CPP* 119). Among them, Klipstein and Krumpacker are Americans, who are “here [in London] on business” (*CPP* 119). When Doris asks Klipstein whether he likes London, Klipstein answers that “London’s swell”, and they “like London fine” (*CPP* 119). However, his response is considered by Krumpacker as “[p]erfectly slick” (*CPP* 119), which suggests Klipstein’s words might not truly reflect their experiences in London. Then, this suggestion is confirmed

²⁹ It can be suggested from the letters between Eliot and Pound in January 1922 that their discussion on Aristophanes was an inspiration for this work. See *PI* 785. Besides, the image of jazz music suggests Eliot’s life might be a source of this play. In an unpublished memoir, Osbert Sitwell records that the flat below the Eliots’ at 18 Crawford Mansions (where they lived 1916-20), was occupied by two “actresses” who spent their time “playing the piano, singing, or putting some particularly loud record on the gramophone”. This often went to “far into the small hours and without interval”, and at midnight they tended to shout out loudly to “gentleman friends” down on the pavement. See *PI* 799.

³⁰ Sweeney does not physically appear in the first part, Fragment of a Prologue.

³¹ Doris appears in the final stanza of “Sweeney Erect,” while Mrs. Porter is in *The Waste Land*.

³² It could be suggested that Wauchope and Klipstein were names of Eliot’s contemporaries at Smith Academy, and Krumpacker was a name that Eliot collected at Harvard. See *PI* 808.

in the following conversation. After Dusty invites them to “come and live” in London, they repeat saying “London’s a little too gay for” (*CPP* 119) them, and they “couldn’t stand the pace” (*CPP* 120). The truth is that London, for them, is only “a fine place to come on a visit” (*CPP* 120). In this scene, Klipstein and Krumpacker, who are “on business” in London, are evocative of both the United States army in the War and the American delegation at the post-war Peace Conference, and their unsuccessful acclimatisation with the life in London echoes American delegates’ unfavourable mediation in Europe after the First World War.

The Waste Land and Order

As both the culmination of Eliot’s early works and “the justification of” (Pound, *Selected* 180) literary modernism, *The Waste Land* also suggests both Eliot’s recollection of the past Great War and his observation of post-war European politics. After the signing of the Peace Treaty, Eliot’s workload at Lloyds Bank increased dramatically. On 9 May 1921, Eliot complained to John Quinn that he had to deal “alone with all the debts and claims of the bank under the various Peace Treaties” (*LI* 557). Exhausted by his work and troubled by his marriage, Eliot’s health collapsed in the autumn of 1921. Due to the “serious breakdown” (*LI* 592), Eliot was given a three-month paid leave in October 1921. During his leave, he visited Margate and Switzerland, where he completed the draft of *The Waste Land*. The poem was first published in England in the first issue of the *Criterion* in October 1922. Then, it was

published in the November issue of *The Dial* in the United States.³³ After its publication, *The Waste Land* struck many contemporary readers as inscrutable primarily because of its fragmentary form. As Aiken observed in 1923, the poem was “a brilliant and kaleidoscopic confusion,” which includes “a series of sharp, discrete, slightly related perceptions and feelings, dramatically and lyrically presented, and violently juxtaposed (for effect of dissonance)” (Aiken, “Anatomy” 195). It gives “us an impression of an intensely modern, intensely literary consciousness which perceives itself to be not a unit but a chance correlation or conglomerate of mutually discolorative fragments,” while invites readers “into a mind, a world, which is a ‘broken bundle of mirrors,’ a ‘heap of broken images’” (Aiken, “Anatomy” 195).³⁴ It is clear that not all literary critics at the time recognised the aesthetic value of *The Waste Land*. Charles Powell, for example, once considered that the poem was “so much waste paper” to “all but anthropologists and literati” (7). However, many critics still consider the poem’s superficial fragmentariness is in fact pointing at “a unified whole” (Brooks 136), in which all the details contribute to an integrity of structure and theme, expressing Eliot’s “vision of modern life” (qtd. in M. Grant 134).

³³ In November, “The Waste Land” was published in the United States in *The Dial*. On 15 December 1922, Boni and Liveright published *The Waste Land* in book form, in which Eliot inscribed a copy “For Ezra Pound *il miglior fabbro*.” Pound was of great help in the completion of *The Waste Land*, and Eliot paid tribute to Pound’s “editorial genius” in “Ezra Pound,” published in the *New English Weekly* in October 1946. On 12 September 1923, its British edition was finally published by Hogarth Press. According to Eliot, when *The Waste Land* came to print as a book, it “was inconveniently short,” so Eliot “set to work to expand the notes,” which “stimulated the wrong kind of interest among the seekers of sources” (*On*, 109-10).

³⁴ Aiken’s review was first published in *The New Republic* on 7 February 1923, and was reprinted by *The Sewanee Review* in 1966.

Apart from its fragmentary form, *The Waste Land* is famous for its great profundity. Many previous studies, such as Grover Smith's *The Waste Land*, have explored the various sources and subtexts in *The Waste Land*. Among them, the vegetation ceremonies from Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and the Grail Legend from Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* are the most frequently mentioned sources of *The Waste Land*. As Eliot wrote in the "Notes on *The Waste Land*" that "[n]ot only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem were suggested by Miss Jessie L Weston" (CPP 76). Besides, *The Waste Land* also explores the theme of "*Le problème de l'histoire et du mécanisme du temps*" ['The problem of history and the time process'], while "attempts to identify a more complicated subtext: *il s'y mêle au désir du salut cosmique et personnel*" [it is mingled with the desire for cosmic and personal salvation]" (qtd. in Badenhausen, *T. S. Eliot* 181). According to Ronald Bush (*Study*, 56), Eliot began serious work on *The Waste Land* by taking up a fragment he had written several years before,

London, the swarming life you kill and breed,
Huddled between the concrete and the sky;
Responsive to the momentary need,
Vibrates unconscious to its formal destiny, (FTOD 31)

while the poem bore "traces of its prolonged incubation" (Kenner 35) and brought the poet's "world of experience to life" (Stead, *New* 185). As Spender recalled, Eliot once told him that

The Waste Land could not have been written at any moment except when it

was written – a remark which, while biographically true in regard to his own life, is also true of the poem’s time in European history after World War I. The sense that Western civilization was in a state which was the realization of historic doom lasted from 1920 to 1926. (*T. S. Eliot*, 117-8)

Spender’s words clearly show the poem’s connection with the poet’s personal life and its historical context. As regards the former, Eliot acknowledged that *The Waste Land* “was only the relief of a personal and wholly insignificant grouse against life; it is just a piece of rhythmical grumbling” (*FTOD* 1). In 1947, he said again that writing *The Waste Land* was “simply to relieve [his] own feelings” (qtd. in *PI* 574). However, *The Waste Land* is surely more than a collection of Eliot’s personal grief, as it is also “a satire on post-war London” (Gordon, *Imperfect* 147) and a reaction to the downfall of European civilisation in the aftermath of the First World War.³⁵ As Eliot wrote in the “Introduction” to *A Choice of Kipling’s Verse* (1963), it is unrealistic for a poet “to be wholly out of touch with his age” (7) when he or she is writing. Accordingly, we must allow some place in Eliot’s thoughts to take such themes as the chaotic anomie of contemporary post-war Europe into account, although Eliot held no brief for the assertion that *The Waste Land* was a “social criticism” (*FTOD* 1) or an expression of “the disillusionment of a generation” (*SE* 358).³⁶ Thus, I will explore the theme of

³⁵ Although *The Waste Land* is often interpreted in terms of spiritual and cultural dissolution, it is also underpinned by a post-war crisis in the economic system. Michael Levenson argued that “[m]ore than Jessie Weston, more than *The Golden Bough*, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* anticipates the ghostly modality of *The Waste Land*” (“Does”, 3), and that Eliot used Keynes’s work as “a canny instrument” to stitch “the relations of politics, economics and poetry at an uncanny juncture” (“Does”, 3).

³⁶ Eliot suggested that he “may have expressed for them their own illusion of being disillusioned, but

war in *The Waste Land*, suggesting that war is an important context, among many, for the understanding of the poem, and highlight the ways in which Eliot is seeking a multidimensional order in his poems of the early 1920s.

As has been explored by many previous studies, *The Waste Land* is fused with a lingering memory of the past Great War. Childs, for example, speculates that the poem's "(dis)arrangement and fragmentation echo the bewildering experience of the war in that the poem's narration could be that of a shell-shocked soldier" (183), while Chinitz suggests that the gruesome scene of "I think we are in rats' alley/ Where the dead men lost their bones" (*CPP* 65) reminds readers of the "reeks of the trenches and of the "No Man's Land" between them, where rats nightly devoured the corpses of the slain. (Chinitz, "Waste" 326). It is clear that the memory of the past Great War could be spotted at the beginning of the whole poem. As Ricks and McCue (*PI* 601) point out, the title of the first part of *The Waste Land* – "The Burial of the Dead" – alludes to the burial of the unknown fallen Great War warriors in Westminster Abbey on 11 November 1920, which was widely reported by newspapers at the time.³⁷ According to Keath Fraser (7), it is even possible that the title is derived from Eliot's actual visit to a churchyard in Padworth with Richard Aldington in 1921. Besides, the description of "the dead" is also registered in the opening lines of "The Burial of the Dead."

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain. (*CPP* 61)

that did not form part of [his] intention" (*SE* 358).

³⁷ See "Armistice Day, 1920."

This passage alludes to the General Prologue to Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, but the speaker points out that the April in the waste land "is the cruellest month" (CPP 61). In interpreting this passage, Ben Richardson argued that it "is about a return of the repressed and forgotten Russian subaltern" (168). However, Eliot made it clear in April 1934 that his

own retrospective is touched by a sentimental sunset, the memory of a friend coming across the Luxembourg Gardens in the late afternoon, waving a branch of lilac, a friend who was later (so far as I could find out) to be mixed with the mud of Gallipoli. (CI3 452)

Although Eliot did not specify the name of his friend, the description of his friend's death in Gallipoli shows that the unnamed friend is very likely to be Jean Verdenal, who was killed in the Gallipoli Campaign on 2 May 1915. Taking Eliot's later remarks into consideration, the opening passage of "The Burial of the Dead" brings forward an elegiac strain in the poem, while shows the speaker's observation of a dead land, associating the poem with its historical context.

In the rest of this section, the speaker continues his observation.

Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.
And when we were children, staying at the archduke's,
My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,
And I was frightened. He said, Marie,
Marie, hold on tight. And down we went. (CPP 61)

This passage alludes to a note of frustration in the speaker's recollection of Europe in the past.³⁸ On the one hand, this passage alludes to Eliot's visit to Munich in July 1911.³⁹ Prior to his returning to the United States, Eliot took a trip to Munich, where he met Countess Marie Larisch, who has often been considered as the speaker of this section, in which she recalls her childhood and how she used to go sledding in the mountains with her cousin.⁴⁰ On the other hand, it suggests an elegiac lament for the collapsed Austro-Hungarian Empire. According to Chinitz, "[w]hat is visible and consistent in this verse is an end-of-empire feeling, which finds an intense literary witness in Eliot's own lengthened end-of-the-war moment" (*Companion*, 95-6). This feeling is suggested by the recollection of Marie, whose family has a close relationship with the outbreak of the Great War. Countess Marie Larisch's cousin is Archduke Rudolph, who was Archduke of Austria and the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Rudolph committed suicide in 1889, and made his uncle, Archduke Karl Ludwig, become the heir to the throne. However, Archduke Karl Ludwig died in 1896, making his oldest son, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir presumptive. On 28 June 1914, Franz Ferdinand's assassination in Sarajevo led to an immediate confrontation between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, and symbolised the outbreak of the First Great War. Four years later, Austria-Hungary was defeated in the

³⁸ Perhaps, the speaker in the section of Germany is different from that of the opening passage. The poem's original title was "He Do the Police in Different Voices," a quotation from Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*, indicating that *The Waste Land* is polyphonic. In "William Blake," Eliot implicitly marks the limits of the monologue form, and writes that "you cannot create a very large poem without introducing a more impersonal point of view, or splitting it up into various personalities" (*CP2* 190).

³⁹ Both Starnbergersee and Hofgarten are related to Munich, where Eliot visited in 1911.

⁴⁰ The word "Keine," a feminine negative indefinite article, shows that the speaker is a female.

war, and was broken up by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. In January 1924, *The Transatlantic Review* published Eliot's letter, in which he referred to himself as an "old-fashioned Tory" (CP2 500), and claimed that in an age of "a mistaken nationalism and of an equally mistaken and artificial internationalism" he was "all for empires, especially the Austro-Hungarian Empire" (CP2 500).⁴¹ On the one hand, his words signalled his pro-Hapsburg stance, which had been made clear in an earlier letter to Pound – "I [...] am anxious to see the Hapsburgs restored" (L2 214-5). It also echoes Eliot's later declaration that he was "a royalist in politics" (vii) in the preface to *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1928). On the other hand, Eliot's words also questioned the feasibility of the Treaty which drew up several new European national boundaries and created "various puppet nationalities" (LI 404-5). According to Roger Kojecký (53), Eliot had little confidence in the artificial internationalism created by the peace-keeping authority, the League of Nations. This could be suggested in the line in German.

Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch. (CPP 61)

In this line, the female speaker comes from Lithuania, but she is a German instead of a Russian. Her assertion is paradoxical, but the three countries mentioned by her imply the intricate, sometimes paradoxical, post-war politics in Europe. In 1958, Eliot confirmed that "[t]he mention of Lithuania in *The Waste Land* does refer to a lady who was daughter of a Baltic baron of German origin and Russian nationality" (qtd.

⁴¹ See Eliot's letter to Ford on 11 October 1923, in which Eliot passionately called himself "an old-fashioned Tory" (L2 251). However, he explained eight years later in the *Criterion* that his Toryism was not "for parliamentary purposes" (CII 71).

in *PI* 605). Lithuania had been subject to Russia, before it was occupied by German in 1917. The complexity of her identity echoed the chaotic political situation in the post-war Europe and “the escalating European nationalism that paved the way to the hostilities” (Chinitz, “Waste” 326), while the artificial national boundaries did not retrieve the peace in Europe.

In the following stanza, the speaker turns his attention to the “Unreal City” (*CPP* 62).

Unreal City,
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine. (*CPP* 62)

The places in this passage – London Bridge, King William Street, and Saint Mary Woolnoth – are evocative of both Eliot’s experiences in the City, the financial district of London, and the poem’s association with its contemporary context. “Every day,” according to Rainey, “from 9:30 to 5:30, [...] Eliot labored in his office, a tiny cog in the great machine of capital” (*Annotated*, 10), and the City has become one of the localities in this poem.⁴² For Eliot, London is the place where “[a] crowd flowed over

⁴² King William Street is in the City of London, and connects the London Bridge. St. Mary Woolnoth, a bankers’ church, is situated in Lombard Street, and is opposite to the facade of Lloyds Bank. Besides, the poem’s specific references to the City also occur in “The Fire Sermon,” in which the Cannon Street Hotel, Lower Thames Street, Queen Victoria Street, and St Magnus Martyr, are also evocative of the City of London.

London Bridge” (*CPP* 62), and the Dantesque crowd has often been considered as those who walked to the place where they worked in the City. In 1950, Eliot (*TCC* 128) acknowledged in “What Dante Means to Me” that this is not only a reproduction of the Dantesque scene, but also an endeavour to establish a relationship between the medieval inferno and modern life.

Besides, Eliot wrote in the manuscript of “The Fire Sermon:”

London, the swarming life you kill and breed,
Huddled between the concrete and the sky; (*FTOD* 31)

This passage was eventually deleted at Pound’s suggestion, but it manages to associate the poem with its contemporary context. Fussell (326) considers that the crowds crossing London Bridge are also evocative of the British reinforcements who were sent to the front line, while Margot Norris argues that they symbolise the return of “the war dead”(52). In the passage, the speaker laments over the scene, “I had not thought death had undone so many,” while the church bell produces “a dead sound” (*CPP* 62). The note of death in that passage arguably originates in a conversation between Eliot and Russell. The latter recalled in the early months of the war that

[a]fter seeing troop trains departing from Waterloo, I used to have strange visions of London as a place of unreality. I used in imagination to see the bridges collapse and sink, and the whole great city vanish like a morning mist. Its inhabitants began to seem like hallucinations. (241)

Russell said that “I spoke of this to T. S. Eliot, who put it into *The Waste Land*” (241).

In this sense, this passage is implicitly connected with its contemporary context, and this connection is sustained in the following lines, in which the speaker recalled his encounter with one of his acquaintances, Stetson.

There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying: "Stetson!
"You who were with me in the ships at Mylae! (*CPP* 62)

As regards the prototype of Stetson, Vanessa Thorpe (44) pointed out that Stetson might stand for Eliot himself, the Stetson hat maker, the feminist lecturer Charlotte Perkins Stetson, an American banker, a place in St Louis, or Pound. Besides, Crawford suggests that Stetson alludes to "Mrs. Stetson, a niece of Harriet Beecher Stowe, lectured to the Wednesday Club in January 1899" (*Young*, 44-5). Recently, David Liston discovers that Stetson is likely to be an anagram of Eliot's name.⁴³ On 6 June, Eliot claimed that "the identification would not help in the least to further understanding of this passage" (qtd. in *PI* 617). Drawing upon Eliot's explanation, I think that more importance should be attached to analyse the implication of the image of "Mylae," as it again implicitly displays Eliot's reflection on the War and its economic nature. In the poem, Eliot combines the past with the contemporary, as "the ships at Mylae" (*CPP* 62) alludes to the Battle of Mylae, a naval battle between Carthage and the Romans in 260 BC during the First Punic War. As John Hayward suggests, the nature of "the great naval victory of the Romans over the Carthaginians in the First Punic War" was "[a] trade war" (qtd. in *PI* 618), in which the Roman

⁴³ Liston took "Thomas" out of the poet's full name, and then transpose the letters of "Stearns Eliot." By doing so, he discovered a new name, "Ariel Stetson." Liston's essay was first published in the *Journal of T. S. Eliot Society* 2015. See Thorpe 44.

Empire gained a great deal of financial interest. That reminds readers of the nature of the First World War as he noted “[a] trade war [cf. 1914-18]). All wars one war” (qtd. in *PI* 618). Likewise, Erik Svarny considers that “Eliot’s citation of a battle in the Punic Wars indicates [...] that this choice of a Trade War as an historical parallel is not fortuitous” (163). I agree with Svarny’s assertion that Eliot’s “contemporary understanding of the causes of the First World War was unusually sophisticated” (Svarny 163).

In addition, the implied identities of Stetson and the speaker as soldiers draw reader’s attention to those who fought in Europe during the War. In “A Game of Chess,” the following section, Albert, a WWI veteran who had been serving “in the army [for] four years” (*CPP* 66), was recently demobbed, and would returned to England soon.⁴⁴ The identification of Albert as a demobilized soldier is an explicit reference to the War. However, it is ironic that his return did not make his wife, Lil, feel happy. Instead, Lil felt worried that they would have more children. Similarly, the image of the First World War soldiers is also evoked in “The Fire Sermon”, in which “[t]he sound of horns and motors” brings “Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the Spring” (*CPP* 67).

O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter
And on her daughter
They wash their feet in soda water (*CPP* 67)

⁴⁴ The unadopted heading of this section is “In the Cage,” but Eliot replaced it with “A Game of Chess,” which alludes to Thomas Middleton’s political allegory, *A Game at Chesse* (1624). Ellen Kellond, the maid of the Eliots, recounted Lil’s story to the Eliots. See *FTOD* 127 and *PI* 638. Besides, Eliot made it clear that Albert was demobbed from the Transport Corps in his manuscript. See *FTOD* 13 and 19.

According to Hargrove, Eliot “plays on the differences between merged images (as in the contrast between a meaningful past and a degraded present implied in the melding of the goddess of chastity Diana from the minor Renaissance work *Parliament of Bees* with the prostitute Mrs. Porter from the bawdy Australian ballad popular with soldiers during World War I” (137-8). In this sense, *The Waste Land* still bears a memory of the war.

Besides, it is evocative of the contemporary European politics, which is explicitly shown in the final section “What the Thunder Said,” in which Eliot made it clear that “the present decay of eastern Europe” (CPP 79) was one of the three themes employed in the first part of this section.

What is the sound high in the air
Murmur of maternal lamentation
Who are those hooded hordes swarming
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth
Ringed by the flat horizon only
What is the city over the mountains
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
Falling towers
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
Vienna London
Unreal (CPP 73)

Eliot supplemented a gloss on this passage, and made it clear that it is derived from Hermann Hesse’s description of the rising Bolshevism in *Blick ins Chaos* (1920):

*Schon ist halb Europa, schon ist Zumindest der halbe Osten Europas auf
dem Abgrund entlang und singt dazu, singt betrunken und hymnisch wie
Dmitri Karamasoff sang. Ueber diese Lieder lacht der Burger beleidigt,*

der Heilige und Seher hort sie mit Tränen. (Hesse 46, qtd. in CPP, 79)

Eliot read it when he was convalescing in Switzerland in 1921, and was impressed by this passage. In 1922, he paid a visit to Hesse, and asked Sidney Schiff, whose pen name is Stephen Hudson, to translate the work into English.

Already half Europe, at all events half Eastern Europe, is on the road to Chaos. In a state of drunken illusion she is reeling into the abyss and, as she reels, she sings a drunken hymn such as Dmitri Karamazoff sang. The insulted citizen laughs that song to scorn, the saint and seer hear it with tears. (Hesse 46)

Hesse said that

[i]t seems to me that European and especially German youth are destined to find their greatest writer in Dostoevsky. [...] The ideal of Karamazov, primeval, Asiatic, and occult, is already beginning to consume the European soul. That is what I mean by the downfall of Europe. This downfall is a returning home to the mother, a turning back to Asia, to the source, to the "Faustischen Müttern" and will necessarily lead, like every death on earth, to a new birth. (13)

According to Hesse, those who see this disaster approaching are terrified:

They see the Downfall of Europe coming as a horrible catastrophe with

thunder and beating drums, either as Revolution accompanied by slaughter and violence, or as the triumph of crime, lust, cruelty, corruption, and murder. (Hesse 26)

Hesse visited India in 1911. In November 1927, A. W. G. Randall, in reviewing the May number of *Die neue Rundschau* in the *Criterion*, mentioned Hesse's transformation before and after the War. Randall wrote that "[t]he war turned his mind eastwards and he concerned himself with Indian mysticism, [...] but he has since recanted, or at least come back to a European ideal for literature" (C6 477). A number of critics, such as North, argues that "Eliot and Hesse apparently have in mind the wave of revolution coming out of Russia in 1917" (qtd. in Bush, *Modernist* 169).⁴⁵ It is also considered by some as a prelude to the downfall of Europe. In the section of "Falling towers," the speaker lists five cities – Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria, Vienna, and London – and suggests that all of them are "[u]nreal" (CPP 73). The five cities allude to five great empires in history. Cook has pointed out that "Eliot preserves the chronological order of the flourishing of each empire" by listing "three ancient empires in one line, two modern ones in the following line" (*Against*, 13). Of the two modern empires, one – the Austro-Hungarian – had been destroyed by the Treaty of Versailles, and, as has been suggested, Eliot was self-conscious of the famine in Vienna in 1919. On 18 December 1919, he wrote that

the destitution, especially the starvation in Vienna, appears to be unspeakable.

⁴⁵ See also Crawford, *Savage* 145 and Ferrall 111.

I suppose Americans realise now what a fiasco the reorganization of nationalities has been: the “Balkanization” of Europe. (LI 425)

For Eliot, he could not “put Vienna out of my mind” (LI 427) at the time, and felt deeply disappointed at the outcome of the Peace Conference. In this sense, the swarming “hooded hordes” and the “[m]urmur of maternal lamentation” likely have their origin in this period of chaos and starvation, and the “cracked earth” is not only part of the symbolism of the grail legend, but also a reference to the contemporary Europe.

As Europe is descending into chaos, a heavenly sound, “Da,” is repeated in the form of thunder, resonating with Datta (give), Dayadhvam (sympathise), and Damyata (control) in the Sanskrit text *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.⁴⁶ However, the thunder in *The Waste Land* is different from Hesse’s thunder in terms of its implication. For Hesse (26), the roaring thunder alludes to the catastrophic downfall of Europe. On the contrary, the former suggests a note of hope. However, it is also clear that the hope in *The Waste Land* “comes not from within Western culture but from without, from the Hindu,” because “[i]n the last lines of the poem, the images from Western literature are images of disintegration, while the fragments of Sanskrit provide tentative

⁴⁶ Eliot might gain his knowledge of the Upanishad and the sermon by the Buddha in “The Fire Sermon” and “What the Thunder Said” from the texts which he had encountered at Harvard. When Eliot was at Harvard, he took a variety of courses, some of which left an impress on *The Waste Land*. He studied Sanskrit in Charles Rockwell Lanman’s course in Indic philology and Indian philosophy in classes taught by James Haughton Woods. He also took a course on Buddhism, given by Masaharu Anesaki. See Crawford, *Young* 169-76. Herbert Howarth’s *Notes on Some Figures Behind T. S. Eliot* (1964) also presents useful biographical details about Eliot’s Harvard professors.

principles of moral structure” (Levenson, *Genealogy* 205). For the speaker, he

[...] sat upon the shore
Fishing, with arid plain behind me
Shall I at least set my lands in order
London is falling down falling down falling down (*CPP* 74).

The speaker’s sitting upon the shore parallels with the line “By the waters of Lemman I sat down and wept” (*CPP* 67) in “The Fire Sermon,” and the speaker of these two sections could be understood as a self-confession of Eliot’s, since Eliot left for Lausanne, which is on the shore of Lac Léman, on 22 November 1921, and continued his composition of *The Waste Land* in December. It is very likely that it is “[b]y the waters of Lemman” that Eliot wrote much of “The Fire Sermon” and the final section of *The Waste Land*. Thus, when the speaker sits next to the “arid plain” and questioned himself “Shall I at least set my lands in order” (*CPP* 74), his question is actually a question of Eliot’s.

Before it was moved to the section of “What the Thunder Said,” the line – “Shall I at least set my lands in order” – first appeared in the manuscript of “Death by Water,” in which Eliot wrote “Shall I at least set my ~~own~~ lands/ ~~Which now at last my/ the~~ ~~kingdom~~ in order?” (*FTOD* 79) For Eliot, the “order” that he wanted to obtain was multidimensional. Firstly, it could be related to his hope to retrieve “order” in his personal life. More importantly, it could be understood as his wish to harmonize his art and the formless modern life, “making the modern world possible for art” (*CP2* 479). It could be argued that this endeavour had been suggested by the juxtaposition of Hindu myth and the speaker’s seeking for “order” in “What the Thunder Said.” In

“*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth” (1923), Eliot praised James Joyce’s “method” as not merely “an amusing dodge, or scaffolding erected by the author for the purpose of disposing his realistic tale” (CP2 476), but “a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity” (CP2 478). Eliot “credited Joyce with the invention of an ironic method for dealing with the formlessness of modern life – the use of an organizing myth” (Raine 78) and decided the “mythical method” (CP2 479) was Joyce’s most significant literary contribution in *Ulysses*. In his review, Eliot wrote that myth “is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, or giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history” (CP2 478). According to Knowles, this statement suggests that “‘Ulysses’, Order, and Myth” is not only a review, but also “a statement of purpose” (27) due to Eliot’s definition in the review that “[i]n using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him” (CP2 478). Besides, it also anticipates Eliot’s effort “to aestheticize and organize the war experience” (Knowles 27). In 1964, Eliot rejected this statement.⁴⁷ But nonetheless, it is still fair to suggest that he was one of the pursuers in the 1920s, who undertook Joyce’s “mythical method” in *The Waste Land*, creating “a step toward making the modern world possible for art” (CP2 479).⁴⁸

⁴⁷ In 1964, Eliot said “[t]o say that other writers must follow the procedure of *Ulysses* is [...] absurd” (qtd. in Ellmann and Feidelson, 681).

⁴⁸ Eliot read Joyce’s *Ulysses* in February 1922. When reading the serialised *Ulysses*, Eliot “found it stimulatingly ‘volatile and heady’; it was ‘immeasurably an advance upon the *Portrait*’” (qtd. in Crawford, *Young* 301). Eliot also pointed out the “mythical method” was “a method already adumbrated by Mr. Yeats,” and considered Yeats as the first contemporary to be conscious of the method. Yeats wrote about the need to link contemporary and ancient worlds in “The Celtic Element in Literature” (1897), asserting that “literature dwindles to a mere chronicle of circumstance [...] unless it

Besides, as has been mentioned above, the form of *The Waste Land* is fragmentary and collage-like. According to Nancy Hargrove (136-7), the technique of collage manifested in *The Waste Land* alludes to his exposure to the influence of cubism in Paris in the 1910s. In August 1921, Eliot commented on cubist art: “[c]ubism is not licence, but an attempt to establish order” (CP2 363).⁴⁹ If so, the fragmentary form of *The Waste Land* then could be understood as an attempt to establish order in art.

Thirdly, the “order” which Eliot wanted to acquire is related to his reflection on the post-war European politics. In 1920, Eliot wrote in the “Introduction” to *The Sacred Wood* (1920) that “[t]he temptation, to any man who is interested in ideas and primarily in literature, to put literature into the corner until he has cleaned up the whole country first, is almost irresistible” (xv). Perhaps Eliot had himself in his mind when he was writing this passage, and suggested that he could not resist the temptation to regain the order in his country, either. According to Donoghue, “Eliot’s concern for public issues did not begin as late as 1932,” but his early literary criticism had already presented his alertness of “the social bearing of literature and of the literary positions he took” (209). Influenced by his literary criticism, Eliot’s prose works might have a social bearing of its own, which is mainly reflected in both its recollection of the past war and the contemplation of its disastrous impact. It could be argued that the social bearing in his literary criticism is also in *The Waste Land*, in which Eliot uttered his longing for restoring “order” in the “arid” European “plain”

is constantly flooded with the passions and beliefs of ancient times” (185).

⁴⁹ See also Eliot’s “London Letter: July 1921.”

(CPP 74). Thus, Eliot introduced three “Shantihs” (CPP 75) at the end of *The Waste Land*, and suggests his wish for both peace in Europe and peace in his mind. Eliot explains in the notes that “Shantih” is “a formal ending to an Upanishad,” which means “The Peace which passeth understanding” (CPP 80). Nonetheless, the sound of “Shantih” echoes Joseph Conrad’s “The horror! The horror!” As Herbert Read later wrote in his 1927 review of Arlington B. Conway’s “In Praise of War,” “[t]he peculiar horror of modern war is not immediately felt, but is a sickening that comes of repletion” (C6 574). In *The Waste Land*, Eliot knew that the peace had not come to the waste land yet, since, as has been mentioned in the chapter, the “peace” established in 1919 was not real and its ironic nature led to the further disintegration in post-war Europe. Being aware of that, whether the sound “Shantih Shantih Shantih” suggests the meaning of peace which passes understanding will be called into question.

In the mid-1920s, Eliot was more overtly critical of the post-war European and economy and politics. His concern over the “unsettled” contemporary “social conditions” could be shown in a letter to his brother Henry on 12 August 1924, in which Eliot told Henry that “I wish to retain a certain amount of capital in a form in which it could quickly be realised, in the event of any emergency, while “ he did not “like to tie up any more capital than can be helped in any one country, in view of the unsettled social conditions which will prevail everywhere during our lifetime” (L2 476). In June 1924, Eliot wrote in “Foreign Exchanges” that “real peace” (250) had not been achieved as yet. In August 1924, he said that “in the present unsettled state of Europe, and the confused state of the exchanges,” it was doubtful whether the world

was “reverting gradually to the conditions which obtained before the war” (qtd. in *L2* 476). In “a period of extreme depression about his future work” (*PI* 725), Eliot finished “The Hollow Men,” which was published in *The Dial* in March 1925. The poem is profoundly Christian, though blasphemous at the same time. It suggests that Eliot escaped from the world seen in *The Waste Land* into the realm of religion, showing “his contempt for human beings – because, as we know them, they are part of the physical world” (Robbins 75), while prefiguring Eliot’s reversion to Christianity, since he “cultivated the state of mind of those early Christians who looked forward to the imminent ruin of a decadent civilization” (Gordon, *Imperfect* 156). In the poem, Eliot hoped that a change could happen as he hoped to re-set his “kingdom” in order. However, the reality does not follow his expectation. Thus, he expresses his lamentation at the end of “The Hollow Men” by repeating “[t]his is the way the world ends” (*CPP* 86). For the speaker, the way how the world ends is different from what he expects, since it ends “[n]ot with a bang but a whimper” (*CPP* 86). In this sense, the speaker, like Guy Fawkes, fails to achieve what he expects to do, and the world then becomes a political failure. For Eliot, if the hollow men, like him, cannot retrieve their kingdom in the secular world, they might find it in the religious “kingdom,” and his religious pursuit becomes more explicit in the coming years.

Also, in the mid-1920s, Eliot started paid more attention to his prose-writings. In February 1924, Eliot complained that the prevailing anti-Tory force had controlled the contemporary journals, and his conservative standpoints affected his popularity among such journals as *Nation*. In “Four Elizabethan Dramatists” (1924), Eliot made

it clear that “[c]ontemporary literature, like contemporary politics, is confused by the moment-to-moment struggle for existence; but the time arrives when an examination of principles is necessary,” and he believed that “the theatre has reached a point at which a revolution in principles should take place” (*SE* 109). Facing the challenges, Eliot decided to leave the bank in the hope that he could have more time to continue his literary career. He explained that

I want to be able to say just what I think. But if I stay in the bank I shall never have time to say what I think. There is so much I want to do. (*L2* 320)

In November 1925, Eliot resigned from Lloyds Bank to join the board of Faber and Gwyer, and became a full-time editor of the *Criterion*.

Chapter Three

“A War of Cultures:” The *Criterion* and War

The Criterion (1922-1939) was important to not only the development of literary modernism, but also Eliot’s intellectual development during the inter-war period. On the one hand, the foundation of the *Criterion* has been considered as “the institutionalization” (Levenson, *Genealogy* 213) of the movement of literary modernism as it featured a number of new works by modernist writers, including Joyce, Pound, Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, W. H. Auden, and Spender, while Eliot, the editor of the *Criterion*, became “the Editor of modernism” (Levenson, *Genealogy* 218). On the other hand, after taking the editorship of the *Criterion*, Eliot succeeded in finding “a public forum from which he could participate in the general cultural conversation: mediating authors and ideas to a variegated field of periodicals and more broadly to highly differentiated organizations and institutions in modern society” (Harding, *Criterion* 2). In this chapter, I will specifically explore the ways in which Eliot sought intelligent debates on political theories as responses to the feverish political climate of the time in a series of cultural conversations that Eliot participated or formed in the *Criterion*, and argue that the *Criterion*’s involvement in the discussion of the post-war European cultural politics shows not only the War’s impact on the ensuing intellectual debates in interwar Britain, but also “[a] war of cultures” (CP3 346) was created on the pages of the *Criterion*.

The Early *Criterion* and the War

Due to Eliot's editorial strategy, the early *Criterion* had a limited involvement with the discussion of war. In retrospect, Eliot identified the early *Criterion* as a literary periodical with a subtle connection to the discussion of politics. According to Eliot, a literary review should "maintain the autonomy" and "the disinterestedness," while exhibiting its relations "to all the other activities" (CI 421). But it would not tolerate "any confusion of the purposes of pure literature with the purposes of politics or ethics" (CI 421). On 4 October 1923, Eliot repeated that the *Criterion* was "not a review of a directly political character" (L2 239). It is clear that Eliot at the time tried to prevent his quarterly journal from being considered as "a party organ" (L2 206), since, "if it were supposed that the *Criterion* was interested directly in politics, it would lose its usefulness" (L2 205). It is also possible that Eliot (L2 320) was trying to avoid causing conflicts between *The Criterion* and other Liberal journals, as the latter was the prevailing force in the contemporary journalism. Thus, Eliot's *Criterion* followed the strategy of other contemporary conservative publications in England, which did not "profess rather indefinite opinions" (L2 238). On the other hand, the failure of Charles Maurras's political movement might also lead to Eliot's avoidance of the whirl of party politics, as Eliot (*Literature*, 21-2) believed that Maurras's political movement had severely damaged his reputation as a literary critic. For Eliot, what is important is to explore "the deep-rooted questions of social life, especially questions ignored by those caught up in the superficiality of political debate" (Levenson, *Eliot's* 376). Thus, Eliot's politics sometimes seem to be "antipolitical"

(Perl, *Skepticism* 93), while the political standpoint of the early *Criterion* perhaps could be summarised by a line in Eliot later *The Elder Statesman* (1959), in which Gomez warned that “Never touch politics./ Stay out of politics, and play both parties:/ What you don’t get from one you may get from the other” (21).

Although Eliot wanted to prevent the *Criterion* from being involved in debate of politics, it is inevitable for the *Criterion* to publish some articles which explored the theme of war. In its early issues, the *Criterion* published a small number of literary articles and book reviews that took war as the topic or the background.¹ Firstly, they reflected on the meaninglessness of the gloomy war between 1914 and 1918, evoking a memory of the fallen soldiers in the War. In July 1927, *The Monthly Criterion* published Read’s “The Raid,” which vividly described army life, highlighting the importance of the resurrection of religious faith in a war-stricken world. The five-part short story features a soldier named P—, and delineated a wartime battlefield scene through the perspective of P—. In the story, the “trench,” the “bombardment,” “No Man’s Land,” and the “blind hiss of bullet,” were accompanied by the protagonist’s “raid,” giving a vivid description of the experience of war and the subtle inter-human relationships between enemies. In September 1928, the *Criterion* published Harold Monro’s “A True Adventure at Dawn,” which is

¹ Most of those articles were contributed by writers who had fought in the War. Some notable figures include Aldington, F. S. Flint, Hulme, Read, Lewis, Monro, Frederic Manning, Hugh MacDiarmid, Ford, and J. S. Barnes. Other examples include Aldington’s review of Read’s *A Retreat* in April 1926, George Caffrey’s essay on Rudolf Borchardt, a WWI Prussian officer, in January 1927, Read’s review of “In Praise of War,” “a striking article” (C6 574) by Arlington B. Conway, an officer in the Canadian army, in December 1927, and Hoffman Nickerson’s short review of B. H. Liddell Hart’s *The Real War, 1914-1918* in April 1931.

“probably his best prose work” (Hibberd 242). In “A True Adventure at Dawn,” the protagonist dreamt about an encounter with his friend Basil, who was a British soldier and went missing after an attack in France.² While the obscure story has a hint of the sexual entanglement between the main characters, it invites reader to remember the past war and the deceased soldiers. In July 1930, Read delivered a bitter denunciation of the political structures that had fuelled the war, when he was reviewing First World War novels in “Books of the Quarter.” “The whole war,” according to Read, “was fought for rhetoric – fought for historical phrases and actual misery, fought by politicians and generals and with human flesh and blood, fanned by false and artificially created mob passions” (C9 767-8). For Read, the War was “‘waged’ by rhetoricians, with rhetoric, for the sake of more rhetoric” (C9 768). Read could “conceive of no values, least of all the political ideals conceived by the men of poor character and intelligence who mostly prevail in the political counsels of the caucus-ridden democracies of modern Europe, for which human life indiscriminately and in the mass should be forcibly sacrificed” (C9 768). In the 1930s, the vague memory of the War could still be found in the *Criterion*. In January 1930, the *Criterion* published Ernst Wiechert’s short story “The Centurion,” the winner of the first Five Review’s Award, a literary award by the *Criterion* and four other like-minded European reviews. “The Centurion” described an encounter between Christoph Von Soden, an army captain, and an anonymous miner, a prisoner of war, on “a summer morning after the Great War” (C9 185), highlighting Von

² Basil has often been interpreted as an allusion to Basil Watt, see Joy Grant 163.

Soden's questioning of human nature and his religious awakening afterwards. Also, the *Criterion* published a series of war poems written by Read, who was later considered by many as Eliot's "aide-de-camp" (Read 26) in the campaigns of inter-war London literary journalism.³ Those poems include "The End of A War" in April 1933, and "A Short Poem for Armistice Day" in January 1934.

In addition, some contributions explored the legacy of the War in Europe. In the first issue of the *Criterion*, Eliot invited Hermann Hesse to contribute a review of the recent development of German poetry, in which Hesse highlighted the legacy of World War I on the younger generation of German poets. According to Hesse, "[t]he experience of the Great War, with the collapse of all the old forms and the breakdown of moral codes and cultures hitherto valid, appears to be incapable of interpretation except by psycho-analysis" (CI 90). However, the rise of psycho-analysis resulted in the following poetic revolutions with no "very fruitful results" (CI 90). Hesse was clear that "a rapid recovery of German poetry" was somewhat unrealistic. However, he believed that the "war" would teach "those who have returned from it" lessons that "nothing" could be solved "by violence and gunplay," and that "war and violence are attempts to solve complicated and delicate problems in far too savage, far too stupid, and far too brutal a fashion" (CI 93). In October 1923, the *Criterion* published Ford's "From the Grey Stone," in which Ford referred to a soldier named "09 Evans," who was also a character in his *A Mirror to France* (1926). In "From the Grey Stone," Ford described a post-war scene:

³ See C6 40-9.

Below the grey stone on which we sit, below the belt of rocks, lavender, and olive trees runs a white ribbon of life of an intense vulgarity. It is the expressed ideal of 09 Evans, a tragedy of waste, of brayings, of pimpings, marbles, cheap gildings. It is what we have given to the world – a product of peace more terrible than the product of any wars. And, indeed, of such peace products wars are the inevitable consequences. We fought lately – and the best of us died – in order to decide which overfed women-folk or which pot-bellied group of men should hang more costly skins of wild beasts, eat, make one braying noise or another and more luxuriantly commit fornications along that white ribbon. It is we Anglo-Saxons who are now enjoying these pleasures here. It would be better if we didn't: better for us and better for all the world. (C2 72)

For Ford, “the product of peace” is as ironic as 09 Evans’s ideal, since it is “more terrible than the product of any wars,” and it ultimately leads to “a tragedy.” In this sense, the short story draws upon the controversial outcomes of the Peace conference in Paris after the War, highlighting the insignificance of the War. It is also correct in seeing that “wars” would be “the inevitable consequences” of such ironic “peace products.”

In another contribution, Charles Whibley turned the focus from the devastation caused by the War to the necessity of restoring order in Europe. In April 1923, the

Criterion published the first half of Charles Whibley's "Bolingbroke," in which Whibley spoke in favour of Henry St. John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke, for his unique distinction "between war and the fruits of war" (CI 211).⁴ According to Bolingbroke,

the glory of taking towns and winning battles is to be measured by the utility that results from those victories. Victories that bring honour to the arms may bring shame to the councils of a nation. To win a battle, to take a town, is the glory of a general and of an army! Of this glory we had a very large share in the course of the war. But the glory of a nation is to proportion the ends she proposes to her interest and her strength; the means she employs to the ends she proposes, and the vigour she exerts to both. (CI 211)

Then, Whibley commented on Bolingbroke's contrivance for "the treaty with France" (CI 211). Whibley believed that "[i]n all respects, the peace was a personal and deliberate achievement," since the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1712, with Bolingbroke's endeavour, restored "calm" to "a stricken world," which "rewarded" Bolingbroke "a peerage" (CI 212) as well. In this article, Whibley's traditionalistic point of view centres on the balance between a nation's military power in war and its government's capability to restore order in post-war period. Perhaps, Whibley had in mind the Treaty of Versailles, which did not restore the "calm" (CI 212) in the war-stricken Europe, when he was praising Bolingbroke's efforts to restore order in Europe after the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht. Whibley's implicit concern over an

⁴ In July 1923, the second half of "Bolingbroke" was published by the *Criterion*.

unsuccessful attempt to restore order after the War became explicit in Read's review of *The Dial*, published by the *Criterion* in February 1924. Read quoted a Letter from Hugo von Hofmannsthal, in which Hofmannsthal wrote that "the inner aspect of spiritual Germany after the catastrophe of the war and of the peace which is continuing the war, and above all, the mentality and the attitude of the youth who are fully concerned in such crises" (C2 228). By comparison, the reflection on the ironic nature of the post-war peace construction in both Whibley's article and Read's review was consistent with Eliot's attitude towards the post-war Peace restoration in Europe, which has been discussed in the previous chapter.

It is true that *The Criterion's* involvement with the discussion of war was not very close in its early issues. But it could be argued that the theme of war, among many, became a more perceptible theme in the *Criterion* later, as Eliot determined to strengthen *The Monthly Criterion's* connection with the social and political commentary in late 1927.⁵ In November 1927, Eliot underlined that politics had "become too serious to be left to politicians" (CP3 286), since the contemporary literary study had been connected "irresistibly to the study of others," and a man of letters "must study the others if only to disentangle his own, to find out what he is really doing" (CP3 287). As for "the others," Eliot named three examples, including "the Russian revolution (which has also directed our attention to the East), the transformation of Italy (which has directed our attention to our own forms of

⁵ The quarterly became a monthly in May of 1927. By November, when the monthly format proved commercially unsuccessful, the directors of Faber and Gwyer proposed reverting to quarterly publication. In June 1928, it changed its title back to *The Criterion: A Literary Review*.

government), and the condemnation of the *Action Française* by the Vatican” (CP3 286-7), all of which will be discussed in details in the following sections of this chapter. Besides, the *Criterion* introduced the development of the post-war war-books industry, highlighting the transformation of the public’s mind-set after the War. In April 1929, the *Criterion* published Read’s review of a series of war books.⁶ In his review, Read pointed out a complicated relationship between war and war-book writers. By quoting Rudolf Binding’s words, Read observed an interesting phenomenon that “[t]he history of this war will never be written,” since “[t]hose who can write it will remain silent” and “[t]hose who write have not experienced it” (C8 546). The exception, however, is “the poet” (C8 546). Read believed that, if the history of the war is written, “it will be written by the poets who took part in it” (C8 546). He gave two types of examples. The first includes *The Notebooks of Captain Coignet* and *Undertones of War*, which are “plain narrative” of “day-to-day experiences” (C8 546). The other type is Arnold Zweig’s *The Case of Sergeant Grischa*, Georg Von Der Vring’s *Private Suhren* and Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which are “works of art” (C8 549). Read’s point of view on the poet’s role in writing the history of war was developed in I. M. Parsons’s “The Poems of Wilfred Owen,” published by the *Criterion* in July 1931. Although Parsons’s article was not a conscious response to Read’s, it observed that Wilfred Owen’s “significance is primarily one of purpose rather than form” in that his verse

⁶ They include Edmund Blunden’s *Undertones of War*, Jean-Rock Coignet’s *The Notebooks of Captain Coignet (1799-1816)*, Rudolf Binding’s *A Fatalist at War*, Arnold Zweig’s *The Case of Sergeant Grischa*, Georg Von Der Vring’s *Private Suhren*, Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Henri Barbusse’s *Le Feu*, and Georges Duhamel’s *Liver des Martyrs*.

“expresses, in terms of poetry, a personal reaction to experiences which, at the time of their incidence at least, left most men hopelessly inarticulate” (C10 667). Similarly, the *Criterion* in April 1930 published H. M. Tomlinson’s reviews of the recently-published war books. Tomlinson reflected on the recent interest of the publishers and readers in war-books. After the wartime “tension with shocks of propaganda,” “rhetorical appeals to its love of virtue [...] and to its hatred of vice,” “noble but brazen music,” and “luscious stories of heroes” (C9 405), readers were “waking up” and “turning to the sincere records of the last affair” (C9 406), being “aware of what had been hidden from us” (C9 407). On the other hand, the war-books, such as C. E. Montague’s *Disenchantment*, started to compel readers to “to look upon that affair objectively – to see it as something which and a nature and history not necessarily related to the emotions we had cherished for more than four years” (C9 410). In the 1930s, due to a series of social, political and economic crisis, the *Criterion* started involving itself more actively in the discussion of “political and social theory” with an explicit theological nature, although Eliot repeatedly denied that the *Criterion* was “concerned with topical and practical political affairs” (L6 666). In David Bradshaw’s words, “a good few of his *Criterion* editorials and essays, alongside his books of social criticism, bear witness to his inability entirely to resist the urge” (273). However, Eliot regretfully wrote in April 1934 that “[o]ur occupation with immediate social, political and economic issues today is a necessity, but a regrettable one” (C13 452).

War of Cultures: East and West

As Walter Benjamin has demonstrated, “[a]ll efforts to aestheticize politics culminate in one point,” which is “war” (*Work*, 36). By saying so, Benjamin suggests in his book that the efforts to aestheticize politics culminate in the period of war. However, I think his words also point to another possibility that the efforts to aestheticize politics culminate in the form of war, and this idea could be suggested in Eliot’s *Criterion*. As the *Criterion* became more involved in the contemporary social and political commentary, it started a metaphorical “war of cultures” (*CP3* 346) in the form of a series of polemics over different literary, social, cultural, political issues. In February 1928, Eliot insightfully predicted the European political situation in the coming years when he was reviewing Julien Benda’s *La Trahison des clercs*. He wrote that “[w]ar, whatever economic or practical interests may tend to bring it about, is sustained by the pretence of a war of cultures, by the pretence that one form of civilization is being maintained against another” (*CP3* 346). This “war” constitutes the second type of the *Criterion*’s involvement with war, and my study will focus on two major wars of cultures in the *Criterion* in the 1920s and the early 1930s.

The first “war of cultures” centres on the cultural conflict between the west and the east. In April 1926, *The New Criterion* published the first half of Henri Massis’s “Defence of the West,” translated by F. S. Flint. In this article, Massis contextualized his discussion in “the crisis of Western civilization and the danger of asiaticism,” and underlined “the formidable problems raised by the awakening of the nations of Asia

and Africa, united by Bolshevism against Western civilization” (C4 225). In June 1926, *The New Criterion* published the second half of “Defence of the West,” in which Massis highlighted the threat of Russian “Bolshevism,” apart from that of Asiaticism. Massis’s “Defence of the West” quickly led to a heated debate in the *Criterion*. In October 1926, *The New Criterion* published a letter of John Gould Fletcher’s, in which Fletcher criticised Massis for falsely taking Asiaticism, to which Massis did not give a “clear conception” (C4 747), as “[t]he chief danger” (C4 746) facing the West. For Massis, “the chief danger to Occidental civilisation comes from the rise of Russian Bolshevism” (C4 747). However, Fletcher argued that Massis misunderstood Marxian communism, which was in essence “a purely Western doctrine” (C4 747), with “the much older atavistic tendency of the Russian peasant to drift back into a Mongolian nomad” (C4 747). Fletcher explained that this tendency was “so little appreciated by the leading Bolsheviks,” who strived “not only to westernise the peasant, but to bring some part of Europe into a frame of mind more friendly to them” (C4 747). As for Massis’s concern over the oriental tendency in post-war German culture, Fletcher believes that it is similar to “the Mediterraneanism of M. Charles Maurras,” which claims that the “Graeco-Roman culture is the only classic culture,” while “every other race and nation, Eastern or Western, is *per se* barbarian” (C4 748). Likewise, the *New Criterion* in January 1927 published a letter from Vasudeo B. Metta, in which he criticized Massis’s article. According to Metta, Massis did not have a fair understanding of the East or convincing evidence to support his statement that “the West should not allow itself to be broken by Oriental anarchy”

(C5 100). In order to refute Massis's point of view, Metta tried to prove that "[e]astern influence on the West is not a thing of yesterday or to-day only," and explored "[i]n what respects the West can learn from the East with advantage to herself" (C5 100). In June 1928, the *Criterion* published Fletcher's "East and West," in which he criticized Massis for "his falsification of history" (C7 320). According to Fletcher, Massis did not see that "Catholicism and Nationalism began as incompatible forces," or that it is the "alliance" between the Church and the Holy Roman Empire that "saved the Middle Ages from shipwreck and kept the principles of 'unity, stability, authority, continuity' intact" (C7 320). Massis, thus, was a "homo Mediterranius," who only cared about "'gloire' in the good French sense of military anarchy and class-war" (C7 320). Besides, Massis's "attempt to defend the Papal policy without defending the sole secular instrument that could have maintained the unity of Christendom in its highest aspect," according to Fletcher, was "a secret plea, not for stable, imperial and ecclesiastical order, but for internal intrigue and underhand Bolshevik tactics" (C7 321). In the same issue, K. de B. Codrington defended Massis's "Nationalism," arguing that it had been wrongly considered by many as "too sentimental to be convincing" (C7 435). Codrington praised Massis as a heroic warrior who was "forced to carry his arms further afield and grapple with the Oriental itself" as he was "combating the pseudo-Oriental defeatism of post-war Europe" (C7 435). However, Codrington's review was one of the few positive comments on Massis's "Defence of the West" in the *Criterion*. In 1928, Fletcher analysed the "Oriental tendency in present-day Germany" in his article "East and West." He believed that the tendency

was to a large extent triggered by the post-war “political and cultural bankruptcy” (C7 315) in Germany. As a consequence, “the German leaders of thought” (C7 314), who were “unable to accept the Latin-Mediterranean political triumph which they had never shared,” started looking for “in the passionless wisdom of the East some respite from their own despair” (C7 315).

In that debate, the war between the east and west was essentially a war between the soviet Russian Bolshevism and the western civilization. In October 1923, Eliot noticed the Oriental influence on the Western Europe. In his letter to Stanley Rice, Eliot wrote that, “since the war, and indeed less forcibly for some years before the war, the Eastern ideas or rather paraphrases and corroborations of Eastern ideas, have been creeping into Western Europe through the gate of Germany” (L2 230). Eliot was concerned that, “if the German Asiatic influence permeates Western Europe,” it would pose a threat to “those European traditions without which I believe we should relapse into a state of barbarism equal to that of America or Russia” (L2 230). Eliot’s anxiety could be felt in one of his contemporary poems “The wind sprang up at four o’clock” (1924), which has been considered by Genesis Jones as a condensate of Cantos VII-XII of the *Inferno* due to its similar “structure of allusion” (19). In the poem, the speaker says

I saw across the blackened river
The camp fire shake with alien spears.
Here, across death’s other river
The Tartar horsemen shake their spears. (CPP 134)

In the first two lines, the speaker recalls the “camp fire” and the “alien spears.” If they

are a reflection of the *Inferno*, the word “Here” in the third line seems to draw both the speaker’s mind and readers’ attention to the present in which he clarifies the “alien” force stationing by the “camp fire” as “[t]he Tartar horsemen.” The scene of those “Tartar horsemen” who “shake their spears” on the other side of “death’s” river alludes to both a barbaric “alien” force coming from the East and the speaker’s concern over the destruction they might bring to his land. However, Eliot modified his attitude towards this threat from the oriental in the late 1920s. He considered the threat of the Russian Revolution as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it posed a threat to the western civilization. On the other hand, it “has made men conscious of the position of Western Europe as (in Valéry’s words) a small and isolated cape on the western side of the Asiatic Continent,” but “this awareness seems to be giving rise to a new European consciousness,” which “is a hopeful sign” (C6 98). However, the concern over the oriental threat was correct in foretelling the European political development in the 1930s and 1940s, as “the rise of Hitler” signalled that Germany had disaffirmed its “allegiance to western civilisation” and “abandoned herself to her primitive instincts, seeking barbaric dominion in cultural isolation.”⁷ Thus, Eliot acknowledged on 1 November 1945 that he understood the nature of Massis’s assertion in the discussion of German’s cultural orientalization, and shared Massis’s “concern for the civilisation of Western Europe, the apprehension of the Germanic danger, and a similar diagnosis of its nature.”⁸

⁷ See Eliot’s “Testimony,” published on 1 November 1945.

⁸ See Eliot’s “Testimony,” published on 1 November 1945.

Compared with its shared concern over Soviet Bolshevism's alleged threat to the Western European classical tradition, the *Criterion* was firm in denouncing the Communist Party's ideological control over intellectuals in Russia. In July 1924, the *Criterion*'s published Eliot's comments on the Society for Cultural Relations between the Peoples of the British Commonwealth and the Union of Socialist Republics, which was suspected by Eliot to be "backed" by "the present Government of Russia" (CP2 530). Eliot criticized the possible link between the Society and its foreign governmental patron, since he considered that "a Government can never be expected to be wholly impartial in its choice of the material which it presents to a foreign audience" (CP2 530). In May 1927, *The Monthly Criterion* published Jean Cocteau's review of a series of contemporary articles on Russian and European politics.⁹ In his review of P. P. Souvchinsky's "Two Renaissances," Cocteau highlighted the Russian Communist Party's control over Russian literary intellectuals via passing "a Resolution bearing on the so-called 'literary front'" (C5 279) after the Thirteenth All-Russian Congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1926. According to Cocteau (C5 279-80), the Russian Communist Party decided to relieve its pressure on writers who had not been patronized by the previous authorities, who did not openly oppose the Soviet Government, and who, in Prince Mirsky's phrase, paid at least lip-service to the wisdom of Marx and the greatness of Lenin. In another review, John Cournos also highlighted the Soviet ideological influences on the contemporary Russian

⁹ Those essays include Edouard Benesch's "Problems of Slavonic Politics," E. Stalinsky's "The Bolshevik Retreat," V. Sukhomlin's article regarding "problems of the Socialist movement in Russia" (C5 280), M. Hilquit's "External Policy of the United States," and V. Lebedev's article on B. Savinkov's *Iv Tiurme*.

literary periodicals in January 1928. Cournos pointed out that the Russian-based writers “strictly adhere to the Communist ideology” (C7 91) and some literary critics, such as Karl Radek, clearly had values “more or less representing the official Soviet attitude” (C7 93). After reading six issues of *Novy Mir*, a Moscow-based Soviet periodical, and another “vigorous” Soviet periodical *Krasnaya Nov*, Cournos declared that he had formed an idea that “literary Russian is the devil’s own seething kettle of energy” (C7 91). In those “vigorous” periodicals, Cournos felt a connection between writers and their country after he examined a series of Russian literary works.¹⁰ Among those Soviet Russian writers, Cournos praised Sergeyev Tzensky’s “Living Water,” which was “exceptionally good, but does not owe its excellence to proletariat ideology” (C7 91). Later, the *Criterion* in January 1934 published Cournos’s “Myth in the Making,” in which Cournos noted that the soviet writers, being influenced by political propaganda, were creating a “myth” (C13 226) in the Soviet Russia. Although Cournos was likely to infuse his own political point of view, which was perhaps shared by some English readers, in his reviews, they at least enabled the *Criterion* subscribers to have an opportunity to know the contemporary Russian literature.

It is clear that Eliot considered state ideological control over the development of its domestic culture as a danger to its future. In September 1928, Eliot commented on Emil Ludwig’s recent biographical work in “A Commentary,” in which he analysed

¹⁰ Those works include Boris Pasternak’s poems, “Lieutenant Schmidt,” Boris Pilniak’s short stories, Feodor Gladkov’s novel, *Cement*, as well as works by Michael Prishvin, Sergey Malashkin, Vladimir Lidin, Alexey Tolstoy, and V. Veresayev.

the “causes of modern war” (C8 5). Whether a nation is aggressive or not, according to Eliot, is not so closely associated with its leader, and “[t]he fact that ‘the people’ does not want war is no security against war,” since “the desire for peace” is not enough “to ensure it” (C8 5). On the other hand, Eliot believes that “intelligent vigilance” and “independent criticism” (C8 5) are more likely to prevent war, since “the more individuals there are in a nation who can think intelligently and independently, the less inclined for war that nation will be” (C8 5). On the contrary, “the more uniform public opinion is in any country, the more stereotyped in prejudice, the more dangerous will that nation be” (C8 5). However, as Lewis observed in *Blasting and Bombardiering* (1937), Eliot’s attempt to get “away from political propaganda back into the detachment of true literature” ended in failure, since “what has happened – slowly – as a result of the War, is that artistic expression has slipped back again into political propaganda and romance, which go together” (250).

In 1927, the *Criterion* started, to a limited but conscious extent, involved itself in discussions of Bolshevism, Communism, Marxism, and revolution. It published a series of articles and reviews by A. L. Rowse, who was “an old friend” (L5 821) of Eliot’s and perhaps the most dedicated supporter of Communism in the *Criterion*, and hence formed an intellectual polemic between Rowse and other scholars. In December 1927, *The Monthly Criterion* published a letter by Rowse, who tried to defend Laski’s book on Communism and justified Marxism as a complex of theories rather than reducing it into a “parti-pris discussion” (C6 545). In the first quarter of 1928, Rowse and Fletcher had a debate on the concepts of history, communism, Marxism, and the

Revolution, in the context of the Russian politics in the 1920s, such as Lenin's political reform after the Russian famine of 1922.¹¹ On the other hand, the criticism against Russian Bolshevik movement could also be seen in the *Criterion*. In January 1926, H. G. Dalway Turnbull contributed an essay entitled "Aristotle on Democracy and Socialism," in which Turnbull tried to introduce modern socialism and communist scheme through the perspective of Aristotle. According to Turnbull, Aristotle would not believe communism was possible, and that has been "a conclusion which modern experiments have abundantly verified" (C4 13). Besides, Aristotle would "warn us that anything approaching to communism, syndicalism, or the 'nationalization of all means of production and distribution' would be economically disastrous and politically fatal," and "eventually" lead to "the ruin of the State" (C4 17). In December 1927, *The Monthly Criterion* published an unsigned review, introducing René Fülöp-Miller's *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism*, translated by Flint and D. F. Tair. The review has an interesting statement on the strategy of Russian Bolshevik movement: "The Bolshevik movement within Russia has at least foreseen from the artist that one cannot wage war by means of politics alone; there must be a movement of ideas within the state parallel to any new political development. Fülöp-Miller briefly introduced the characteristics of Bolshevik culture, which is "radical and experimental" (C6 567), while pointing out its "great weakness" that "it bases its appeal upon the masses, rather than upon individuals" (C6 567). It would be fair to say that this review did not give a very clear introduction to Bolshevik culture, but the

¹¹ See C7 262.

reviewer added in the final paragraph that “[w]hether we condemn Bolshevism or uphold it, it is necessary first of all to study it,” and Fülöp-Miller’s book provided us with “excellent materials for study” (C6 568). Perhaps, Eliot might adopt a similar strategy when he was editing the *Criterion*. The primary aim of including those essays or reviews on Russian Bolshevism, for Eliot, is to provide English readers with “excellent materials” to study Bolshevism, rather than make their judgement without knowing what exactly Bolshevism is.

Although it shared concern over Soviet Bolshevism’s alleged threat to the Western European classical tradition, the *Criterion* was more actively involved in forming “a new European consciousness” in the Western Europe. In the late 1920s, the *Criterion*, as has been suggested, has moved “away from the profound cultural pessimism of post-war ‘disintegration and chaos’ towards an attempt to establish a pan-European ideal of Latinate ‘classicism’” (Harding, *Criterion* 203), alluding to a set of politicized characteristics: “*form* and *restraint* in art, *discipline* and *authority* in religion, *centralization* in government” (Schuchard, *Eliot’s* 27). In order to do so, Eliot advocates Europeanism – or rather, “the mind of Europe” or “The European Idea” – to salvage European civilization from both the destruction of both the War and post-war peace treaty. As early as 1919, the concept of “the mind of Europe” had appeared in Eliot’s “Tradition and the Individual Talent.” However, as Jayme Stayer pointed out, the idea “is never clearly defined, and is often modified with equivocations” (xviii) in “Tradition and the Individual Talent.” Nonetheless, as A. David Moody has argued, Eliot “knew perfectly well that he was invoking an ideal

conception which had little support in actuality,” and “[i]t was precisely because the mind of Europe did not exist in any practical form that it was necessary to invent it, or to reinvent it” (61).

However, on Eliot’s way to establish a united “European Idea,” one of the strongest challenges was the rise of nationalism in the post-war Western Europe. The First World War reshaped the post-war European political, cultural, and philosophical landscape. In Fletcher’s “East and West,” published in June 1928, Fletcher gave a concise description of the War’s impact on Europe. “The Great War,” according to Fletcher, “left Europe economically crippled, politically shaken, internally threatened with collapse” (C7 321). After the War “revealed the complete disunion of Europe and the lack of common cause among the Allies” (C7 307), nationalism in the post-war Europe was “intensified,” becoming “more alive than ever” (C7 321). As was suggested in Eliot’s review of Benda’s *La Trahison des clercs*, the “war of cultures” had been tightly bound up with a “national emotion,” which was the “cause of so much hatred between nations” (CP3 346). Besides, with religion becoming “national” and entering “the national service,” it “reinforces national (and even class) emotions instead of checking them” (CP3 346). In August 1927, he wrote “[n]ine years after the end of the War we are only beginning to distinguish between the characteristics of our own time and those inherited from the previous epoch,” and “[o]ne of the latter was Nationalism” (C6 97). Eliot was opposed to what he saw as the Balkanizing influence of Wilsonian nationalism and the vacuous liberal spirit of Versailles’s most conspicuous legacy: the League of Nations. Eliot suggested that Wilson’s

commitment to national self-determination – and the map of Europe that had been shaped by it – were the product of a nineteenth-century Romanticism that he had unconsciously inherited, and that it would become a barrier to the revitalization of European culture. Influenced by the spirit of nationalism, Europe continued to be torn apart by political propaganda and international rivalry. As early as October 1922, this phenomenon had been suggested in the *Criterion*. In “Dullness,” the very first article of the *Criterion*, George Saintsbury pointed out that Thomas Carlyle’s “pro-Germanism” might be one of the “reasons” why he was “unpopular at the present day” (C1 4), since it “was sure to diminish the politeness and either increase the neglect or turn it into positive spurning” (C1 4). Perhaps, Saintsbury’s speculation was not able to explain Carlyle’s “Dullness,” but it suggests both a prevailing anti-pro-Germanism mind-set in the contemporary English society and its nationalist feature. Thus, Eliot believed that “how Europe can be organized” then was “the question of the day,” and one of methods was the reaffirmation of “The European Idea” (C6 97).

Eliot hoped to promote the idea of Europe as a cultural unity, becoming an integral part of a European network of cultural reviews that strengthened the literary and intellectual exchanges between the countries of Western Europe in the age of “the artificial patriotism of the press, of political combinations and unnatural frontiers and the League of Nations” (C11 72). In retrospect, the *Criterion* was “the first periodical in England to print the work of such writers as Marcel Proust, Paul Valéry, Jacques Rivière, Jean Cocteau, Ramon Fernandez, Jacques Maritain, Charles Maurras, Henri

Massis, Wilhelm Worringer, Max Scheler, E. R. Curtius” (C18 271). On the other hand, it formed an informal network of like-minded periodicals across Europe, including the *Criterion* in Britain, *La Nouvelle Revue Française* in France, *Europäische Revue*, *Neue Deutsche Beiträge* and *Die Neue Rundschau* in Germany, and *Revista de Occidente* in Spain, providing “in London a local forum of international thought” (C18 271). Besides, the *Criterion* sought to establish a network for intellectual exchange between comparable European reviews, and published regular reviews of foreign periodicals from 1923 onwards. The *Criterion* promoted a series of new writings from abroad, and this emphasis was clear in the first issue, which included an appraisal of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* by the French novelist Valéry Larbaud and a survey entitled ‘Recent German Poetry’ by the German novelist and poet Hermann Hesse. Later, Eliot considered that “the existence of such a network of independent reviews, at least one in every capital of Europe, is necessary for the transmission of ideas” (NTDC 116). In several of his editorials for the *Criterion*, Eliot elaborated upon this conception of a shared European tradition. In 1923, he argued that “all European civilizations are equally dependent upon Greece and Rome – so far as they are civilizations at all,” adding that “if everything derived from Rome were withdrawn [from English culture] – everything we have from Norman-French society, from the Church, from Humanism [...] what would be left? A few Teutonic roots and husks. England is a ‘Latin’ country” (C2 104-5). He later referred to the subject of “The European Idea” as “one of the ideas which characterizes our age” (C6 97). However, worsening political circumstances through the late 1920s and the 1930s

extinguished this hope. In 1939, Eliot remarked in “Last Words” that the “European mind” “disappeared from view” as “[g]radually communications became more difficult, contributions more uncertain, and new and important foreign contributors more difficult to discover” (CI8 271). Meanwhile, many of the important European periodicals that had connections with the *Criterion* were unable to continue their work in the same way. Later, Eliot referred to this phenomenon as a “gradual closing of the mental frontiers of Europe” (NTDC 116).

I argue that Eliot’s attitude toward nationalism is far more complicated than it seems to be. Although the Treaty of Versailles had “separated nation from nation,” Eliot noted in his 1929 essay on Dante that “nationalism” and “the process of disintegration which for our generation culminates in that treaty” had already “began soon after Dante’s time” (CP3 702). In the essay, Eliot did not put much attention to the threat of current nationalism or the falsity of the Treaty. Instead, he was suggesting a need to retrace a “mentally” “united” (CP3 702) Europe again. Besides, if the general opinion in the *Criterion* was anti-nationalist, it could be argued that Eliot’s *After Strange Gods* had a pro-nationalist nature. In 1933, Eliot travelled to the University of Virginia and delivered the Page-Barbour lectures, which later became the controversial *After Strange Gods* (1934), in which “Eliot began to adumbrate his own vision of the ideal state” (Bradshaw 271). The book is notorious in that it considers “free-thinking” Jews as “undesirable” (ASG 20).¹² This statement prompts

¹² North noted that behind Eliot’s comments on Jew “lurked the practicalities of [his] own historically, politically, and geographically anomalous position as an urbanised expatriate preaching settled habits, traditional pieties, and the healthy influence of the land” (*Political*, 110). On the other hand, Donoghue

William Chace to consider that “*After Strange Gods* is a political work because of the prejudices it expresses, not for the political vision it establishes” (161). Nonetheless, Eliot insisted that “the Jewish problem is not a racial problem at all but a religious problem” (qtd. in Berlin 278). On 30 January 1952, Eliot explained to Isaiah Berlin that “I still do not understand why the word ‘race’ occurs in the sentence, because my emphasis was on the adjective *free-thinking*” (qtd. in Berlin 282). In this thesis, I do not intend to defend Eliot’s anti-Semitic remarks in *After Strange Gods*, but would like to explore the connection between the phrase of “any large number” and the contemporary America. In the early twentieth century, a large number of Jewish immigrants came and settled in America. This phenomenon has arguably been suggested in Eliot’s “Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar.” It could be possible that, when he was criticising the large amount of “free-thinking Jews,” Eliot was actually denouncing the infiltration of the “foreign races” in American then.

Eliot’s pro-nationalistic standpoint was more explicitly manifested in the rest part of *After Strange Gods*, in which Eliot “launches an extended lamentation on New England’s return to its unsubdued state, a thinly veiled meditation on the decline of a tradition, a region, and a people” (Sigg 19) in America by referring to the Civil War as “certainly the greatest disaster in the whole of American history” (ASG 16). For

argued that Eliot’s comments on “free-thinking Jews” are “objectionable, but not for the reasons commonly given: it is objectionable because it is badly written, and, being badly written, it leaves in disorder the feelings from which it issued” (213). Similarly, Bradshaw argues that, “while Eliot’s remarks may be contextualised, they are much harder to excuse” (271). One example is a letter between Eliot and his mother, in which Eliot wrote “[i]t is very bad in me, but I have an instinctive antipathy to Jews, just as I have to certain animals” (LI 482). Julius explored other instances regarding Eliot’s anti-Semitism in his *T. S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism, and Literary Form* (1995).

Eliot, the Civil War was the beginning of a disaster in the American history, since it de-rooted the native culture in America, bringing an increasing number of industries and “foreign races” into America. Later, this idea was more substantially articulated in his *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, in which Eliot repeated that the American Civil War led to the rise of “a plutocratic elite,” accelerated “the expansion and material development of the country,” and an increase in the scale of “mixed immigration,” bringing “the danger of development into a caste system which has not yet been quite dispelled” (45). For Eliot, an industrialised society and the influx of foreign races, for Eliot, pose threats to “a native culture” (ASG 16) in America. He described his sad feelings when he arrived in New England during his visit, and felt frustrated when he saw the land, which symbolized a national spirit, had disappeared. Those lands are those

in which a long struggle of adaption between man and his environment has brought out the best qualities of both; in which the landscape has been moulded by numerous generations of one race, and in which the landscape in turn has modified the race to its own character. (ASG 17)

His words, such as “one race,” and “its own character,” highlight the national character and the unification of a common national identity in America, which is nationalistic in this sense. In lamenting the loss of those lands, Eliot believed that “the chances of the re-establishment of a native culture are perhaps better here than in New England,” since the South was “farther away from New York; you have been less

industrialised and less invaded by foreign races; and you have a more opulent soil” (ASG 16).

In thinking about a way to deal with the decline of American culture, Eliot believed that “[t]he population should be homogeneous,” since “where two or more cultures exist in the same place they are likely either to be fiercely self-conscious or both to become adulterate” (ASG 19). However, it is surprising that he then spoke that “reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable” (ASG 20). According to Stan Smith (*Origins*, 27), Eliot’s lecture was reminiscent of Hitler, of its talk of a western civilisation “worm-eaten by Liberalism,” of the United States as “invaded by foreign races,” of the need for a population to be “homogeneous,” linked by “blood-kinship” and not “adulterated” by other races, while observed “reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable.” However, we should bear in mind that the nationalist nature of *After Strange Gods* was accompanied with a religious spirit. Eliot made it very clear that his role in these lectures was “a role of moralist” (ASG 12), and he believed that, in an age “worm-eaten with Liberalism” (ASG 13), “the struggle of our time” is the effort “to re-establish a vital connexion between the individual and the race; the struggle, in a word, against Liberalism” (ASG 48). In order to do so, Eliot called for the establishment of both a “unity of religious background” (ASG 20) and “a Christian tradition” (ASG 21).

War of Cultures: Fascism, Communism, and Religion

The second “war of cultures” centres on the debate on fascism, communism and religion in the *Criterion* in the late 1920s and the 1930s. In the late 1920s and the 1930s, Eliot’s commentaries dwelt more on contemporary literary, cultural, and socio-political issues questions. Among them, the rise of Fascism and Communism became an important topic, while Eliot often made it clear in his letters that the *Criterion* was not a communist or fascist organ.¹³ Both fascism and Soviet communism were consequences of the First World War. They were developed in the clamour of national and international crises in the early 1930s, and to a large degree led to the coming of the Second World War. As for its nature, Fascism rejected human equality, combining ultra-nationalism with theories of superman, eugenics, and race. It was considered by Oswald Mosley as a “steel creed of an iron age,” and “cuts through the verbiage of illusion to the achievement of a new reality” (16).¹⁴ Communism, meanwhile, took shape in a Bolshevik Revolution fuelled largely by popular dissatisfaction with the War, and aimed for a classless, egalitarian society. Both early fascism and communism enjoyed awkward relationships with Britain’s political establishment, and remained on the margins of British politics, serving as designated “extremes” against which to measure mainstream opinion and practice. On the one hand, the British Fascist groups between 1923 and 1940 were self-proclaimed

¹³ See *L7* 42.

¹⁴ Eliot often mentioned Oswald Mosley in his letters to Rowse in the early 1930s, see *L5* 499 and 507. However, Eliot “disclaimed any connection between [himself] and Sir Oswald Mosley,” see Eliot’s letter to Nora Wydenbruck on 11 May 1954.

patriotic organizations that were concerned primarily with repelling the supposed threat of socialism. Although inspired by Mussolini's repression of the Italian left, the British Fascisti lent its support to the Conservative Party and for some time appeared fascist in name only. Consequently, more vigorously fascist groups had also emerged – the National Fascisti and the vehemently racist Imperial Fascist League, for example – before Mosley's foundation of the British Union of Fascists (BUF) in October 1932. However, the BUF, according to George R. Watson, "never occupied an intellectual role equivalent to that of the British Communist Party" (*Politics*, 71), and "an awareness of fascism hardly began until after Hitler's accession to power in January 1933" (*Politics*, 72) in England. On the other hand, communists clearly stated their intention to overhaul parliamentary democracy and establish a soviet state via the dictatorship of the proletariat. Inspired by the Russian revolutions, communists came to see in Bolshevism, the Soviet Union, and Stalin's five-year plans the basis for a realised socialist future. Nonetheless, these ideologies offered wholly re-imaged civilizations that challenged and animated thinking people. Both provided stinging critiques of the way things were and a combative approach to overcoming the problems of the post-war age.

They gradually stimulated a range of intellectual interests, providing for an influence that extended beyond the relatively closed worlds of academia or literary society. Many intellectuals, such as Pound, were attracted to the possibilities opened by the new political creeds in the aftermath of the Great War.¹⁵ Some scholars argued

¹⁵ For a historical account of Pound's support for Italian Fascism, see Redman.

that artists and writers in the 1930s “had similarly and often quite purposefully been *constructed* [...] as a significant entity, a shaped narrative [...] about what George Orwell had called “the invasion of literature by politics” (qtd. in Batsleer 2). In 1930, Lewis made the case for fascism, praising Mussolini and predicting a prosperous future for Germany’s emergent National Socialist movement. Aldous Huxley, meanwhile, suggests that the Soviet Union provides a more suitable model for Britain to follow. Fascism, as John Strachey later admitted, had an “attractive entrance” (165), and neither he nor Mosley was alone in drifting towards it in the inter-war period. Nevertheless, it should be bear in mind that, as Stefan Collini (86) emphasises, the majority of British intellectuals did not become politically engaged or publicly express their political views at this time.

Neither fascism nor communism was widely discussed in the *Criterion* before 1928. In retrospect, Eliot’s interest in the discussion of Fascism started with his attention to the development of Italian Fascismo in 1923. In a letter to the editor of *The Daily Mail*, published in *The Daily Mail* on 8 January 1923, Eliot wrote that “[n]othing could be more salutary at the present time than the remarkable series of articles which you have been publishing on Fascismo” (CP2 430). However, Eliot quickly realised that Mussolini’s fascist government might not be a panacea to fulfil his ideal of a united European idea. In April 1926, Eliot pointed out a major disparity between the ideas held by the old Roman Empire and the present government of Italy in “The Future of the Roman Empire.” According to Eliot (C4 222), the old Roman Empire was a European idea – the idea of a common culture of Western Europe, and it

must be kept distinct from the essential idea held by the new Roman Empire, which was an Italian idea. Thus, Eliot did not believe Mussolini would be the figure who could retrieve Authority and Tradition in Italy. According to Eliot, the common culture of Western Europe “suggests Authority and Tradition, certainly, but Authority and Tradition (especially the latter) do not necessarily suggest Signor Mussolini” (C4 222). In January 1925, this idea had already been suggested in “On the Eve: A Dialogue,” a short story published in the *Criterion*. It was published under the name of Eliot, but he acknowledged later that Vivien – who joined the British Fascists after their separation – was the primary author, while emphasised that the “political opinions of the speakers cannot be taken as expressing the views of Mr. Eliot himself at the time” (CP2 575). In “On the Eve: A Dialogue,” there is a short conversation between Alexander, Horace, and Agatha. Alexander first said a Constitutional government

“– is no longer possible. It does not matter how this election turns out. No election matters now. The best we can hope for, the only thing that can save us, is a dictator.”

“Good old Mussolini,” shouted Agatha.

“But a dictatorship is only a palliative –” He paused to light a cigarette. (CP2 574)

In the conversation, a dictator, such as Mussolini, was but “a palliative” to the contemporary British politics, which suggests that Mussolini’s political experiment in Italy might be a provisional remedy for the contemporary political predicament, but it cannot be a panacea. In this sense, it is fair to say that Eliot was not “a supporter of any post-Mussolini Fascist movement” (Craig 279), but at most shared some of its

ideas, such as authority and tradition.

However, the *Criterion* was not unfamiliar with the British pro-fascist periodicals. In February 1928, Eliot commented on three periodicals in “Fascisti, Socialists, and Rotarians.” One of them is *The British Lion*, the organ of the British Fascists. In the October-November issue of 1927, *The British Lion* published *The British Fascist Manifesto*, stating the British fascists’ ambition “to resist [...] any attempt by the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, or any other disloyal section of the community, to abolish the Monarchy or disrupt the Empire” (qtd. in *CP3* 333). In its January-February issue of 1928, *The British Lion* opened with a “British Fascist Declaration of Loyalty: The British Fascists take this opportunity to declare their humble allegiance to H. M. King George the Fifth, his Heirs and Successors, and their steadfast loyalty to the Constitution of the British Empire” (qtd. in *CP3* 333). In his “Commentary,” Eliot wrote that “[t]he accusations made by *The British Lion* against British Communists may all be true, and the aims set forth in the statement of policy are wholly admirable” (*CP3* 333). Eliot appreciated “[t]he *Lion* wishes to support ‘His Majesty the King, his heirs and successors, the present Constitution, the British Empire and the Christian Religion’” (*CP3* 333), but he cautiously pointed out the inconsistencies between fascist government and the British Constitution. However, Eliot at that moment had already realised the necessity of forming an intellectual debate on the question of Fascism. In June 1928, Eliot wrote in *The Quarterly Criterion* that “the philosophies expressed or implicit in various tendencies, such as communism or fascism, are worthy of dispassionate examination” (*C7* 291). In the

late 1920s, Eliot encouraged James Strachey Barnes to expound the case for fascism in the *Criterion*, counterbalanced by a series of sympathetic essays from Rowse on the literature of communism.¹⁶

Eliot started a wide debate regarding fascism and communism in the *Criterion* in December 1928. The *Criterion* published Eliot's "The Literature of Fascism," which is a review of Barnes's *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, Aline Lion's *The Pedigree of Fascism*, Gaetano Salvemini's *The Fascist Dictatorship in Ital, Vol. 1: Origins and Practices*, Luigi Sturzo's *Italy and Fascismo*, and Luigi Villari's *The Fascist Experiment*. Eliot first considered that, in "a certain spiritual anaemia," "human beings are inclined to welcome any regime which relieves us from the burden of pretended democracy," and perhaps are "craving for a regime which will relieve us of thought and at the same time give us excitement and military salutes" (C8 288). What really matters in a society, according to Eliot, is order and authority, which was hid in "the motto of fascism" (C8 285). However, he questioned Barnes's imagination of fascism that Europe "can only be united on the basis of the Roman tradition" (C8 285), and pointed out the disconformity between Barnes's Roman political tradition and religious tradition. It is clear that Eliot did not considered fascism as "a panacea," because he failed to "find in it any important element," and those "concepts which might have attracted me in fascism" had been found by Eliot in "the work of Charles

¹⁶ James Strachey Barnes, an important contributor to the *Criterion*, was a Mussolini supporter, who was raised in Italy and educated in England. In 1927, Barnes became Secretary-General of the International Centre for Fascist Studies. On 7 January 1937, Eliot told Henry that Barnes was "a violent Italophile, a pal of Mussolini, and wrote a couple of books about Fascism in its early stages," and he was "also some kind of honorary valet to the Pope, being a R. C. convert" (L6 89).

Maurras” (C8 288).¹⁷ Maurras was a very important figure in the trajectory of Eliot’s intellectual development. His political tenets were “fiercely and resolutely anti-Romantic” (Torrens 314), and he advocated order, discipline, hierarchy, reason, willpower and Classicism, as opposed to intuition, impulse and Romanticism. As one of the leading figures of *Action Française*, Maurras favoured the restoration of absolute monarchy, supported the Catholic Church as an embodiment of the Roman virtues of order, authority and tradition, and was opposed to the Jewish and mystical

¹⁷ Eliot heard Maurras’s philosophy in Babbitt’s class at Harvard. In 1928, Eliot reviewed Leo Ward’s *The Condemnation of the Action Française* and published an article entitled “The Action Française, M. Maurras and Mr. Ward” in the *Criterion*, in which he revealed he had been “a reader of the work of Maurras for eighteen years” (C7 202). As Asher asserts, “from beginning to end, Eliot’s work, including both the poetry and the prose, was shaped by a political vision inherited from French reactionary thinkers, especially from Charles Maurras” (*Ideology*, 2-3). See also Asher’s essay “T. S. Eliot and Charles Maurras,” 20-9. In April 1934, Eliot (C13 451-4) looked back upon his stay in France and acknowledged that it had a lasting influence on his thoughts, stimulated his already strong interest in French poetry, and introduced him, through the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, to the thoughts of Maurras. See also Asher, *Ideology* 8. When Eliot was in France, *Action Française* was in its heyday. Jean Verdenal was familiar with the movements of *Action Française*. According to a letter by Arthur Schlemmer, a fellow medical student of Verdenal, Verdenal “took a small interest, literary and political, in Charles Maurras and *L’Action Française*. He may have been inclined to be monarchist theor[et]ically, but not to take part in this extremist movement” (qtd. in Watson, “Quest” 469). Eliot admitted that he “first discovered Maurras through his book *L’Avenir de l’intelligence*” (qtd. in Torrens 313) in 1911. According to Greene (173), Maurras’s *L’Avenir de l’intelligence* explored the frightening description of the human mind which reduced to total sterility due to the anti-intellectualism of the modern industrial world. Greene (93) took the “Triumphal March” as an example, arguing this poem was drawn from a specific paragraph in the book and reflects both its images and its rhythm. Maurras’s *L’Avenir de l’intelligence*, along with Benda’s *Belphégor*, was considered by Eliot in November 1923 as “an important influence on his intellectual development” (qtd. in Hargrove 46), as it exerted an influence upon *The Waste Land* and Eliot’s other subsequent poems. In the 1920s, Eliot gradually developed a personal relationship with Maurras. See L2 197. On 31 March 1930, Eliot explained his attitude towards Maurras to the editor of *The Bookman* that his “personal acquaintance with M. Maurras is but slight” (L5 133), and he admitted that “there are far grosser positive errors and far greater dangers in the doctrine of Maurras than in that of Babbitt” (L5 134). In 1955, Eliot remarked in a speech at a luncheon organized by the Education Advisory Committee of the London Conservative Union, later published as *The Literature of Politics* (1955), that Maurras’s political movement severely damaged his reputation as a literary critic, and, if Maurras had behaved less than a “N. C. O. of politics” (18), his readers would not have been distracted from enjoying the aesthetic value of his works.

elements in Christianity.¹⁸ Besides, Eliot also rejected fascism as a political creed or practice for England, because Maurras's philosophy might "have a closer applicability to England than those of fascism" (C8 288). On the one hand, the *Action Française* "insists upon the importance of continuity by the Kingship and hereditary class, upon something which has some analogy to what the government of England was, formerly, at least supposed to be; it would protect the humble citizen against the ambitious politician" (C8 288-9). The movement, "in the face of post-war chaos, has [...] rallied together those Catholics to whom Catholicism still bears the old imprint," although its leaders, Daudet and Maurras, considered the Church as "the obvious upholder of the traditional social order" standing for "nationalism, militarism, and royalism" (L3 846). On the contrary, the idea of the Kingship does not play "any great part in fascism," which contemplates "a powerful dictator and a nominal king" rather than "the powerful king and the able minister" (C8 289). On the other hand, fascism aims to advocate centralization, while "[t]he theory of the *Action Française* carries decentralization to the farthest possible point" (C8 289). For Eliot, "the situation of

¹⁸ Maurras believed in authority, order, hierarchy, and tradition. Led by Maurras, *Action Française* was a political organisation which advocated nationalism, monarchy, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Army, and had a huge influence on the *Camelots de Roi*, a group of unruly young people. Eliot was not unfamiliar with *camelots*. In his 1934 "A Commentary", Eliot recalled that "in 1910 I remember the *camelots* cheering the *cuirassiers* who were sent to disperse them, because they represented the Army, all the time that they were trying to stampede their horses" (C13 453). According to Hargrove, the event recalled by Eliot is "a highly publicized controversy known as the *Affaire Fauchois*" (44), which took place in the same month when Eliot arrived in Paris. Fauchois, a young playwright, seriously criticized Jean Racine's *Iphigénie en Aulide* in a lecture preceding a performance of the play at the Théâtre Odéon on 27 October 1910, which immediately led to a contingent of the Camelots who violently shouted him down. As a consequence, on November 3, an escalated riot took place in the theatre during the subsequent lecture. Although the police arrived and arrested some of the rioters, it did not diminish the agitation on the street and caused a demonstration at the Latin Quarter.

England is nearer to the situation of France than it is to that of Italy” (C8 289), while *Action Française* would be a more appropriate political model for England than that of Mussolini. Thus, Eliot warned: “if anything, in another generation or so, is to preserve us from a sentimental Anglo-Fascism, it will be some system of ideas which will have gained much from the study of Maurras” (C7 196-7). In addition, Eliot argued that “sound political thought in one country is not to be built upon political facts in another country,” and that notions of “Russian communism and Italian fascism” were merely “political ideas” rather than “political practice” (C8 290). In this sense, Eliot did not “believe that enthusiasm for Russian or Italian ‘revolution’ has any intellectual value” (C8 290) in England, though “a new school of political thought” might be learnt from “political thought abroad” (C8 290).

In April 1929, the *Criterion* published Rowse’s “The Literature of Communism: Its Origin and Theory”, in which Rowse (C8 422-36) defended the adaptability of Russian communism in England after he examined the nature of communist literature. In the same issue, the *Criterion* also published Barnes’s “Fascism.” Barnes admitted that Eliot was correct in pointing out that his book partially aimed to show that “Fascism is not incompatible with the teaching of the Catholic Church” (C8 446). However, he also pointed out that fascism, as “a theory of State” (C8 446), was different from *Action Française* and other nationalistic movements, which

give every indication of wishing to deify the State, to treat the individual merely as a means to the glory and power and prosperity of

his national group, to regard religion through pragmatic eyes and to fasten on the State as the only positively known thing above and transcending the individual to which he must in duty bound give himself body and soul. (C8 446)

On the contrary, fascism “would not deify the State, but would acknowledge God above the State and the existence of a moral law which is not merely a natural law [...] but a divine law before which the State itself must bow [...], a law justified by the faith” (C8 447). The “central idea” and “the moving force of Fascism,” for Barnes, were “the utter repudiation of materialism and every form of naturalistic theory of the State” (C8 447). Besides, Fascism, unlike other nationalistic movements, presupposes “the existence of a divine Providence” (C8 447), and it

is determined to educate the new generation into one of believers in the supernatural, to make of it a generation of heroes who know not fear because of their faith, who would gladly fly in the face of any danger run in a worthy cause and welcome martyrdom with a smile. (C8 447)

After demonstrating “the revolutionary character of Fascism” (C8 451) and his praise of Mussolini’s leadership in the fascist movement in Italy, Barnes analysed the relationship between fascism and communism. Firstly, he emphasized that “Fascism is not just a revolt against Communism” (C8 456). At its early stage, the threat of Communism “gave Mussolini and the ex-combatants their opportunity of sweeping away the old regime, which had let down the soldiers in the trenches, had let down the

country in the peace negotiations and had allowed Italian society to fall into a condition of practical anarchy” (C8 456). As a result “Fascism gained the support of big financial interests and of the panic-stricken propertied middle classes” (C8 456). However, after Mussolini came to power, he “set himself the task of shedding these ‘capitalist’ influences,” and transformed Fascism gradually into “a movement of the masses” (C8 456). It “consequently makes its appeal to all classes and therein lies its strength” (C8 457). Barnes also suggested that it might be worth “studying Fascism” as a political idea in England, as a response to Eliot’s concern of the inadaptability of Fascism in England. At the end of his article, Barnes explained the fascist’s ideal “perfect man” (C8 459). Barnes wrote confidently that “if Fascism can produce this type endowed with Italian intelligence, the world may be sure that Italy will not plunge Europe into war, except for a cause which would have its echo in the heart of every man of good will” (C8 459). In his article, Barnes explained about the nature of Italian Fascism and its historical development. He also made it clear that the development of Fascism in Italy is closely associated with the War, and possibly will develop in the direct of a war.

After the publication of Barnes’s “Fascism,” Eliot wrote to Barnes on 10 April,

[y]our essay on Fascism has been very successful and received a good deal of praise. I am indulging myself to the extent of writing a shorter essay myself for the next number dealing with you and A. L. Rowse together and I hope to provoke replies from both of you although of course discussion

on the subject will have to get shorter and shorter. (LA 481)

In July 1929, the *Criterion* published Eliot's "Mr. Barnes and Mr. Rowse." Eliot compared communism and fascism, and found them equivalent on several points: neither proposed "[a] revolutionary idea" (C8 683) of government; both appealed to "a combination of statements with unexamined enthusiasms" (C8 687); both were "apparently anti-capitalistic" (C8 689) but would not necessarily be enough to undo "the concentration of power" (C8 689) in the hands of company directors. Eliot also pointed out what he saw as weaknesses in both ideologies. The materialist theory of history was "merely a theory that things happen" (C8 684) by its own logic predicting that communism was bound to lead to something else. Fascism, on the other hand, represented "the Napoleonic idea" (C8 690). Then Eliot made his preference for kingship clear by distinguishing the king, who incarnated the idea of the Nation, from the fascist dictator. By comparing the two systems in his review, Eliot leaned towards a consideration of Italian fascism because communism sought to destroy the church, which was deemed as a crisis by Eliot. Thus, he wrote that "it is conceivable that in particular circumstances fascism might make for peace, and communism for war" (C8 690). Although he stayed clear from commitment or avowal, he was willing to

confess to a preference for fascism [to communism] in practice [...] and I will not admit that this preference is itself wholly irrational. I believe that the fascist form of unreason is less remote from my own than is that of the communists, but that my form is a more reasonable form of unreason. ("Mr.

Barnes”, 690-1)

In October 1929, the *Criterion* published the replies of both Barnes and Rowse. In “Fascism: A Reply,” Barnes responded to Eliot’s questions in “Mr. Barnes and Mr. Rowse” by pointing out three major disparities between Fascism and Communism. The first is their economic policies. Fascism encourages private capital, while Communism not. Then, “the avowed atheism (materialism) of Bolshevism” is “opposed to the attachment of Fascism to the belief in a Divine Providence and in the supernatural” (C9 71). Besides, “the avowed intention of the bolshevists to destroy the institution of the family” (C9 71) is opposite to the fascist emphasis on this institution. The biggest difference between them, according to Barnes, is that “Fascism will endure, while Bolshevism will give way before the irreducible facts of reality [...] until the differences disappear and Bolshevism becomes Fascism” (C9 71-2). He further listed eight “firm fascist principles” (C9 77), considering that “Fascist nationalism” was “not opposed to internationalism provided international action is controlled and guided by the Governments of each national unit” (C9 80). He also believed that “the only way to prevent wars would be by the acceptance of fascist principles in international law, by which the proletarian nations would be able to come into their own on the principle of denying the right of individual nations to pursue purely selfish and monopolistic aims without regard to the general well-being” (C9 80). War, according to Barnes, “can be abolished by enforcing [...] principles of equity between nations” (C9 80). In Rowse’s reply, entitled “Marxism: A Reply,” Rowse expressed his opinions on the difference between fascism and communism.

For him, “Communism aims at transcending the state, and at achieving a classless society,” while fascism “means the glorification of the state, and the perpetuation of groups and classes in its corporative organization” (C9 84).

In the early 1930s, the *Criterion* continued its interest in “Russian affairs” (L5 311). On 5 September 1930, Eliot told Cournos, the contributor of “Russian Periodicals” in the *Criterion*, that he was “very keen to have the *Criterion* have a scoop on Russian affairs; and there is almost nothing except your review of periodicals to indicate that there is anything in Russia except the tragic farce of communism” (L5 311). Eliot also discussed with Rowse the latter’s “capital” (L5 24) essay on communism on 9 January 1930, and then told Rowse on 3 February 1930 that he “should like to write a long letter about” Rowse’s article on Communism, which he “thoroughly enjoyed” (L5 79). In April 1930, Rowse introduced at length the theory and practice of Communism, and its impact on Europe and the Far East.¹⁹ In October 1932, the *Criterion* published A. L. Morton’s “Poetry and Property in a Communist Society,” in which he talked about the economical-political background, provided by a Communist society, to poetry. In July 1934, V. A. Demant compared communism with capitalism, and with religion, in his review of John Macmurray’s *The Philosophy of Communism*. Demant drew a conclusion that “Communism, in the light of its own dialectic, could be seen to have the form without the content or Religion, as it has the content without the form of Capitalism” (C13 689). In 1935, the *Criterion* became interested in the economic reform in Soviet Russia. In April 1935, it

¹⁹ See C9 451-69.

published A. J. Penty's review of W. P. Coats and Zelda K. Coats's *The Second Five-Year Plan of Development of the U. S. S. R.* In his review, Penty was sceptical about the authenticity of the figures and statistics listed in Coats's book, suggesting that it might be the Soviet government's device to "impress capitalist countries with the soundness of its schemes" (C14 517). In July 1936, the *Criterion* published an anonymous review of Waldemar Gurian's *The Future of Bolshevism*, and described it as "[a] stimulating book" (C15 759). In his book, Gurian introduced the theory and practice of Bolshevism, arguing that its characters could be "likewise found in German National Socialism" (C15 759). Gurian argued that German National Socialism "is quintessential Bolshevism," in spite of its "professed defence of established European tradition against the revolution and barbarism of the Russian variety" and "[i]n this way it constitutes [...] a menace to the whole world" (C15 759). In January 1937, the *Criterion* also published John Garrett's review of Beatrice King's *Changing Man: The Soviet Education System*, in which Garrett introduced King's "record of the biggest adventure in education" (C16 356) in the U. S. S. R.

In the 1930s, some poetic works published in the *Criterion* also reflected the journal's interest in the Russian communism. In October 1930, the *Criterion* published four poems by Spender, including a poem called "Lines Written When Walking Down the Rhine." This poem, later known as "In 1929," expressed "conflicting emotions and opposed ideals, typical of that generation torn between the pursuit of personal, emotional liberation and fulfilment and the menace of politics and history" (Perkins, *Modernism* 145). In "Lines Written When Walking Down the

Rhine,” three naked friends, “the new, bronzed German,/ The young communist and myself, being English” (C10 33). “The young communist” was later corrected into “[t]he communist clerk,” who originally appears in the second stanza of “Lines Written When Walking Down the Rhine,” in the published version of “In 1929.” The “clearly autobiographical speaker” recalls “the enmity of the Great War” (Firchow 147) during the generation of the German’s father and his, and notes that now both of them are facing the threat of the communist, who “with world-offended eyes/ Builds with reds his heaven; makes our bones/ The necessary scaffolding to peace” (C10 33). The personal life is vulnerable to history in “Lines Written When Walking Down the Rhine.” Nonetheless, the three friends could still feel for “a moment” (C10 33) their common humanity, “which lies precisely in this vulnerability” (Perkins, *Modernism* 145). In July 1932, the *Criterion* published Hugh MacDiarmid’s poem “Second Hymn to Lenin.” The poem expresses both what MacDiarmid feels poetry’s role should be in a revolutionary society and the role of a revolutionary society is to lay the conditions for better poetry. It suggests not only “the true significance of communism in MacDiarmid’s poetry” (Baglow 116), but also the *Criterion*’s involvement with contemporary political movement in the United Kingdom. A similar communism-related poem, Louis MacNeice’s “To A Communist,” was also published in the *Criterion* in January 1934. In the poem, the speaker responds to a communist whose “thoughts make shape like snow” (CPI3 230), and, as many scholars noted, it suggests MacNeice’s “reservations” (Stanford 112) over communism.

On the other hand, the *Criterion*’s interest in the discussion regarding fascism

could be seen in its contributions on the post-war German society in the 1930s. The *Criterion* published a series of articles on the contemporary German political ideas, highlighting the threat to the unity of European culture presented by totalitarian governments. In April 1931, the *Criterion* published Thomas Mann's "An Appeal to Reason," translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter. In his article, Mann considered that "there are hours [...] when art fails to justify itself in practice" (C10 394). Those hours include "sixteen years ago, when the War broke out that was to be for every conscious human being so much more than a war," in "the post-war years" when Germany "collapsed," and "again to-day" when "we are swept by a new economic crisis that stirs political passions afresh" (C10 394). According to Mann, "the foreign and the domestic field" and "the bad economic situation" together "conditioned the sensational election results," and the "German people took advantage of a garish election poster, the so-called national-socialist, to give vent to its feelings" (C10 399). Mann considered this trend dangerous, since "[f]anaticism turns into a means of salvation, enthusiasm into epileptic ecstasy, politics becomes an opiate for the masses, a proletarian eschatology; and reason veils her face" (C10 402). Mann's insightful perspective foresaw the dangers of the rise of Hitler's National Socialist Party in the German elections. Thus, he called for "an appeal to Reason" (C10 393) in not only Germany, but also Europe. A year later, Eliot praised Curtius's *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr*, which warned of the Nazi threat to education. In his editorial for October 1932, Eliot noted the menacing atmosphere which confronted German intellectuals – such as Curtius and the German Jewish scholar Friedrich Gundolf, who were both

contributors to the *Criterion*. Besides, the *Criterion* Published Max Rychner's article, translated by Marjorie Gabain, in its "German Chronicle" column in July 1932. Rychner criticised the "national irrationalism," which was "under the name of National Socialism" (CII 708), in Germany. For Rychner, the movement of National Socialism "has no intellectual programme" (CII 708). Nor does it have a clearly formulated "political and commercial aims" (CII 708). It incited "the unconscious part of the soul," and "calls to blood rather than to the spirit" (CII 708). Its nature at the beginning appears as Anti-Semitism, and then "allied itself to the feelings of home, of race, and of land, to the irrational, specifically Teutonic element, intangible in itself, but belonging to the very definition of Germany" (CII 708). Besides, the movement is "Anti-Marxian, and its nationalism can be partly explained as a reaction against Marxian internationalism" (CII 708). Recognising the nature of National Socialism, Rychner also alerted readers to "the crisis in Germany to-day" – "there is hardly a manifestation of intellectual or artistic life that is not immediately evaluated and judged by political or social standards" (CII 709). In Rychner's perspective, Germany was moving at the direction of what Maurras described as "Politique d'abord," and this phenomenon will "only result in a lowering of the cultural level" (CII 709), as E. R. Curtius had pointed out in his *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr*.

The discussion of the transformation of German society after the National Socialists raised to power was given more space after 1932. In October 1933, the *Criterion* published Spender's review of W. H. Dawson's *Germany Under the Treaty* and Erich Roll's *Spotlight on Germany*. Both books, according to Spender, focused on

the development of the post-war Germany. The former touched upon German's suffering under the Treaty of Versailles, while the latter focused on the trajectory of German post-war political policies. Following the National Socialists' ascent to power in Germany, the *Criterion* published its "Foreign Reviews" by A. W. G. Randall, whose review of recent German periodicals focused on the Nazification of the press and the harassment of Jewish writers in Germany. He pointed out that "the "accession of the National Socialists to power has already had its effect on literature" (C13 173), and noted a number of examples in recent issues of *Die Literatur*, *Die neue Rundschau*, and *Europäische Revue*. His review, to some degree, suggests the *Criterion's* interest in the contemporary Germany politics, particularly Hitler's accession to power in 1933. Later, the *Criterion* published Rychner's "Germany and the West," translated by Marjorie Gabain, in January 1934. Rychner admitted that "[t]o write about the Germany of 1933 is to write about a different country from that which we knew in 1932," and Germany "seems to have shifted to a different part of the map, further east than it was before" (C13 300). However, compared with Massis's worry over "the crisis of Western civilization and the danger of asiaticism" (C4 225) in the 1920s, Rychner believed that Germany's turning to the oriental in the 1930s was "the result of the general upheaval that has taken place" and "the deliberately anti-western attitude of several of ideologies now in vogue" (C13 300). In April 1936, Rychner published another "German Chronical," in which he regretfully wrote that German Nazi government's "guiding hand is felt everywhere" and "in Germany the state has become the chief organ of enterprise" (C15 489). In 1941, Eliot

observed that “to many people a critical attitude towards ‘democracy’ has come to imply a friendly attitude towards fascism,” which is “a nastier name,” but fascism, “from a truly Tory point of view, is merely the extreme degradation of democracy” (*On*, 246).

Fully conscious of the shortcomings of contemporary society, Eliot wrote in “Christianity and Communism” (1932) that “we live in a world in which true liberty declines” (*CP4* 426), so what seems to be important, as Eliot wrote in “Niccolo Machiavelli,” “is order and the maintenance of order” (*CP3* 115). Following this notion, he turned to Christianity for help, and became increasingly concerned with the relationship between Christianity and culture. After his conversion into the Church of England in 1927, establishing a Christian society on both a political vision and a religious vision seems to become Eliot’s plan for the future society, as he believed that the Church was “fundamentally an institution of order and authority, with ‘fixity of dogma’” (*L5* xiii). Although Eliot’s turn to the church was not sudden, his “reversion to politics armed with the categories of spirit” (Levenson, “Eliot’s” 382) exerted an immediate impact on his following writings and led to “a major shift in his centre interest” (A. Cunningham 211).²⁰ In 1928, Eliot announced, in the preface to *For*

²⁰ Hints of his private spiritual search can be found in his early writings, his study of Bradley’s *Absolute*, his years of immersion in Dante, his acceptance of the doctrine of original sin, and his interest in the sermons of English divines from Andrewes to Donne. Sencourt noted Eliot’s impartial examination of “how far the faith of a Christian depended on belief in the Jesus of history” in his review of William Temple’s *Mens Creatrix* in 1917. Sencourt considered that “the Christian faith was already securing its place at the back of his mind” (66) before his conversion. Barry Spurr’s “*Anglo-Catholic in Religion: T. S. Eliot and Christianity*” (2010) also explored “the genesis, development and character of Eliot’s Christianity – the faith which, for forty years, was central to his life and a seminal influence in his work throughout that period” (xii).

Lancelot Andrewes, that he was a “classicist in literature, a royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion” (vii). This avowal was the same as the Maurras’s description of his intellectual complexion – “classique, catholique, monarchique” – in the March 1913 issue of *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (Ackroyd 41). The parallel between Eliot’s self-recognition and that of Maurras’s, according to Torrens, suggests that Eliot might find “a whole constellation of ideas representing the tradition that was dear to him” (315) in Maurras’s ideas. However, for some critics, his Maurrassian “declaration of classicism in literature, religion in politics and Anglo-Catholicism in religion marks the first stage of a progressive decline in critical and poetic power” or “a continuity in poetic development with a shift or a decline from literary to social and religious criticism” (A. Cunningham 211).²¹ After his conversion, Eliot published a series of literary works of strong religious implication, notably *Ash-Wednesday* (1930), the Ariel poems, and *The Rock* (1934). They suggested, in one way or another, the journey of Eliot’s religious pursuit. In his prose, Eliot asserted time and again that the consideration of poetry, economic issues, political doctrines, education, or censorship, could not be divorced from ethical principles founded upon religious belief.²² The majority of the previous studies have pointed out that at that stage Eliot

²¹ This avowal was the same as the Maurras’s self-description of his intellectual complexion – “classique, catholique, monarchique” – in the March 1913 issue of *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (Ackroyd 41).

²² In “A Note on Poetry and Belief” (1927), Eliot wrote that he “cannot see that poetry can ever be separated from [...] belief” (CP3 19-20). In August 1929, he told Paul Elmer More that he was anticipating the emergency of “a new type of intellectual, combining the intellectual and the devotional” (L4 567). In 1935, the connection between religion and literature was strengthened in Eliot’s “Religion and Literature,” in which he not only hoped that “the application of our religion” could be associated to “the criticism of any literature” (SE3 389), but also supported that “[l]iterary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint” (SE3 388). In “Modern

concentrated his attention most vigorously on the possibility of a Christian society (Donoghue 206). However, the theological reorientation in the *Criterion* alienated some of its most important collaborators, such as Bonamy Dobrée, who described it as a “Religio-Political Organ” (qtd. in Harding, *Criterion* 178).²³

Eliot’s engagement with the idea of Fascism and Communism is complicated. Some previous studies have explored Eliot’s subtle involvement with them. North, for example, argues that “Eliot edges away from fascism in two rather different directions” (118). On the one hand, Eliot “complains that it offers nothing as convenient as kingship to incarnate the character of the people” (North 118). On the other hand, Eliot complains in “The Literature of Fascism” that “the aim of fascism seems to be centralization,” while “[t]he theory of the *Action Française* carries decentralization to its farthest possible point” (North 118). However, this contradiction is not a contradiction for Eliot, since the appeal of Maurras’s *Action Française* “is its apparent ability to combine kingship and decentralisation” and “to argue [...] that the nation needs a single human being as its representative cultural personality and that it should be allowed to lapse into a collection of local community” (North 118). As Cairns Craig argues, Eliot “was not a supporter of any post-Mussolini Fascist movement: he supports the ideas which created Fascism but despairs of action sufficiently to see its

Education and Classics” (1932), Eliot believed that the deterioration of education in the present was essentially “a religious problem” (*SE3* 507). In his closing editorial “Last Words,” Eliot admitted that “a right political philosophy came more and more to imply a right theology” (*C18* 272).

²³ Eliot claimed that he would avoid “too distinct a theological cast to the *Criterion*” (qtd. in Margolis 135). However, his editorials time and again underlined the importance of religion. On 9 April 1929, Bonamy Dobrée complained to Read, the *Criterion* had turned into a “Religio-Political Organ” (qtd. in Harding, *Criterion* 178).

instantiation as a denial of its ideas” (279-80). Charles Ferrall (71-114), however, suggests that Eliot might be attracted to Fascism, since Fascism promised to reintegrate art into society while simultaneously guaranteeing its autonomy in the social context of art’s increasing separation from a society undergoing a second industrial revolution.

However, Eliot was not a supporter of either Fascism or Communism, since they were pagan ideologies. For Eliot, “[t]he moral foundations of Communism and Fascism seem to [him] equally unacceptable” (L7 303). His belief in Anglo-Catholicism, which is a dominant force in Eliot’s late social writings, prevented him from sympathizing with Soviet Communism or Italian Fascism. As Moody points out, Eliot’s late political point of view was “dependent upon and only defined by theology and revelation” (319).²⁴ In “The Literature of Fascism” (1928), Eliot regretted to see that “many political beliefs are substitutes for religious beliefs” (C8 282), but he was clear that “[t]he more a political creed usurps the place of religious creed, the more risk of its becoming merely a façade” (C8 282-3). Religion, in Eliot’s view, will not be replaced by other concepts. In “The Humanism of Irving Babbitt” (1928), Eliot criticized Irving Babbitt’s assertion that “humanism is the alternative to religion” (CP3 454).²⁵ For Eliot, the concepts of religion and humanism

²⁴ Moody maintains this point of view in the second edition of *Thomas Stearns Eliot: Poet*, published in 1994.

²⁵ On 31 March 1930, Eliot repeated that statement: although he had “the greatest admiration” (L5 134) for Babbitt, he regretfully felt obliged to point out that Babbitt’s humanistic outlook had been transformed into “the hard and fast dogma of a new ethical church, or something between a church and a political party” (L5 134-5). “Babbitt’s humanism,” according to M. A. R. Habib, ““posits a unity which might contextualize historically the reductive multiplicity and isolated present of bourgeois

were not parallel. He stated in “Religion without Humanism” (1930) that humanism will be “in the end futile without religion” (CP4 36), although religion will not fulfil its function alone. In his prose, Eliot criticized Nazi Germany and Soviet communism for stimulating religious fervour without an ethical system founded upon doctrinal beliefs. In 1931, he intoned a severe judgement on the entire culture of modern secularism: “the experiment of attempting to form a civilized but non-Christian mentality” will “fail,” but “we must be very patient in awaiting its collapse” (CP4 810).

With regard to the relationship between Christianity and Russian communism, Eliot argued in his article “Christianity and Communism,” published by *The Listener* on 16 March 1932, that he was against Russian communism, “a religion which is not mine” (CP4 424). As for the fate of Russian communism, Eliot predicted that the current communist system did “not work properly” and, as an increasing number of people believed, “it never did” and “it never will” (CII 467). On the one hand, “it is exactly in its religious development that Communism seems to me to collapse and to become something both ludicrous and repulsive” (CII 468). For Eliot, as he wrote in July 1933, “Communism has what is now called a ‘myth,’” which “is successful so long as it gives people the illusion that they are not bored; so long as it can give them the illusion that they are important” (CPI2 644). However, it would not be “adaptable to a civilization which is predominantly middle-class, as is the whole of western

world,” and Babbitt considered “multiplicity as embracing individualism, unrestrained liberty in morality, politics and aesthetics, uncontrolled pluralism, a liberal obedience to facts and the unconstrained hegemony of science” (15).

Europe, Britain and America” (CP12 646). Thus, Eliot did not believe that “any class in this country could endure such minute control of their lives – though it is astonishing how much control they can endure,” and it would lead to “chaos” rather than “the Russian kind of order” (CP4 427). On the other hand, Eliot believed that his “conception of the good life for the individual, as underlying political-economic ideas, is [...] akin to Mr. Douglas Jerrold’s notion of the Ethical State” (CI2 646). Jerrold considered the “Ethical State” as the objective of the “authoritarian group on the Right of the Conservative Party” (164) and “the ultimate cure of our troubles” (174) in his May 1933 article “English Political Thought and the Post-War Crisis.” Similarly, Christopher Dawson’s article “Religion and the Totalitarian State,” published in the *Criterion* in the October issue of 1934, offered a clearer explanation.²⁶ For Dawson, Communism “challenges Christianity on its own ground by offering mankind *a rival way of salvation*,” or rather, as a Communist poster says, “Jesus promised the people Paradise after death, but Lenin offers them Paradise on earth” (CI4 7). With regard to the relationship between religion and German Fascism, Dawson believed that “it is not that the Nazi movement is anti-religious,” but “it has a religion of its own which is not that of Christian orthodoxy” (CI4 8). According to Levenson, Dawson “was no simple influence upon Eliot,” since, when reading Dawson’s writing of the thirties, one is likely to “hear what Eliot dare not openly say, but what he often discreetly means” (“Eliot’s”, 383). For Eliot, he was clearly aware of Dawson’s “alarming tendency towards fascism” (L7 127), while was “quite ready

²⁶ On 11 July 1934, Eliot wrote to Dawson, saying he was “very much interested in your article” and he did not “think it at all unsuitable for the *Criterion*” (L7 264).

to agree to anything [he] say about Communism” (*L7* 179). However, Eliot also questioned Dawson’s assertion that “the authority claimed by a fascist state” would be compatible with “ecclesiastical authority,” while suggesting that English Fascism might be as “spiritually destructive” (*L7* 179) as English Communism. For Eliot, a Christian society is a better option. This idea might be suggested in the Rev. Edward Quinn’s article in July 1938:

[w]hether the State be democracy or dictatorship, Fascist, Liberal or even Communist, Christian philosophy will give justification provided it safeguards these principles in theory; and even if it denies them in theory, but provides for them in practice, Christians will loyally accept their obligations as members of the State. (*C17* 626)

Eliot alludes to this idea in *The Rock*, in which he “had a scene lampooning the British fascists as well as the communists” (*L5* 499).²⁷ In the sixth part of *The Rock*, the speaker says that “[t]hey constantly try to escape/ From the darkness outside and within/ By dreaming of systems so perfect that no one will need to be good” (*CPP* 159). This passage alludes to Eliot’s “Christianity and Communism” (1932), in which he wrote that

[n]o perfect scheme can work perfectly with imperfect men; if the Russian scheme ever comes to “work” perfectly with what I call imperfect men,

²⁷ *The Rock* (1934) is Eliot’s first full dramatic work and a pageant play written to raise money for forty-five churches in the northern suburbs of London.

then to me the Russian system will be condemned by its very efficiency.

(CP4 428)

Believing in the inherent imperfection of humanity, Eliot does not believe that a “system that continues to repeat, and must repeat, the words ‘be ye perfect’ can be expected to work perfectly” (CP4 428). Nor does he believe that a system can function well with imperfect men. For him, only in a Christian society can we find the “perfect” men, since “Christians will loyally accept their obligations as members of the State” (CI7 626).

Besides, Eliot considered religion as not only a matter of personal faith, but also a tool to maintain social order in a state. In “Niccolò Machiavelli” (1927), Eliot wrote that Machiavelli, as a Roman Christian, “maintained steadily that an established Church was of the greatest value to a State” (CP3 113), since, by quoting Machiavelli, “[r]eligion produced good order, and good order is generally attended with good fortune and success in any undertaking” (CP3 114). On the contrary, a world without religious faith will never be in order, as Thomas Becket said in *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), a historical drama about the assassination of St. Thomas Becket of Canterbury:

Temporal power, to build a good world,
To keep order, as the world knows order.
Those who put their faith in worldly order
Not controlled by the order of God,
In confident ignorance, but arrest disorder,
Make it fast, breed fatal disease,
Degrade what they exalt. (Eliot, *Murder* 32-3)

On the other hand, Eliot was also clear that the function of religion needed a stable and prosperous social background. In “Arnold and Pater” (1930), Eliot recognized the foundation of a positive relationship between religion and art is associated with the stability and prosperity of a state. He wrote that “[w]hen religion is in a flourishing state, when the whole mind of society is moderately healthy and in order, there is an easy and natural association between religion and art” (CP4 182). Thus, I agree with Victor F. Calverton’s assertion that Eliot was an “inverted Marxian” who shared the Marxist critique of “nineteenth century individualism” (372) but proposed a Catholic rather than a Communist community as the replacement.

“Internecine warfare”

As Paul Saint-Amour points out, the interwar period was “a time of both postwar relief and wrenching anxiety about the next war” (317). In retrospect, the polarisation of European politics increased in the late 1920s and the early 1930s, and the narrative of “The Last War in History” (Campbell 166) had become a castle in the air.²⁸ Before the Second World War actually broke out, a number of writers had been acutely aware that the clouds of warfare started to gather for another time. In as early as 1926, H. G. Wells gave “A Forecast of the ‘Next War’” (1080) in the 1926 edition of *The Outline of History*. On 8 June 1940, Orwell wrote in his wartime diary that “[s]ince 1934 I have known war between England and Germany was coming, and since 1936 I have known it with complete certainty” (392). Virginia Woolf, similarly, anticipated the

²⁸ In November 1918, P. J. Campbell, a British WWI Gunner, like many others, thought that “there would never be another war like this one. The Last War in History!” (166).

war in her early draft of *Between the Acts* by raising the ghosts of poets of the First World War.²⁹ Besides, MacNeice's *Autumn Journal*, written in December 1939, is also a warning of a future war. It is clear that Eliot is also one of those writers. During a luncheon with Eliot in 1929, Spender asked him what form he had thought the future of civilisation would take. "Internecine warfare," Eliot answered, and then he explained that its meaning is "[p]eople killing one another in the streets" ("Remembering", 53). In the story, Eliot thought that Western civilization was confronted by impending ruin and that its collapse would be closely associated with the "[i]nternecine warfare." According to Lucy McDiarmid, "[t]o be a poet in the interval between the wars was to hear voices of despair" (ix), and the voice made by history resonates in Eliot's writings. McDiarmid argued that

[t]he strident voices of a troubled England sounded through Eliot's play *The Rock*, where Redshirts, Blackshirts, Agitators, Plutocrats, and the weaker "voices of the unemployed" compete for attention. And in the midst of the cries of the mob and the marketplace Eliot heard the Word: "The Word in the desert/ Is most attacked by voices of temptation." (McDiarmid ix)

It could be suggested that the *Criterion* also had a premonition of a potential war, and started involved itself in the discussion of war in the early 1930s. This is closely associated with the contemporary historical context. According to Sharpe, "the country was in a mess" in the early 1930s, as "[i]n December 1930 unemployment

²⁹ Virginia Woolf began the writing of *Between the Acts* in 1938, and rewrote the novel in wartime.

stood at 2.5 million; the following year Britain was forced off the gold standard and a National Government under Ramsay MacDonald was brought into being, to confront the deepening Depression” (127). In January 1930, Eliot hoped to publish more discussions “on the subjects of Nationalism and International Relations” (C9 182) in the *Criterion*. His commentary “Nationalism, Disarmament, and Peace” suggests *Criterion*’s attention to the development of contemporary international politics, and its alert for the potential threat of a new war. A war, according to Eliot, could be caused by people’s “fear of war,” because “[i]t is easy to convince people of the horrors, and of the harm that war does” (C9 183). However, Eliot believed that “it is at least as important to convince them that it does no good, and has no grandeur” due to the “tragic” insignificance of war, and that “the sense of glory,” advocated by nationalist ideology, “has other, and only other, means of expression” (C9 183).

Eliot’s contemplation over the issue of war in the *Criterion* is echoed in one of his contemporary poems – “Triumphal March.” The poem is Eliot’s incomplete “challenging experiment” in terms of finding “a new style and subject” (Sharpe 126). According to Eliot, “Triumphal March” was motivated by his “study of the mother-son relation,” and has a connection to “Beethoven’s version *Coriolan*” (L5 368). In 1937, he even emphasized that “*Triumphal March* was not concerned with contemporary politics” (qtd. in *PI* 820). Nonetheless, many previous studies still consider that the poem is closely related to the theme of war. In 1932, Hugh Ross Williamson (181-4), for example, observes that the poem was likely to allude to the post-Peace Europe, if *The Waste Land* suggested the post-War Europe. Some critics

have also pointed out three sources that “Triumphal March” might draw on. The first is Eliot’s memories of London parades after the Allied victory in the First World War. Ricks and McCue (*PI* 821) list Eliot’s letter to Charlotte Eliot in 1918, in which Eliot described the crowded London welcome scene when President Woodrow Wilson visited London on 30 December 1918, as a possible source of the title “Triumphal March.” Secondly, Kojecký (101), Kenner (221), and Spender (*T. S. Eliot*, 216) have explored the poem’s allusion to Mussolini’s 1923 march in Rome. Thirdly, Matthiessen (82-3) points out the final line of “Triumphal March” – “*Et les soldats falsaient la haie? ILS LA FAISAIENT*” (*CPP* 128) – was a quotation from Maurras’s *L’Avenir de l’intelligence*, which suggested a link between “Triumphal March” and *L’Avenir de l’intelligence*. Based on Matthiessen’s discovery, Stead argued that this fact “confirms” that “the poem stood in relation to the politics of its time” (*Pound*, 218-9).

“Triumphal March” has often been considered as a fascist poem. In Stead’s study, he disagrees with Matthiessen’s “protest against the suggestion that this is a Fascist poem,” and does not believe that Eliot “can or should be absolved of the stand he took in relation to the history of his time” (*Pound*, 219). For Stead, the climax of the poem is “the arrival of ‘the Hero, the Führer,’” whose “stillness and inner strength” is very special in that no other male figure in Eliot’s poetry has ever received “such unqualified preference” (*Pound*, 218). Hence, Stead considers that “to place an idealized strong man squarely in a political context, as this poem undoubtedly does, is to invoke a whole Fascist ideology” (*Pound*, 219). He also suggests that the

“Triumphal March” alludes to “what Eliot spelled out discursively in his political prose” (*Pound*, 219), especially the attitude to the crowd in this poem.

There is no interrogation in his eyes
Or in the hands, quiet over the horse’s neck,
And the eyes watchful, waiting, perceiving, indifferent. (*CPP* 127)

Stead believes that its attitude alluded in the passage was “consistent with his 1931 statement [...] that ‘a new asceticism’ had to be ‘imposed upon the many’; and it belongs with statements made two or three years later about modern society being ‘worm-eaten with Liberalism’” (*Pound*, 219). In terms of Eliot’s “idealization of the strong man,” Stead believed that “Eliot was with Hitler” and “there is no point in pretending otherwise” (*Pound*, 219).

Although I agree with Stead’s assertion that Eliot should not “be absolved of the stand he took in relation to the history of his time” (*Pound*, 219), I argue that Stead’s point of view overlooks two important facts. First, “Triumphal March” was first published in October 1931, before Hitler’s accession to power in January 1933. It is true that Eliot might be aware of the rise of Hitler’s National Socialist party in Germany before the publication of “Triumphal March,” as, in April 1931, Thomas Mann’s expressed his concern over the rise of “the so-called national-socialist” (*C10* 399), while Lewis openly predicted a prosperous future for Germany’s emergent National Socialist movement in the early 1930s. However, it does not necessarily mean that the arrival of “the Hero” is “the arrival of “the Führer” (Stead, *Pound* 218). Instead, the poem continued Eliot’s contemplation over the topic of fascism in the

Criterion, as he wrote in “The Literature of Fascism” that, in “a certain spiritual anaemia,” “human beings are inclined to welcome any regime which relieves us from the burden of pretended democracy,” and perhaps are “craving for a regime which will relieve us of thought and at the same time give us excitement and military salutes” (C8 288). Second, I am not convinced by how Stead supports his accusation of “a whole Fascist ideology” (*Pound*, 219) in “Triumphal March,” either. Stead draws that conclusion on the basis that Eliot places “an idealized strong man squarely in a political context” (*Pound*, 219). Perhaps the “idealization of the strong man” (*Pound*, 219) in “Triumphal March” reminds Stead of the concept of *ibermensch* in Nazi Germany, but a similar “strong man” can also be found both in the past and in the contemporary Europe, such as Napoleon, Mussolini, Stalin, Wilson, Lenin or other great military strategists and political leaders in Europe. Thus, Stead’s interpretation has presumed the poem’s connection to Fascism, and simplified the political implication in “Triumphal March.”

I believe that “Triumphal March” is Eliot’s response to the rise of nationalism and militarism in Europe in the early 1930s. After its publication, a German reader wrote to Eliot, considering “Triumphal March” as “being ‘militarist’” (L5 707), but Eliot responded, “if anything it was distinctly the contrary” (L5 707). For Eliot, it is not a “militarist” poem, but a poem about militarism in the contemporary Europe. The speaker in the poem might be an onlooker in a triumphal march, but that does not necessarily mean he was a militarist. This also applies to Eliot’s case. It is true that Eliot wrote a poem entitled “Triumphal March,” in which he included a list of

weapons and an august army officer, but that does not mean Eliot admired the militarist idea. On the contrary, I believe that the tone of “Triumphal March” is more complicated than it seems to be. On the one hand, it is “a political satire” (L5 707). Judged from the general point of view regarding peace and war, militarism and pacifism in his *Criterion*, Eliot detested the social-political upheaval provoked by the ideology of nationalism. As early as 1929, Eliot expressed his concern that the development of modern languages had led to a growing nationalistic trend in different countries. He wrote that “[w]hen you read modern philosophy, in English, French, German, and Italian, you must be struck by national or racial differences of thought: modern languages tend to separate abstract thought” (SE 239). However, his observation of that phenomenon is followed with his solution: “mediaeval Latin tended to concentrate on what men of various races and lands could think together,” as it “cuts across the modern division of nationality” (SE 239). As a central figure in the development of mediaeval Latin, Dante and his Florentine speech were spoken about favourably by Eliot, who wrote that “Dante, none the less an Italian and a patriot, is first a European” (SE 239). Thus, he made great efforts to establish contacts with other like-minded foreign journals, endeavouring to erect a “European idea” and retrieve the “order,” as well as “authority,” in the post-war Europe. However, the fact that the nationalistic ideology kept growing in some European countries worried Eliot, who started doubting the future of Europe. Thus, when he was describing a “triumphal” march which had been a custom of imperial Rome, Eliot was perhaps criticizing the rise of nationalism, whose triumph was likely to bring disaster to

Europe in the future. On the other hand, Eliot was also worried about the concept of “order” and “authority” in that those two concepts had been reduced into empty catchwords. “Order and authority,” Eliot wrote in 1928,

are good: I believe in them as wholeheartedly as I think one should believe in any single idea; and much of the demand for them in our time has been soundly based. But behind the increasing popular demand for these things, the parroting of the words, I seem to detect a certain spiritual anaemia. (C8 287-8)

According to Sherry, “this memory of the Roman triumphal march” in the poem suggested “a lost source of order and authority” (“Where”, 98), as well as “a subject for memory and desire, for nostalgia, for elegy” (“Where”, 99). However, Eliot’s attitude towards the concept of “order” and “authority” is complicated. On 7 November 1930, Eliot told Bonamy Dobrée that “‘Order’ and ‘Authority’ are more dangerous catchwords now, than ‘Liberty’ and ‘Reform’ were fifty or seventy-five years ago,” since Order and Authority “may point more directly to the yellow press and the crook capitalists than Liberty and Reform pointed to Socialism” (L5 375). Then, Eliot articulated that he “as scared of Order as of Disorder” (L5 376). Likewise, Eliot wrote on 23 February 1931 that

the word ‘order’ in political and social theorizing, is in danger merely of replacing the Nineteenth Century word ‘liberty’, and both words in a complete vacuum are dangerous. The question is what order and what

liberty? (L5 487)

Eliot's concern over the emptiness of such words as "order" and "authority" was accompanied by his concern over the coming of another war, which was suggested in the list of weapons and supplies in "Triumphal March."

5, 800, 000 rifles and carbines,
102, 000 machine guns,
28, 000 trench mortars,
53, 000 field and heavy guns,
I can't tell how many projectiles, mines and fuses,
13, 000 aeroplanes,
24, 000 aeroplanes engines,
50, 000 ammunition waggons,
now 55,000 army waggons,
11, 000 field kitchens,
1, 150 field bakeries. (CPP 127)

According to Grover Smith, this passage was "purloined almost verbatim from" Erich F. W. Ludendorff's *The Coming War*, published by Faber in June 1931, and the weaponry list "represents the munitions surrendered or destroyed by the Germans after Versailles" (*T. S. Eliot's*, 162). In *The Coming War*, Ludendorff forecast the coming of another world war. He wrote that

[t]he world war has proved a disappointment to the supernational forces in many ways. They are too affected by superstition, their Jewish mentality, or the teaching of Christianity to understand that the nations are governed by spiritual laws of the highest import. (qtd. in *PI* 825)

Thus, Ludendorff observed that it was time for the German people to "take the sword

to regain their liberty” (qtd. in *PI* 825). This point of view was implicitly echoed in the line “Don’t throw away that sausage, / It’ll come in handy” (*CPP* 128). According to Ricks and McCue, the word “sausage” was a slang word, meaning a “German trench-mortar bomb, so called because of its shape” (*PI* 824). In this sense, when the voice “Don’t throw away that sausage, / It’ll come in handy” is heard, it is subtly associated with an implication of the rising war atmosphere in Germany.

On the other hand, the passage of “Don’t throw away that sausage, / It’ll come in handy” also alludes to the difficulty of Disarmament in the late 1920s and early 1930s. According to Article 8 of the League’s Covenant, the League should reduce armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations. However, the League of Nations’ effort to implement the Disarmament did not proceed successfully in that it failed to build up trust among its member states or formulate a practical plan among them. As Eugenia Kiesling (327-51) has explored, many major powers did not truly abandon their practices of armaments, while in fact preparing the next war during the interwar period. In 1932, the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments of 1932-37, also known as the World Disarmament Conference or Geneva Disarmament Conference, was held in Geneva under the chairmanship of former British Foreign Secretary Arthur Henderson. In the conference, Germany demanded the same level of armaments as other powers, while France wanted Germany to be kept disarmed. Besides, Britain and America were not prepared to offer the unlimited support that France needed to give up its armaments, either. It is clear that Eliot focused on the

issue of disarmament in his letters. On 3 February 1930, Eliot told Rowse that he hoped to find “a few active politicians” (L5 78) to contribute to *Criterion*. On the next day, he explained his plan to Rowse in details. Eliot wanted to “round up in an article the considerable literature (or some of it) of the last year or so on Disarmament, Peace Pacts etc.,” and “should like to get a good essay for the June number, which could probably take in the Naval Conference in retrospect” (L5 84). In the same letter, Eliot wrote that he wanted “(apart from the Politics discussion) to get several views on the subject of Nationalism – a word much used for years, but the meaning not very often analysed” (L5 84). On 10 February 1930, Eliot expressed his wish that “there might exist an informally political club of few members” who had “a cross-section of opinion” and “desire to look at politics present and future” (L5 95). Besides, his attitude towards this issue seemed to be forecast in the passage of “Don’t throw away that sausage, / It’ll come in handy.” Behind the passage is a firm tone, forecasting the coming of another war. In preparation for the potential war, the speaker hopes to preserve the weapon, symbolised by the “sausage” image, so that they will “come in handy” when a war truly happens.

In April 1932, Cournos reviewed a Soviet Russian periodical *Krasnaya Nov*, in which readers can feel the intensifying hostility between the Soviet Russian and Germany. In the July issue, Cournos pointed out the writing style of the political writers in Soviet Russia, who “rarely minced their words, especially when dealing with their enemies” (C11 567). Cournos gave an instance of Feodor Zhalobov, a contributor to *Krasnaya Nov*, Zhalobov satirised Hitler’s image and governing

capacity in his article in the July issue of *Krasnaya Nov.* If Cournos shows only a caricature of the escalation of the tension between nations, the military intension becomes more explicit in “Difficulties of a Statesman,” the second part of the unfinished “Coriolan.” In “Difficulties of a Statesman,” its connections to an international war have been suggested in the opening lines.

All flesh is grass comprehending
The Companions of the Bath, the Knights of the British Empire, the
Cavaliers,
O Cavaliers! Of the Legion of Honour,
The Order of the Black Eagle (1st and 2nd class).
And the Order of the Rising Sun. (*CPP* 129)

In this passage, the images of “the Legion of Honour,” the “Order of the Black Eagle,” and “the Order of the Rising Sun” denoted the order of chivalry in France, Germany, and Japan, respectively. When they are juxtaposed with “the Knights of the British/ Empire, the Cavaliers,” the speaker juxtaposed explicitly four of the major military powers in the world. Although the speaker did not make it clear the relationship between those four countries, we can still infer from the title “Difficulties of a Statesman” that the relations between them might be the “difficulties.” In “Difficulties of a Statesman,” the speaker introduces a series of commissions that has been appointed. Among them, two commissions allude to the failure of Disarmament. The first commission “is appointed/ For Public Works, chiefly the question of rebuilding the/ fortifications” (*CPP* 129), while the latter is

To confer with a Volscian commission
About perpetual peace: the fletchers and javelin-makers and smiths
Have appointed a joint committee to protest against the Reduction of
orders. (*CPP* 129)

The two commission's functions are pointing to one purpose. The former focuses on the rebuilding of the military fortifications. If this could be understood as an action of demilitarisation, the "joint committee" formed by "the fletchers and javelin-makers/ and smiths" in the following lines suggest a resistant force against the demilitarising efforts done by the previous commission. For those "fletchers and javelin-makers/ and smiths," Disarmament means a "Reduction of orders," a lack of commercial requests for goods. However, for a statesman, Disarmament could also mean a "Reduction of orders," or rather the decrease of social stability and national security.

Besides, the intensifying confrontation between nations in 1930s is also echoed in "Journey of the Magi." After going through the strenuous journey against the discouragements of nature and the hostility of man, the speaker finally succeeded in finding "a mystery impenetrable to human wisdom" (G. Smith, *T. S. Eliot's* 123). Among those hardships, the speaker remembered "the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly" (*CPP* 103). They were also allusive of the contemporary division and hostility, caused by the false nationalism, among the European countries, which had been highlighted in the *Criterion*. Nonetheless, "Journey of the Magi" expressed an optimistic note of hope after the speaker found "the place," which was "satisfactory" (*CPP* 103). Likewise, a note of war is evoked in another Ariel poem. In "Animula," Eliot depicts "a psychically damaged, confined soul corroded by its own caution, a life disfigured and distorted, rusty with reluctance" (Raine 2). Apart from its religious implication, the poem also suggests a lamentation for the fallen soldiers in the War. In the final stanza, the speaker prayed for "Boudin," who had been "blown to pieces"

(*CPP* 108). Some of Eliot's critics have pointed out that "Boudin" means black pudding in French. However, Eliot denied the connection between "Boudin" and the French cuisine. On 25 May 1945, Eliot told E. M. Stephenson that "Boudin" represented "someone who was killed in the last war" (*PI* 772).

From 1934 onwards, the *Criterion* involved itself more actively in the discussion of war. In January 1934, it published Read's review of Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud's *Why War?* and Edward Glover's *War, Sadism, and Pacifism*, presenting the debate on the cause of war from the approach of national security and psychoanalysis. In July 1934, it published E. D. Swinton's review of Hoffman Nickerson's *Can We Limit War?* In his review, Swinton observed the premise of Nickerson's book – "The Inevitability of War" (*C13* 657). Nickerson argued that "war can best be limited by the establishment of some form of unity amongst mankind," and concluded that "the combination of extreme militant nationalism and the growth of democracy has led to the abandonment of any limits to the aims of warfare" (*C13* 657). Nickerson's point of view is very similar to that of the *Criterion*, and of Eliot himself, who criticised the blind nationalism and democratic movements in the 1930s, meanwhile tried to find a "unity" in religion: "[t]he peace of this world is always uncertain, unless men keep the peace of God" (Eliot, *Murder* 57).

In April 1935, the *Criterion* published Nickerson's "War, Democracy and Peace," in which Nickerson discussed the nature of war and its relationship with peace. He used the example of Napoleonic war, and suggested that a heavy indictment of

modern war was “its failure to achieve peace” (*C14* 357), since the defeated “would sign no treaty with the intention of keeping it” when the victors, “[h]ypnotized by the temporary completeness of their own successes,” “imposed such injuries and humiliation upon” (*C14* 357) them. Nickerson’s words alluded to the post-war Europe, which was reformed and reshaped under the Treaty of Versailles. The Treaty did not truly bring peace back to Europe but the rise of nationalism and authoritarianism, which in retrospect led to the outbreak of the Second World War eventually. It could be argued that Eliot shares Nickerson’s attitude towards the post-war peace treaty, since Eliot wrote in “The Christian in the Modern World” (1935) that “[w]e cannot, after the treaty of Versailles, believe that any war will end war; we believe rather that war breeds war: certainly that a bad peace generates war” (*CP5* 186).³⁰ For Eliot, “[t]he eventual collapse of the League of Nations should have been apparent to any Christian from the beginning: for the foundations of the League were not really Christian,” and the collapse of the League had “shown that no pacifism that is not Christian pacifism is genuine” in that “it is the pacifists who pinned their faith on the League of Nations who are now most bellicose” (*CP5* 187). It is clear that a similar assertion could also be found in Nickerson’s article. For Nickerson, what “would really limit war” is the rebuilding of “a moral – best of all a religious – unity” (*C14* 363), since he recognised that the League of Nations, representing an attempt at a

³⁰ “The Christian in the Modern World” was delivered by Eliot at the annual meeting of the Church Union Literature Association at Church House on 31 January, 1935. He also gave a version of this lecture as “The Christian and the Modern State” on 21 November, 1935 in a series of lunch hour talks organized by the Revd P. T. R. Kirk at the Christ Church Vicarage, Westminster. See *CP5* 185-95 and *PI* 823.

“strong centre like ancient Rome,” seemed “certain to fail before national patriotism – the chief moral force of our time” (C14 363). Besides, Nickerson predicted that “it is not impossible that the new forms of minority government, Communist and especially Fascist, may give the world a breathing spell from the mass massacres of democratic war,” since primarily “the armed minorities wish to open no door towards its domestic enemies” (C14 353). However, Nickerson’s prediction turns out to be wrong roughly a decade later.

In July 1936, Eliot commented on “the ethics of War and Peace” (C15 663). According to Bishop of Durham, “every man must decide for himself whether a war is, or is not, ‘just,’ and, of course, he must follow his conscience at all hazards” (C15 663). Eliot did not agree on this point. For him, “very few people are ever in a position to be possessed of adequate knowledge to be able to decide whether a particular war is ‘just,’” and sometimes a man “may even conscientiously decide, as a private individual, that it is his duty at a moment of crisis to participate in an ‘unjust’ war” (C15 663). Whether a war is just or not, for Eliot, is a very complicated question, since sometimes a “[just] war may become unjust after it has started, or it may appear unjust in retrospect in the light of an unjust peace” (C15 663). However, he supported the Bishop’s “prediction of an epidemic of just wars” (C15 664). Eliot pointed out that the notion of justice “is traversed when we draw too sharp a distinction between war and peace,” and suggested that they need to give “enough thought and effort to the institution of justice during the condition of ‘peace’” rather than “exercise our consciences so violently in anticipation of war” (C15 664). It is possible that when

Eliot made that point of view he had the consequences of the Treaty of Versailles in his mind. In October 1936, Eliot continued to discuss the ethics of war and peace in his "Commentary." He targeted Lord Allen of Hurtwood's pamphlet *Peace in Our Time*, pointing out the confusing reasons for supporting peace in Lord Allen's pamphlet. On the one hand, Eliot was curious about Allen's implication that "on the highest plane it is equally to the advantage of all peoples to preserve peace, there appears to be a lower plane on which the preservation of peace is more to the interest of some nations than others" (C16 63-4). On the other hand, Eliot was not persuaded by Lord Allen's assertion that an unarmed nation would not be a victim, since it "would no longer be feared as a menace to its neighbours" (C16 64). Eliot pointed out that Lord Allen did not take a nation's "soft power," such as "economic arms" (C16 64), into consideration. It also depended too much upon the assumption that "there is enough desirable land in the world, and enough materials of all kinds, to maintain everybody contentedly on the highest level of civilization of which each people is capable that we can believe that permanent peace is even a *possibility*" (C16 65).

In 1936, the Spanish Civil War broke out. It quickly became a momentous literary phenomenon in both contemporary world and literary history.³¹ During the Spanish Civil War, many young intellectuals fought on behalf of the anti-Fascist Popular Front and took up strong positions on the conflict.³² Although Eliot cared

³¹ Peter Monteath (xii-xv) noted the ways in which the Spanish Civil War becomes a significant event in both literary and intellectual history.

³² According to Monteath (38), *Left Review* published a survey in 1937, entitled *Authors Take Sides on the Spanish War*, in which 127 replies were pro-government, 5 against-government, and 16 neutral. See also Katharine Bail Hoskins's *Today the Struggle: Literature and Politics in England during the*

about the Spanish Civil War, he pointedly refused to “take sides” on a polarised choice between the extreme right and the Communist left, and “was lambasted for his silence at the *Criterion*” (Rogers 146). Apart from “Casualties,” a poem written by Irish poet Blanaid Salkeld, the *Criterion* barely openly published anything related to the Spanish Civil War. However, he defended himself in the “Commentary” in the January issue of 1937. He insisted that, as long as “we are not compelled in our own interest to take sides,” he could not “see why we should do so on insufficient knowledge,” and “[p]olitical fanaticism in releasing generous passions will release evil ones too” (CI6 290). Eliot believes that no matter which side won the civil war in Spain, its victory would not “be the better for having had to fight for its victory” (CI6 290). “The victory of the Right will be the victory of a secular Right, not of a spiritual Right,” while “the victory of the Left will be the victory of the worst rather than of the best features” (CI6 290). Besides, “if it ends in something called Communism, that will be a travesty of the humanitarian ideals which have led so many people in that direction” (CI6 290). As one of those “who have at heart the interests of Christianity in the long run,” Eliot claimed that he then had “special reason for suspending judgement” (CI6 290). According to Donoghue, Eliot in fact “cared about the Spanish Civil War, but not in the same way that other people in England cared about it,” or rather, he was not distressed by “the apparent success of fascism” in Italy but its “form of paganism” (221). In a BBC radio broadcast “The Church’s Message to the World,” Eliot made it clear that, if he had doubted the wisdom of fighting in Spain, he

Spanish Civil War (1969), in which Hoskins explores the contemporary literary reactions to the Spanish Civil War in England.

had no doubt about the campaign for a Christian society. He urged the Church to “struggle for a condition of society which will give the maximum of opportunity for us to lead wholly Christian lives, and the maximum of opportunity for others to become Christians” (*ICS* 93).³³ Thus, his comments on the Spanish Civil War are also heavily based on his religious point of view. In October 1938, Eliot greatly admired “the just impartiality of a Christian philosopher” (*C18* 58) exemplified by Maritain’s dignified and principled stance toward the Spanish Civil War, and defended Maritain in his editorial “Commentary.” Maritain was “violently” (*C18* 58) attacked by Serrano Suner, General Franco’s Minister of the Interior, in a speech reported in *La Gaceta Regional* of Salamanca. Eliot did not agree with Suner’s speech, since its primary reason appears to have been “Maritain’s refusal to admit the assertion that the war of the *Franquistas* is a ‘holy war’” (*C18* 58). Without taking Suner’s words to heart, Eliot points out that “[o]ur concern should be rather with that part of the public which is inclined to attribute all the ‘holiness’ of this war to the party of Valencia and Barcelona, and, which [...] would hardly find M. Maritain’s philosophy any more acceptable” (*C18* 58). However, Eliot made it clear that he was not referring “so much to the small number of communists as to the larger number of the heirs of liberalism, who find an emotional outlet in denouncing the iniquity of something called ‘fascism’” (*C18* 58-9). Although it needs more contexts to analyse Eliot’s remarks on the distinctive treatment of “communists” and “the heirs of liberalism,” it could be inferred from Eliot’s words that “the heirs of liberalism” are

³³ See also *CP5* 425.

those who denounced “fascism” without rational critical thinking. The blind denouncement of “fascism,” according to Eliot, is “a danger in several ways,” since “[t]he irresponsible ‘anti-fascist,’ the patron of mass-meetings and manifestoes,” first of all, would, “when exploited by a foreign press,” nourish “abroad the very ideas which he so vehemently repudiates” (C18 59). Besides, their activities “confuse the issues of real politics with misplaced religious fanaticism,” and “distract attention from the true evils in their own society” (C18 59).

In January 1939, Eliot brought *The Criterion* to an end, and its ending was also closely associated with war, or rather “the prospect of war” in the autumn of 1938 and “the subsequent *d’âente*” (C18 269). In Eliot’s words, his “feeling of staleness” and the “growing discontent” (C18 269) over his job as an editor were two major causes. Seven years later, Eliot explained how the political and economic situation in Europe led to the ending of the *Criterion* in his radio talks on “The Unity of European Culture,” and attributed the ending of his literary review chiefly to “the gradual closing of the mental frontiers of Europe” (NTDC 116). However, many scholars believe that the immediate cause of the ending of the *Criterion* is the events of September 1938, such as Chamberlain’s appeasement of Hitler, which “had cast him into such dejection that he could not continue” (Donoghue 206).³⁴ Faced with the increasingly volatile and sectarian political situation during the late 1930s, Eliot lamented in his editorial for October 1938: “There seems no hope in contemporary politics at all” (60). He was bitterly shaken by the Munich agreement between

³⁴ See also Harding, *Criterion* 21; Tomlin 106-7; and Cooper, *Ideology* 34.

Chamberlain and Hitler, which produced in him a depression of feelings so profound that he no longer had the enthusiasm to edit the *Criterion*.³⁵ In his valedictory “Last Words,” Eliot remarked that “present state of public affairs” had led him to have a “depression of spirits so different from any other experience of fifty years as to be a new emotion” (C18 274). He was shocked that Britain had shown itself, as it appeared in the months before the war, incapable of responding to Hitler’s convictions with moral force at least equal and opposite to his. Later, he wrote in *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939) that he was

deeply shaken by the events of September, 1938 (in which the Munich Pact was signed and England and France gave in to Hitler’s demands to annex Czechoslovakia), in a way from which one does not recover; persons to whom that month brought a profounder realization of a general plight.

(63-4)

It could be seen that the events of September 1938 raised in a peculiarly intense form the question of a democratic culture and the necessity, as it appeared to Eliot, of creating a Christian society. Responding to this question, Eliot was “in fear and trembling and often in despair” (Donoghue 207). Up to that point, the *Criterion*’s struggle to materialize its ambitions in March 1928 – Britain is “the bridge, the middle way, between two parts of western Europe” (C7 194), and to “prevent another

³⁵ Chamberlain’s performance in the Munich Conference was viewed in an unfavourable light among some English writers. MacNeice’s *Autumn Journal*, for example, recorded the illusive meaning of the Munich Conference and express sarcasm at Chamberlain’s diplomatic policies. See MacNeice 117.

war” (Rogers 62) – had failed. To some degree, the failure of the *Criterion* was resonated in *East Coker*, in which he wrote “Twenty years largely wasted, the years of *l’entre deux guerres*” (CPP 182). I agree with Harding’s contention that the *Criterion*’s “self-appointed role as a guardian of European civilization” and its “largely dismissive treatment of the violent and abrasive *realpolitik* of inter-war foreign affairs” to some degree suggests its “painful inability to estimate contemporary social and political forces at their true strength” (*Criterion*, 6). Nonetheless, we should perhaps pay more attention to the *Criterion*’s endeavour in seeking intelligent discussion on socio-political issues across Europe during the inter-war period.

Chapter Four

“Not fare well, But fare forward, voyagers:” Patriotic *Four Quartets* and Eliot’s Post-WWII Peace-building

This chapter focuses on Eliot’s writings after 1935, particularly the wartime *Four Quartets* and the post-war *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*. On the one hand, it explores *Four Quartets* in relation to wartime England during the Second World War, investigating the ways in which Eliot’s three wartime quartets are “patriotic” poems. As has been pointed out in Introduction, many previous studies have already explored the war allusions in each section of *Four Quartets*. However, none of them has systematically explored the poem’s connection with the theme of patriotism. Nor have the previous studies investigated the relationship between the war allusions in the quartets and Eliot’s assertion that the latter three *Quartets* are patriotic poems. Therefore, drawing upon the previous studies, I will specifically explore *Four Quartets*’ connections with the theme of war and the ways in which the latter three quarters are patriotic in the first half of this chapter. By doing so, I do not suggest that *Four Quartets* is a reportage of war, but that we can reach a nuanced understanding of the poem when it is contextualised in its historical context in terms of its composition, form, emotion, allusions, the theme of patriotism, and the poem’s pursuit of an English national identity during the War, and that *Four Quartets* suggest a notion that art is able to supply what the wartime English society needs – confidence, commitment, and the necessity of a collective English national identity. On the other hand, this chapter also explores Eliot’s *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, and

highlights that Eliot advocates the means of “cultural reconstruction” in a war-torn society after the Second World War. By doing so, I aim to show the ways in which war, especially the Second World War, contributes to the formation of Eliot’s cultural theory in the late 1940s.

Patriotic Four Quartets

Four Quartets is composed of *Burnt Norton* (1936) and three wartime quartets, namely, *East Coker* (1940), *The Dry Salvages* (1941) and *Little Gidding* (1942). They not only contain a continuous meditation on the literary topics in which Eliot had been interested since his early career, such as time, memory, myth, and ritual, but also, like *The Waste Land*, “seem to speak directly to their times,” while drawing “on private, sometimes strange experience, to generalise for all time” (Gordon, *Imperfect* 354-5). Of course, it is not a problem to understand or appreciate *Four Quartets* without associating it with the topic of war. However, the poems, particularly the last three *Quartets*, are subtly connected with the theme of war in many ways. As Gardner (*Composition*, 169) notes, the theme of war was involved in the poem during the process of writing. Gardner’s words, in my opinion, suggests a link between the poem and its history, particularly the outbreak of the Second World War, “a watershed for British poetry” (Piette, “Poetry” 13).¹ Eliot acknowledged in two post-war interviews

¹ According to Adam Piette (“Poetry”, 13), the Second World War broke the dominance of high modernist orthodoxies, transformed the openly political poetics of the Auden group into a war poetry of symptom and reportage, released a contained and self-censored British surrealism in the form of the New Apocalypse, and saw the redefinition of formal genres such as the religious ode, sonnet sequence, elegy, and ballad within a range of new registers, from Rilkean-Jungian to psychoanalytic-demonic. Observing those phenomena, Auden once considered that the contemporary poets “must have direct

that the composition of *Four Quartets* was a direct response to its contemporary history. In his 1953 interview with John Lehmann, Eliot said that

“Burnt Norton” might have remained by itself if it hadn’t been for the war, because I had become very much absorbed in the problems of writing for the stage and might have gone straight on from “The Family Reunion” to another play. The war destroyed that interest for a time: you remember how the conditions of our lives changed, how much we were thrown in on ourselves in the early days? “East Coker” was the result – and it was only in writing “East Coker” that I began to see the Quartets as a set of four. (5)²

Six years later, Eliot elucidated the ways in which he wrote *Four Quartets* in another interview with Donald Hall. Eliot said that “[t]he form of the *Quartets* fitted in very nicely to the conditions under which I was writing, or could write at all.” In both interviews, Eliot signalled a subtle connection between the writing of the last three *Quartets* and the Second World War. During the War, Eliot managed to “concentrate on the five sections of each poem separately” (Tomlin 200), and wrote the latter three *Quartets* “in sections” due to both the harsh wartime conditions and his “war jobs.” On 25 February 1941, Eliot (*PI* 886) told Richard Jennings that his war duties turned out to be arduous for him, as his general loss of sleep made any kind of work more difficult. Likewise, Eliot told Donald Hall in the 1959 interview that “I didn’t have to have quite the same continuity; it didn’t matter if a day or two elapsed when I did not

knowledge of the major political events” (qtd. in Carpenter 207).

² See Eliot, “T. S. Eliot Talks About Himself and the Drive to Create; T. S. Eliot” 5 and *PI* 883.

write, as they frequently did, while I did war jobs” (qtd. in Ackroyd, 258).³ After it was finished, Eliot initially referred to the poem as *Kensington Quartets*.⁴ Although that title was abandoned later, it reminds readers of Eliot’s experience of being an air-raid warden in Kensington during the war. On two later occasions, Eliot made that connection more explicit. According to Ackroyd (264), Eliot once referred to the last three *Quartets* as patriotic poems in a draft of “The Three Voices of Poetry” (1953), although he crossed out that remark later. For Eliot, the last three *Quartets* were patriotic, but Eliot seemed to be hesitant about acknowledging it in public at the time. However, in the fall of 1958, Eliot said in *Columbia University Forum* that “[a]ll the last three *Quartets* are in a sense war poems – increasingly” (qtd. in *PI* 892).

Although this study aims to investigate the relationship between *Four Quartets*, the Second World War, and the theme of patriotism, it will start with an exploration of the pre-WWII *Burnt Norton*, which was not considered by Eliot as a “patriotic” poem. *Burnt Norton* takes its title from a country house in Gloucestershire, where Eliot visited in the company of Emily Hale in 1934.⁵ When Eliot was writing *Burnt Norton* in 1935, the poem stands as an independent poetic work and the ending poem of Eliot’s *Collected Poems 1909-1935* (1936), signalling a farewell to poetry before he turned to drama. At that time, Eliot was also working on producing *Murder in the*

³ However, during that time, Eliot still managed to attend congresses, meetings and retreats, and his participation became increasingly appreciated. According to Kojecký (150), Eliot also delivered a series of literary lectures both in the United Kingdom and on the Continent. Eliot was also taking part in Moot discussion, a forum organized by a group of Christian intellectuals in 1938.

⁴ See Knowles 115.

⁵ According to Gordon, Eliot’s letter to Aunt Edith in September 1934 shows that he had visited *Burnt Norton* before his visit with Emily Hale. See Gordon, *Imperfect* 266.

Cathedral, and did not have a plan to write the latter three *Quartets*. On 19 January 1949, Eliot recalled that “*Burnt Norton* at the time of writing was a solitary experiment, and I had nothing in mind for the next step” (qtd. in *PI* 882). As has been suggested in the previous chapter, Eliot’s *Criterion* had a premonition of a potential war in the early 1930s, and Eliot had predicted even earlier that the future of civilisation would end up with “[i]nternecine warfare.” However, those thoughts barely entered *Burnt Norton*. The poem does not focalise the imminent war, at least not when it was being written. The poem starts with a meditation on the nature of time, which was transformed from a passage originally created for *Murder in the Cathedral*.

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in the future,
And time future contained in time past. (*CPP* 171)

In a cyclic pattern of history, each type of time presents in the development of the others, while the other types of time also influence its movement. By writing so, the speaker introduces “a perpetual possibility” in “a world of speculation,” and suggests a possible alternative – “what might have been” (*CPP* 171) – to the present time and what is happening at the present. The following sounds of footfalls find the echo in the “memory” and lead the speaker’s thought down the “passage” which they did not take and the “door” which they “never opened/ Into the rose garden” (*CPP* 171).

Many previous studies have explored the political implication of the passage. Jed Esty, for example, argues that “the central time-space thematics of *Four Quartets*” are determined by high modernism’s seeking for, in Frank Kermode’s word, *Kairos*, a

“meaningful or shaped or end-directed time” that “integrates past, present, and future” (116).⁶ With *Kairos*, Eliot’s writing “no longer needs to rage at shapeless time, nor to retail aesthetic wholeness to an unwhole and untimely metropolis” (Kermode 117). For Eliot, *Kairos* “migrates from its confinement within the aesthetic sphere to become the principle of what Eliot will imagine as a potential cultural revival” after “imperial decline and fascist rebarbarization” discredited “the progressive narratives of secular modernity” (Kermode 117). Likewise, Stan Smith explores the intertextuality in Eliot’s poetry, and argues that *Burnt Norton*’s meditation on “the passage that we did not take” echoes “the ‘cunning passages’ of a sinister History complexly figured in ‘Gerontion’” (*Origins*, 104). For Smith, the “passage” in *Burnt Norton*, like the “cunning passages” in “Gerontion,” is leading to what was happening in the contemporary Europe, as Hitler repudiated the Treaty of Versailles by marching into the Saar in 1935, which proves that the ominous prophesy of History in “Gerontion” is true. It also suggests that the pernicious consequences, caused by the injustice of the Treaty of Versailles and lamented by the speaker of “Gerontion,” finally come true.

In exploring the political implication of *Burnt Norton*, many previous studies associate the second part of the poem with Eliot’s disappointment with the contemporary British foreign policies.

The trilling wire in the blood
Sings below inveterate scars
Appeasing long forgotten wars. (*CPP* 172)

⁶ See also Kermode 47.

According to Gardner (*Composition*, 84), the final line of this passage read “And reconciles forgotten wars” before it was changed to “Appeasing long forgotten wars” when *Four Quartets* was published in 1944. Gardner (*Composition*, 84) considers that the change is presumably made to avoid anticipating the word “reconciled” in the last line. In reviewing *Four Quartets* in December 1944, Reginald Snell pointed out that “the only significant alteration from the pamphlet form of the poems ... is the appearance of the word ‘appeasing’ instead of ‘reconciling,’ in connection with ‘forgotten wars’” (qtd. in *PI* 915). Snell considered the alteration as “a risky change, considering the emotional overtones to which the newer word now gives rise” (qtd. in *PI* 915). One month later, Eliot responded to Snell’s comments, acknowledging that Snell was “quite correct, and correct also in suggesting that one of the changes was of doubtful value” (qtd. in *PI* 915). When it is considered in the context of the War, the word “Appeasing” reminds readers of Chamberlain’s policy of appeasement, although it is nearly impossible for Eliot to foresee Chamberlain’s foreign policies with the German government in the late 1930s when he was writing the poem in the mid-1930s. As has been noted in the previous chapter, Eliot was clearly disappointed at Chamberlain’s appeasing policies with Germany in the late 1930s. Taking this point into account, Knowles suggests a way in which *Burnt Norton* was politicised through revision, while arguing that the poem has been allowed “to be considered as a poetic response to war” (102). I agree with Knowles’s assertion that Eliot’s alteration in 1944 signalled a political intent, which enables *Burnt Norton* to be read as a response to contemporary European politics, especially when it is read together with the other

three “patriotic” Quartets.

The connection between *Burnt Norton* and the theme of patriotism could be seen in its reflection on time and space, particularly the time past and its location in England. In the first part of *Burnt Norton*, the speaker wanders in a “rose garden,” observing its present and imagining its past.

Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged,
And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
The surface glittered out of heart of light,
And they were behind us, reflected in the pool. (*CPP* 172)

On the one hand, the speaker’s recollection of the past could be related with the expression of a patriotic emotion, as recollecting the past, for Eliot, could be interpreted as a patriotic action. In December 1928, Eliot translated and published Pierre Gaxotte’s article “Fustel de Coulanges” in the *Criterion*. In that essay, Pierre Gaxotte reviewed the major works of Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, a French historian, who believed that “patriotism did not consist in vilifying the monarchy, in detesting the aristocracy, in slandering our institutions” (*C8* 267). For Fustel, “[t]o be a patriot is not to be an enemy of ancient France” (*C8* 267). Instead, Fustel believed that “[t]rue patriotism is not the love of the soil, it is the love of the past, it is respect for the generations which have gone before us” (*C8* 267). Gaxotte repeated that sentence at the end of his article, hoping “the time will come when all the students of France – when all the students of political philosophy in Europe – will inscribe [the sentence] on the first page of their notebook” (*C8* 269). This essay provides a hint of

the political implication of Eliot's contemplation of the time past in *Burnt Norton*, as the recollection of the past could be a reflection upon the present.

On the other hand, the speaker's wandering in a "rose garden" could be interpreted as the poem's affiliation to England, which could also be considered as a connection to the theme of patriotism when it was published in the mid-1940s. During the Second World War, according to Robert Hewison, the theme of "Deep England" was "a resonant theme in wartime propaganda" (*Culture*, 23). The phrase was coined by Patrick Wright (77-83), and is expressive of "an image of the national heartland constructed as much out of folk memories, poetry and cultural associations as actuality" (Hewison, *Culture* 23). According to Wright, "[t]he approved and dominant images of Deep England are pastoral and green" (83). However, the "imagined pastoral landscape" became "contrast to, and compensation for, all the destruction and stress of war" (Hewison, *Culture* 23) during the Second World War. It could be suggested that description of "the rose garden" – the image of "bird," "vibrant air," and "shrubbery" (*CPP* 172) – in *Burnt Norton* is also a landscape myth, which shows a connection between the poem and the concept of Deep England. However, the poem also shows that the Deep England is only a set of past memories instead of a tangible environment in the present, as the dry "pool" (*CPP* 172) in front of the speaker signals that the beautiful landscape in the past has disappeared. This change perhaps was brought about by the violence of war if the poem is understood in the context of Second World War.

The degree to which the poem is attached to England is increased in *East Coker*, while the association starts to be infused with a more explicit patriotic mood. *East Coker* takes its title from a village near Yeovil in Somerset. As Bergonzi (4) points out, it is a personal poem in which the poet looks back to his remote family origins and reflects on the contemporary wartime English society. It was from East Coker that the distant ancestor of the Eliot family, Andrew Eliot, had emigrated in around 1669 to found the American branch of the Eliot family from which the poet is directly descended. According to Valerie Eliot (qtd. in Gardner, *Composition* 42), Eliot visited the village in early August 1937, when he was staying with Sir Matthew Nathan at West Coker.⁷ On 31 May 1940, Eliot told R. P. de Menasce that East Coker, as the name of a place, merely “serves as a concrete localisation of a mood and a train of meditations” regarding “beginnings and ends,” and it has “no ‘figurative’ meaning for the reader” (qtd. in *PI* 925). On the one hand, *East Coker* continues the meditation on the theme of time in *Burnt Norton*, signalling a consistent focus throughout *Four Quartets*. In the opening passage of *East Coker*, the houses’ “rise and fall” (*CPP* 177), life and death, and building and destruction all suggest a powerful transformative force of History. On the other hand, Eliot’s comments suggest that the title’s function as “a concrete localisation of a mood” is more important than its “‘figurative’ meaning for the reader” (qtd. in *PI* 925), and the title suggests the locality of the “mood” is England, strengthening *Burnt Norton*’s attempts to choose England as its setting. In *East Coker*, “the music/ Of the weak pipe and the little drum” and man and woman’s

⁷ This is Eliot’s second visit to East Coker. See *PI* 926.

happy dance around the bonfire depict a prosperous “rustic” view and the “country mirth” (*CPP* 178). However, “[t]he whole earth” becomes a “hospital” (*CPP* 181) in the following sections of *East Coker*.

The transformation of the description of land could be understood by taking the context of war into consideration. Eliot wrote the poem in January-February 1940 during the time of the “Phoney War.” After England and Germany were officially at war, no actual fighting began until spring 1940 when the German armies marched on Belgium and Holland. A number of previous studies have noted the poem’s connection with its historical contexts. Bergonzi believes that this quartet was “inspired by the war” (4). In the fall of 1958, Eliot acknowledged in *Columbia University Forum* that “*East Coker* belongs to the period of what we called the ‘phony war’” (qtd. in *PI* 892). During the “period of war without war” (*CP5* 776), no actual German aerial attacks happened. However, the possible bombing is suggested by a series of images in the first passage of the second section – “snow,” “[t]hunder,” and “comets” (*CPP* 178). They come from the sky, leading “the destructive fire” to “[t]he world” (*CPP* 179). Those disastrous “weapons” from the sky was more likely to be both Eliot’s recollection of his experiences during the First World War and an imagination of the potential danger in the future. Germany aircraft carried out the first attack on English soil on Christmas Eve 1914, though it did not cause much damage except broken glass near Dover Castle. Later on, German airships frequently attacked London and other English towns and villages after 31 May 1915, and the attacks continued to near the end of 1916 before effective measures of countering German

Zeppelin were taken.⁸ In the First World War, Eliot had the experiences of sheltering in a cellar with Vivienne in order to avoid being killed by German aerial attacks in London.⁹ In this sense, Eliot was never unfamiliar with the wartime sheltering in London, although an aerial attack had not been actually carried out by the German air force since the start of the Second World War.

During those days, Agatha's advice to Harry – "we must learn to suffer more" (Eliot, *Family* 138) – had developed concrete meaning, as the expected German air bombings caused a great deal of inconvenience to the life of British people, particularly those who lived in London.¹⁰ The British government enforced a series of blackout regulations to control the man-made lights on the ground, and evacuated civilians to underground stations at night in order to avoid large numbers of civilian casualties. Thus, many Londoners slept in the underground stations or other public shelters then, though a large number of Londoners decided to stay at home.¹¹ Some of them, particularly women and children, were evacuated to the countryside areas around London.¹² In the third section of *East Coker*, an imagined scene of a large group of people walking into the darkness alludes to the wartime experiences in the London Blackout during the "Phoney War," although it has been widely considered to be a description of a group of people walking into a tube station in London. In the

⁸ See O'Brien 7.

⁹ See *LI* 226.

¹⁰ See Krockel 185.

¹¹ See O'Brien 508.

¹² According to Ackroyd (258), when the Second World War came, Eliot retreated to Shamley Green, near Richmond in Surrey, where he lived as a guest of Mrs. Mirrlees.

stanza, people from all walks of life “go into the dark,” and “lights are extinguished” in a “theatre” in the “hollow rumble of wings” (*CPP* 180). According to Grover Smith (*T. S. Eliot’s*, 273), “the scene to be changed/ With a hollow rumble of wings” is an allusion to the air war. During World War Two, London theatre industry was seriously affected, with the majority of theatres being shut down due to the blackout regulations, and the number of audience being greatly reduced. In the late 1930s, Eliot believed that his future lay in drama – especially after the success of *The Family Reunion* (1939) – but the wartime blackout and public’s anxiety about the future greatly hit the theatre industry in London.¹³ This personal experience was accompanied by the experiences of the other Londoners. In *East Coker*, when “an underground train” stops, “the conversation rises and slowly fades into silence” (*CPP* 180). This scene has been widely interpreted as an allusion to the experience of people travelling on the train, but I think that it is also evocative of Londoners’ nightly shelter from German air raid during the War. Although the practicing of seeking shelter in London tube stations during the Second World War was not widespread until the middle of September in 1940, sheltering in a tube station was a collective memory among Londoners as it is what they had done in the First World War.¹⁴ In the tube station, the speaker sees nothing but “mental emptiness” (*CPP* 180) behind those faces. During the “Phoney War,” they were seeking shelter from the expected, meanwhile unexpected, German aerial bombardments in the underground stations, but the attacks did not come until the first Blitz of autumn 1940. In this sense, London itself was

¹³ See Bergonzi 4 and Chamberlin 114.

¹⁴ See O’Brien 392.

transformed into a theatre of war where “[t]he lights are extinguished” (*CPP* 180).¹⁵ Moreover, like the London underground in *Burnt Norton*, the underground in *East Coker* also evokes a meditation on time, but the time then has become “a time to assess the past before confronting an unknown future” (Litz 180). During that time, “the growing terror of nothing to think about” appears among the English people, while what they can do, according to the speaker, is to “be still” and “wait without hope” or “love” (*CPP* 180). Although the speaker notes that there is still faith, yet “the faith and love and hope are all in the waiting” (*CPP* 180). The urge to maintain patience in the uncertain wartime atmosphere could also be felt when the speaker tells his soul to let “the darkness of God” come upon it, as he suggests it is “a movement of darkness on/ darkness” (*CPP* 180), alluding to a movement of “the darkness of God” on the darkness during the Blackout. In this sense, the speaker is “urge[ing] patience on both the suffering and the faltering nation,” as “[i]n a series of similes, Eliot qualifies the process of self-negation whereby a ‘dark night’ [...] becomes a lingering prelude to salvation” (Esty 146).

East Coker, according to A. Walton Litz, predicts another forthcoming historical event – the Dunkirk evacuation. Litz noted that, when Eliot was working on this poem, he “worked as if Dunkirk were in view (the military imagery of parts IV and V anticipates the events of May-June 1940)” (180). After Paris was occupied by Germany on 13 June 1940, Britain was under the dire threat of German armies’ invasion. Under such circumstances, Churchill, who had replaced Chamberlain as the

¹⁵ See Bowen 7-8 and Piette, *Imagination* 3.

Prime Minister, ordered a strategic retreat, evacuating the bulk of British army to England through Dunkirk. Although *East Coker* is not about Dunkirk, it becomes appropriate to that era:

[...] And so each venture
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate
With shabby equipment always deteriorating
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
Undisciplined squads of emotion
[...]
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. But perhaps neither gain nor loss.
For us there is only the trying. The rest is not our business. (*CPP* 182)

These passages signal how Eliot's ruminations on war as a metaphorical situation become startlingly relevant to war as a military and political reality. The evacuation in Dunkirk was a setback to Britain's military strategy in the Second World War, drawing a conclusion to its unsuccessful military movements at the first stage of the War. However, the British military defeat in the Continent becomes a topic for Eliot to arouse patriotic emotion in his other wartime poems. During the Second World War, Eliot "paid lip-service to the total war effort in a few jingoistic lines" (Sencourt 143).¹⁶ "Defence of the Islands" (1941), for example, was written at the request of E. McKnight Kauffer, who was working for the Ministry of Information.¹⁷ The poem was written after the evacuation from Dunkirk, praising the war effort of Britain.¹⁸ In

¹⁶ Eliot wrote wartime occasional verses at the request of his friends: "Defence of the Islands" (1941), "A Note on War Poetry" (1942), and "To the Indians Who Died in Africa" (1943).

¹⁷ Eliot felt "rather distressed" when he found that people considered "Defence of the Islands" as "a poem." See Eliot's letter to Walter McElroy on 19 April 1949.

¹⁸ See *PI* 213.

“Defence of the Islands,” a patriotic voice glorifies the endeavours to defend England in face of German invasion, and expresses a determination to protect England by following “their forebears” who were “undefeated in defeat, unalterable in triumph” (CPP 201).¹⁹ Apart from his encouragement to British soldiers, Eliot also praised the honourable sacrifice made by the soldiers from British colony. In 1943, Eliot wrote “To the Indians Who Died in Africa” at the request of Cornelia Sorabji for Queen Mary’s *Book for India*.²⁰ In the poem, Eliot tries to arouse a patriotic emotion by describing Indian soldiers’ sacrifice in the “foreign places” (CPP 203).

Apart from an allusion to the British military defeat in the European Continent, *East Coker* also suggests that the poet had to face a problem of his art.

So here I am, in the middle way, having had twenty years –
Twenty years largely wasted, the years of *l’entre deux guerres*
Trying to use words, and every attempt
Is a wholly new start and a different kind of failure
Because one has only learnt to get the better of words
For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which
One is no longer disposed to say it. (CPP 182)

Written in 1940, this passage could be understood as Eliot’s reflection on his literary endeavours in the past two decades. As has been explored in the previous chapter, Eliot brought the *Criterion* to an end in January 1939. The world had been transformed into a completely new situation, which the existing “words” were unable to describe. The lamentation of the failure of words was later gradually developed into

¹⁹ The phrase “powers of darkness in air/ and fire” (CPP 201) is “Eliot’s term for the Nazi threat” (Piette, *Imagination* 61).

²⁰ See CPP 203.

a concern on “the difficulty of writing a poem” (*PI* 1050) during the Second World War in his another wartime occasional poem, “A Note on War Poetry” (1942). This poem was written at the request of Storm Jameson, and was included in her *London Calling* (1942).²¹ In “A Note on War Poetry,” Eliot wrote

[w]ar is not a life: it is a situation,
One which may neither be ignored nor accepted,
A problem to be met with ambush and stratagem,
Enveloped or scattered. (*CPP* 202)

Thus, Eliot suggests that, in a wartime “situation,” what is needed is a proportionate synthesis between “private experience” and “the expression of collective emotion” (*CPP* 202) in poetry, as

[t]he enduring is not a substitute for the transient,
Neither one for the other. But the abstract conception
Of private experience at its greatest intensity
Becoming universal, which we call ‘poetry’,
May be affirmed in verse. (*CPP* 202)

Krockel suggests that this passage seems to “to justify the vision of the *Quartets*” (194), in which the individual experience is mixed with a broader background of national crisis. The combination is necessary, as Eliot wrote in “T. S. Eliot on Poetry in Wartime” (1942) that “[y]ou cannot understand war [...] while you are in the midst of it; you can only record small immediate observations” (351).

With its allusion to the “Phoney War” and the Dunkirk evacuation, *East Coker* seems to express a deep pessimism about the British society in the late 1930s and the

²¹ See *CPP* 202.

early 1940s.²² According to Linda Shires (53), unlike poetry of the First World War, the poetry of the Second World War was overwhelmed with pessimism since the outset of the War. *East Coker* similarly observed the loss of the beautiful past in present England, as well as a “growing terror” (*CPP* 180) of nothingness in people’s minds. However, I do not think that *East Coker* is a gloomy poem, as many previous studies have pointed out that *East Coker* has an affirmation of hope. Lobb believes that, if we “see the poem historically, as a product, in part, of wartime,” *East Coker* “becomes, paradoxically, almost cheerful” (30-1). In *East Coker*, Eliot “was suggesting, among other things, that the hardships of war could be put to spiritual use,” and this “helps to make sense of his remark [...] that the last three *Quartets* are primarily patriotic poems” (Lobb 31). Similarly, Gordon observes that “for all its rigor, ‘East Coker’ is the most optimistic of the *Quartets*” (*Imperfect*, 353), while Gardner (*Composition*, 17) comments on its impact during the darkest period of the war. In facing the darkest period of the War, *East Coker* also expresses a determined hope.

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. But perhaps neither gain nor loss.
 For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.
 [...]
 Old men ought to be explorers
 Here and there does not matter
 We must be still and still moving
 Into another intensity
 For a further union, a deeper communion
 Through the dark cold and the empty desolation, (*CPP* 182-3)

²² In 1939, the first shot of the Second World War was fired as the German army invaded Poland, while English intellectual society lost Yeats, Freud, Ford, and Auden. Yeats, Freud, Ford passed away, while Auden left England for America. See Bergonzi v.

The determination of moving towards a new direction of “a further union” and “a deeper communion” suggests an intention to raise the moral of the British public in front of the foreseeable threat of German air attacks. As Calder notes, this passage expresses “an attitude which must have struck readers in mid-1940 as highly appropriate to their situation” (*Myth*, 145). In this sense, *East Coker* implicitly signals a patriotic emotion between its lines.

The “patriotic” mood could also be suggested in the next quartet. On 9 October 1940, Eliot told Frank Morley that he wanted to “do another *quartet* – provisionally entitled *The Dry Salvages*” (qtd. in *PI* 886). Four months later, *The Dry Salvages* was published in *New English Weekly*.²³ This quartet takes its title from a group of rocks off the coast of Cape Ann in the north-eastern Massachusetts. Due to its American setting, Steve Ellis, like Donald Davie, doubts whether *The Dry Salvages* could be considered as a patriotic poem.²⁴ If it has a historical significance as *East Coker* does, the American setting of *The Dry Salvages* seems to suggest a connection with the bilateral diplomatic relations between the United States and the United Kingdom. As Ricks and McCue (*PI* 886) note, the writing of this Anglo-American *Quartet* coincides with the discussion of America’s Lend-Lease Scheme, which was enacted in March 1941. In January 1941, *The Times* published a series of reports regarding the possible aids from the United States. On 10 January 1941, *The Times* published a correspondence report entitled “‘Lease-and-Lend’ Bill To-day” in the column of

²³ See *PI* 959.

²⁴ See Ellis 77 and Esty 260.

“All-out U. S. Aid to Britain.”

After a conference between President Roosevelt and the Democratic leaders at the White House last evening (states Reuter), it was announced that the Administration’s Bill authorizing a “lease-and-lend” programme of aid to Great Britain and other nations fighting the Axis Powers would be introduced in both Houses of Congress today. (4)

Apart from its evocation of America’s Lend-Lease Scheme, some previous studies, after investigating the image of water in *The Dry Salvages*, suggest its connections with the Dunkirk Evacuation.²⁵

However, I think that a stronger connection between this quartet and the theme of patriotism could be suggested in Eliot’s mythical poetics in *The Dry Salvages*. On the one hand, Eliot reflects on the relations between word and world: “I” have “only learnt to get the better of words/ For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which/ One is no longer disposed to say it” (*CPP* 182). Words seem to be unable to express circumstances around the poet in the contemporary world, as its development has gone beyond the limit of verbal expression. Therefore, Eliot adds a series of mythical elements in *The Dry Salvages*, in which the river becomes “a strong brown god” while the speaker reflects on Krishna’s words. Although the speaker tries to speak his mind in the myth, he clearly knows that not all the mythical methods can help him, especially those popular supernatural auguries when a nation is in “distress” and in

²⁵ See Krockel 188-9.

“perplexity” (CPP 189). The first myth, the myth of “a strong brown god,” is of great personal significance for Eliot, as it is widely considered an allusion to the Mississippi River flowing through Eliot’s birthplace, St. Louis. The description of the river appears in the first two sections of *The Dry Salvages*, and suggests Eliot’s contemplation of the past, or the past of his own, in “[t]he backward look” (CPP 187). On the other hand, the myth of Krishna’s words suggests Eliot’s thoughts about the future. The future is deemed by Eliot as “a faded song” (CPP 187), which alludes to the delightful music and rustic laughter in that open field in *East Coker*. Meanwhile, as Kenneth Asher pointed out,

Eliot, borrowing from Hinduism, refers to the future as “a Royal Rose,” but it is a future that is described in terms that are in part appropriate to the past, for the rose is “pressed between yellow leaves of a book that has never been opened.” (*Ideology*, 99)

Later, the notion of “a Royal Rose” belonging to both past and future is also highlighted in *Little Gidding*, “with more definite historical association” (*Ideology*, 99).

Besides, the patriotic emotion is also encouraged in an ensuing passage, in which “a voice” descants at nightfall.

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 the judgement of the sea,

Or whatever event, this is your real destination.’
So Krishna, as when he admonished Arjuna
On the field of battle.

Not fare well,
But fare forward, voyagers. (*CPP* 188)

The mythical language in this passage, according to Ricks and McCue (*PI* 980-1), recalls both the aphorism in *Bhagavad Gita*, in which Arjuna is recalled to Krishna’s teaching on the sense of duty and the way of salvation, and Sibyl’s words to Alaric on his way to Rome. At the same time, that passage is also evocative of an attempt to encourage patriotic actions and emotion when it is being contextualized in the Second World War, as both references have connections with military leaders’ choice before they went into a battle or when they were facing the enemies, while and the lines – “Not fare well, / But fare forward, voyagers” – signal a gesture of encouragement that one should bravely combat the enemies.

The patriotic calling for maintaining patience to go through wartime difficulties and fighting “to recover what has been lost” during the War was continued in *Little Gidding*. According to Ricks and McCue (*PI* 990), Eliot had planned to write another quartet before *The Dry Salvages* was completed. On 31 December 1940, Eliot told Geoffrey Curtis that “[t]he unwritten one is provisionally, *Little Gidding*” (qtd. in *PI* 990).²⁶ On 15 October 1942, *Little Gidding* was published in *New English Weekly*. *Little Gidding* takes its title from a small village near Huntingdon, England. Like the other three *Quartets*, the title of *Little Gidding* has a connection with Eliot’s personal

²⁶ On 15 October 1942, *Little Gidding* was published in *New England Weekly*. See *PI* 989.

life, as Eliot visited Little Gidding in May 1936.²⁷ Gardner suggests that Eliot's visit was very likely to be "inspired by the fact that some time early in 1936 his friend, George Every, sent him the draft of a verse play on the subject of King Charles's last visit to *Little Gidding*" (*Composition*, 61). As Gardner (*Composition*, 61) notes, King Charles visited Little Gidding in 1633 for the first time. Nearly a decade later, he returned there with the young Prince and his nephew Prince Rupert in 1642, hunting and enjoying the local food. However, his next return was not as relaxing as the previous one. In May 1646, King Charles passed Little Gidding at night alone, except for his chaplain, on his way north to give himself up to the Scots. The legend of King's Charles's visit to Little Gidding is suggested in *Little Gidding*: "If you came at night like a broken king" (*CPP* 191) and the passage of "a king at nightfall" (*CPP* 195). In this sense, *Little Gidding* "goes beyond the personal and involves the history of a nation and its Church" (Gardner, *Composition* 58).

On 12 June 1944, Eliot told Hayward that his writing improved towards the latter part of *Four Quartets*.²⁸ I believe that a similar improvement also applies to the degree of patriotic sympathies in each part of *Four Quartets*. On 19 August 1949, Eliot told Matthiessen that "*Little Gidding* is particularly English," and "[i]t is not only East Anglian in scenery but historical in content and is in fact essentially a patriotic war poem of 1942."²⁹ Likewise, as Ricks and McCue notes, after Janet Adam Smith reviewed the 1952 edition of *Gallup* in *New Statesman* 24 Jan 1953,

²⁷ See Gardner, *Composition* 61.

²⁸ See Gardner, *Composition* 4.

²⁹ See Eliot's letter to Matthiessen on 19 August 1949.

Eliot sent her a postcard on 8 February, in which he wrote “[i]f L. G. isn’t Toppicle: well, it was *meant* to be the best Patriotic Poem in the language” (qtd. in *PI* 892). Thus, I will explore the patriotic emotion in *Little Gidding*, particularly its historical significance in the context of the Blitz between 1940 and 1941. From the summer of 1940 to the spring of 1941, Germany carried out aerial attacks on a number of British cities, particularly London. The capital experienced 57 nights of continuous bombardment, which claimed lives of thousands of civilians. During the German aerial bombardments, the scene of the “Unreal City” in *The Waste Land* is resurrected in *Little Gidding*.

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. (*CPP* 192)

A number of previous studies have agreed that this stanza came out of Eliot’s experience in fire-watching on the roof of Faber and Faber in the early 1940s.³⁰ Eliot was an air-raid warden during the first Blitz of autumn 1940. Each week, Eliot had to sit up two nights on the premises of Faber and Faber fire-watching. In 1948, he talked about his wartime work with W. T. Levy:

³⁰ Leo Mellor, for example, explores the Blitz’s impact on the contemporary literary writing, and argues that “the apotheosis of flame enchantment comes in *Four Quartets* and, especially, in ‘Little Gidding’” (8). Similarly, Gardner asserts that *Little Gidding* “is set in a context of recent experiences, experiences shared by many of Eliot’s fellow-citizens, the London air raids of the autumn of 1940” (*Composition*, 58).

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. (Levy and Scherle 15)

Like other Londoners, Eliot went through bombings, houses burning at night, rubbles in the streets, and the dank smell of ruined buildings in the early 1940s. The experiences caused anxiety among many Eliot's contemporaries, making pre-war life unreal and post-war life unimaginable.³¹ The Blitz of 1940-41 on Home Front London, in this sense, becomes "the most potent and circulated representation of the civilian experience of war" (Deer 2), and appeared in a wide range of contemporary literary works.³² For Eliot, it is even before the German aerial bombardment actually took place that he had already been anxious about its coming, and even had fantasies of the house being bombed.³³ In this sense, the memory of the harsh conditions at the Home Front starts to be made immediate in *Little Gidding*, and is continued in the third stanza of this section.³⁴

³¹ See Ackroyd 264.

³² See Bergonzi 1-17 and 29-34. See also Hewison's *Under Siege: Literary Life in London 1939-1945*, 46. Hewison explores the Blitz allusion in poetry of Louis MacNeice, C. Day Lewis, and Dylan Thomas. Another example can be found in Mellor's *Reading the Ruins: Modernism, Bombsites and British Culture*. Mellor (47-84) explores how the Blitz appears in the contemporary literary works, including William Sansom's short stories and Henry Green's novel *Caught* (1943). Other examples include John Strachey's *Digging for Mrs Miller* (1941) and John Carstairs's *Whatho she Bumps!* (1941). See also Kristine A. Miller's *British Literature of the Blitz: Fighting the People's War* (2009).

³³ See Ackroyd 258.

³⁴ The Second World War is made immediate in many contemporary literary works, even before the outbreak of the War. Notable Examples, among many, include Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts* (1941) and Evelyn Waugh's *Work Suspended* (1939), *Put Out More Flags* (1941), *Brideshead*

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 matted foundations we forgot,
Of sanctuary and choir.
This is the death of water and fire. (*CPP* 193)

Eliot brought together water and fire in this passage. Gardner points out that “[a]nyone who lived through the London raids must link water and fire as equally destructive, remembering the charred and sodden ruins and their smell the morning after as the great hoses played on the flaming and smoking ruins” (*Composition*, 85). The mixed smell of “the stench of a water-doused fire and the aftermath of high-explosive” was “a unique ‘blitz’ smell” (Chamberlin 60).

In the “water and fire,” a purgatorial land is created in *Little Gidding* which is filled with the note of death.

The parched eviscerate soil
Gapes at the vanity of toil,
Laughs without mirth.
This is the death of earth. (*CPP* 193)

In “What Dante Means to Me,” Eliot states that the second section of *Little Gidding* “is intended to be the nearest equivalent to a canto of the Inferno or the Purgatorio [...] that I could achieve” (*TCC* 128). The fire in *Little Gidding* also appears in *The Family Reunion*, which was written under the shadow of war.³⁵ In *The Family Reunion*,

Revised (1945), and *Sword of Honour* (1952-61).

³⁵ It is true that the major theme of *The Family Reunion* is not war, but it is justifiable to indicate that war is added into the play’s background. This could be suggested by the identity of Gerald, Harry’s uncle. Gerald was “a retired Anglo-Indian Colonel,” who “prefer[s] the East where there are better

Agatha says to Harry:

You are the consciousness of your unhappy family,
Its bird sent flying through the purgatorial flame.
Indeed it is possible. You may learn hereafter,
Moving alone through flames of ice, chosen
To resolve the enchantment under which we suffer. (148-9)

In *Little Gidding*, the scale of “the purgatorial flame” (Eliot, *Family* 148) is expanded greatly, and the purgatorial fire ceases to be metaphorical but becomes actual in this poem. It succeeds “[t]he town, the pasture and the weed,” derides “[t]he sacrifice that we denied,” and “shall rot/ The marred foundations we forgot,/ Of sanctuary and choir” (*CPP* 193). By creating a purgatorial land in *Little Gidding*, Eliot tries to “present to the mind of the reader a parallel, by means of contrast, between the Inferno and the Purgatorio, which Dante visited and a hallucinated scene after an air-raid” (*TCC* 128).

For Eliot, Dante’s *Purgatorio* becomes “the most appropriate metaphor” (Knowles 100) for the Blitz in *Four Quartets*, and the fire of Purgatory becomes similar to the fire of the Blitz. In *Little Gidding*, “the dark dove with the flickering tongue/ Had passed below the horizon of his homing/ While the dead leaves still rattled on like tin” (*CPP* 193). The symbolic meaning of “the dark dove” has often been associated with German bombers in the Blitz, since Germany’s first military plane in the First World War was called the Taube, or “Dove.”³⁶ Eliot was not the

servants and an incomparable climate” (188). He “started as a youngster on the North-West Frontier –/ Been in tight corners most of my life/ and some pretty nasty messes” (81), but his “glorious” past has faded away, and now he, in Violet’s words, “is useless out of the army” (95).

³⁶ *The Times* started referring to German bombers as *Taube* during the First World War. See *PI* 1007 and Grover Smith, *T. S. Eliot’s* 287.

only artist to aestheticize warplanes as doves, as the German aerial bombardment was often aestheticized in the contemporary literary works.³⁷ Paul Nash, an official war artist, had similarly described the Whitley bomber as “a dove of death” (qtd. in Knowles 111). This passage’s connection with the German aerial attacks is easier to understand in its unpublished draft, in which “the dark dove” “[h]ad made his incomprehensible descension” (qtd. in Gardner, *Composition* 172) instead of “[h]ad passed below the horizon of his homing” (*CPP* 193). Gardner argues that

[t]he manuscript reading “incomprehensible descension” relates the falling fire-bombs to the “pentecostal fire” of line 10. The change to the astronomical term “descension” retains the implication by echoing “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove” (John I. 32). (*Composition*, 172)

Gardner also notes that “Eliot’s friend Charles Williams published in 1939 a strikingly original book *The Descent of the Dove*, a short history of the Holy Spirit in the Church” (*Composition*, 172). According to Knowles, Eliot’s metaphor that the dark dove is a German bomber helps his audience to “make sense of the Blitz” (112).

In the hours of the Blitz, the speaker encounters “a familiar compound ghost” (*CPP* 193). “*Four Quartets*,” according to Craig,

rediscovers memory out of the collapse of Europe in the Second World War:

³⁷ See Rawlinson 69-75.

the bridge they establish to the past is the undoing of the collapse of memory which the First World War betokened, and of which *The Waste Land* is the fundamental expression: ‘London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down.’” (225)

However, when London was being bombed, the memory in *Little Gidding* was “resurrected to confirm that the bridge is unfallen; the ghost walks” (Craig 225).

I met one walking, loitering and hurried
As if blown towards me like the metal leaves
Before the urban dawn wind unresisting.
And as I fixed upon the down-turned face
That pointed scrutiny with which we challenge
The first-met stranger in the waning dusk
I caught the sudden look of 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 (*CPP* 193)

As Gardner (*Composition*, 175) suggests, the figures “in the brown baked features” allude to those scorched faces in Dante’s inferno. However, according to Ricks and McCue (*PI* 1012), they also remind readers of those firemen, who were known as “heroes with grimy faces,” in the Blitz, when it is juxtaposed with the dove-like German bomber’s “flickering tongue.” In the purgatorial world, human beings seem to become ghost-like figures. This highlights the speaker’s complex feeling towards the unreal reality around him.

Knowles (100) argues that the myth of purgatory, which lies behind *Little Gidding*, is a direct confrontation with the air raid and the futility and anarchy of a

world at war, and a retreat from it at the same time. However, I would like to add one point that the myth also suggests a light of hope, since “the purgatorial flame” would lead to a new start which is full of hope.

The dove descending breaks the air
With flame of incandescent terror
Of which the tongue 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. (*CPP* 196)

For the speaker, the world could only be “redeemed from fire by fire.” Those are two different types of fire: the former is hellish fire, while the latter is purgatorial fire. This passage echoes Eliot’s statement in *The Idea of a Christian Society* that “here and hereafter the alternative to hell is purgatory” (*ICS* 24). When imperial decline and the rise of fascist ideology together discredited the progressive narratives of secular politics in the 1930s, Eliot argues in *The Idea of a Christian Society* that “the only hopeful course for a society which would thrive and continue its creative activity in the arts of civilisation,” or rather “is to become Christian” (*ICS* 24).³⁸ In front of punishment and redemption, “[w]e” will be only “[c]onsumed by either fire or fire” (*CPP* 196). In this sense, the fourth section of *Little Gidding* becomes a place where Eliot highlights the importance of keeping faith in a hell-like wartime London. It is

³⁸ Esty contests Chace’s assertion in *The Political Identities of Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot* that Eliot rejected modernity by retreating into the Church, and argues that it is misleading to consider “Eliot’s later work as the product of either a simple minded Tory retreat into traditionalism or an exhausted personal retreat into Christianity, both taken as inevitable expressions of Eliot’s latent and rigid conservatism” (108), since “[t]he usual biographical explanation obscures Eliot’s place [...] in a wider culture of national retrenchment” (109).

possible that Eliot's religious hankering is one of the reasons why he chose Little Gidding as the setting of the fourth quartets, as it is famous for its religious community established by Nicholas Ferrar in 1626.³⁹ However, I agree with David Gervais's assertion that "*Four Quartets* does not think of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a dynamic force behind modern culture [...] but rather as a past which he can adapt to his mood" (137). The mood is complicated, since it includes a sense of frustration in one's patriotic practices.

[...] love of a country
Begins as attachment to our own field of action
And comes to find that action of little importance
Though never indifferent. (*CPP* 195)

When one starts taking actions to practice patriotism with determination, he or she is likely to find that their endeavour and contribution "of little importance." However, there is always a hope in the end, as

[...] all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
By the purification of the motive
In the ground of our beseeching. (*CPP* 196)

In the final section of *Little Gidding*, the poet's notion of keeping faith in front of a war-ridden predicament develops into a patriotic passion with a strong nationalistic emotion, as he wrote

History is now and England. (*CPP* 197)

With regard to the poem's relationship to nationalism, there are two opposite types of

³⁹ The Community of Little Gidding is also known for devising and compiling harmonies of the four gospels and other books of the Bible, allowing them to be read as unified narratives, see *PI* 989.

points of view. According to Esty (135), the first type sees the poem as ultimately Anglo-centric, territorialized, and nationalistic, while the second type of viewpoint denies the connection. Many previous studies are followers of the former: the historical moment of “now and England” evoke a sense of nationhood and a strong feeling of nationalism. Bergonzi believes that this passage confirms Eliot’s “present sense of English identity in a world at war” (54). Likewise, Keith Alldritt suggests that the War has been “assimilated” in *Four Quartets* to achieve a “larger and extremely ambitious literary purpose” (27). Gill Plain also notes that “[w]hether or not Eliot expects the reader to follow him into belief, the poem ends with revelation and unity which, like the statement ‘History is now and England’ [...] begs to be read in patriotic terms” (204). However, Steve Ellis (182) opposes the Anglo-centric reading of *Four Quartets*, pointing out it is the readers who have transformed the poem into an expression of national attachment. In addition, there is a third type of opinion. Esty, for example, considers “[s]uch formal acts of affiliation” as “indicative of Eliot’s lust for roots,” as by the time Eliot wrote *Four Quartets*, Eliot had already entered the Anglican Church and assumed English citizenship, and he also observed that *Four Quartets* “exemplifies a wider turn from cosmopolitan aesthetics to national culture” (111). However, what *Four Quartets* advocate is not nationalism but “a new and historically contingent concept of national culture is among the poem’s conditions of possibility” (Esty 136). Considering the background of this poem’s composition, I prefer the former point of view, especially Plain’s assertion that “the statement ‘History is now and England’ [...] begs to be read in patriotic terms” (204). On the

one hand, the war-related images in *Four Quartets* suggests not only that the poet is in sympathy with the suffering of fellow Britons during the War, but also that a British national identity is being shaped as “[w]ar culture remains central to definitions of Englishness and British national identity” (Deer 14). When British national security was under threat during the Second World War, a national solidarity is more likely to be formed among the British people. On the other hand, if the passage of “History is now and England” is understood in the context of all the four quartets, its nationalistic allusion will become clearer. After making the statement that “History is now and England,” the speaker said

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. (*CPP* 197)

Starting from the pastoral Burnt Norton in England, the speaker continues his “exploration” and returns to Burnt Norton, the place where he “started” in *Four Quartets*, at the end of his journey. When the speaker arrives there, his understanding of Burnt Norton has become different from his initial knowledge on that place. He seemed to discover more meaning about that place through what he had been through in those years, finding the meaning for England, English people and the speaker himself. In this sense, *Little Gidding* for another time arouses a patriotic emotion between its lines by encouraging its contemporary readers to hold confidence, commitment, and faith in the Second World War.

Notes towards the Definition of Culture and Post-WWII **Peace-building**

After the publication of *Four Quartets*, Eliot did not write any significant poem, and possibly lost confidence in writing any poem that is worth printing.⁴⁰ He, as a man of letters, then became more involved in social criticism in order to find “solutions to a baffled populace” (North 112). Published in 1948, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* was Eliot’s last substantial prose work, and “the final fruit of the project which he had been contemplating since the middle of the Second World War” (Ackroyd 291). Despite being “a difficult work to assess” (Williams 247), the book takes the idea of culture, and disassembles it into its constituent parts, arguing that the idea of culture depends upon a class system, a variety of regionalism and the family. Some previous studies also explored its political implication and its relationship with the post-war society. Jed Esty, for example, considers the book as “a document of [post-war] and [post-empire] reconstruction” (127). In *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, Eliot explores the political implication of culture, as well as its relationship to the post-war society, and proposes his understanding of the cultural development in the aftermath of the Second World War. However, they tend to contextualise the book in the post-war era, while not giving enough attention to investigate its connection with the theme of war, particularly the Second World War. Therefore, this chapter explores Eliot’s thoughts about the ways in which culture could be used as “an

⁴⁰ Eliot expressed those feelings when Lehmann asked Eliot for a new poem for an anthology in 1944, see Sharpe 165.

instrument of policy” (*NTDC* 83) to maintain world peace in the post-WWII period, and offers a nuanced reading that *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* suggests Eliot’s contemplation of the post-war peace-building through a re-construction of culture.

In *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, Eliot is clearly aware that the Second World War exerts a destructive impact on the development of culture, while Eliot still considers culture as an important tool to reconstruct the ties between European countries in the post-war period.⁴¹ He remarks that

I have observed with considerable anxiety the career of this word *culture* during the past six or seven years. We may find it natural, and significant, that during a period of unparalleled destructiveness, this word should come to have an important role in the journalistic vocabulary. (*NTDC* 13)

In the Appendix to *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, Eliot includes a radio talk, entitled “The Unity of European Culture,” given to Germany after the Second World War. Eliot reaffirms his faith in “an international fraternity of men of letters within Europe” (*NTDC* 118). He speaks of the “mutual dependence” (*NTDC* 124) of the members of this fraternity, and the “common responsibility” to “preserve our common

⁴¹ The Second World War gave a heavy blow to culture, while some efforts to reconstruct culture during the War were sometimes considered to be prodigal. The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) was founded in January 1940 with the help of Kenneth Clark, English wartime art patron. In early 1940, CEMA received £50,000 from governmental funds to develop cultural activities in England. This expenditure is severely criticised by *Daily Express*. On 13 April 1940, *Daily Express* stated that “[t]he Government gives £50,000 to help wartime culture. What sort of madness is this? There is no such thing as culture in wartime” (qtd. in Marwick, 298).

culture uncontaminated by political influences” (*NTDC* 123). Eliot is fully aware of the inter-war political discussions’ negative impact on “the cultural unity of Europe”.

In the discussion of politics,

[a] universal concern with politics does not unite, it divides. It unites those politically minded folk who agree, across the frontiers of nations, against some other international group who hold opposed views, but it tends to destroy the cultural unity of Europe. (*NTDC* 117)

The cultural unity of Europe was destroyed during the War, but Eliot believed that the basis of that unity was not and it is still possible to re-establish the unity of European culture. One of Eliot’s reasons has been suggested, perhaps unconsciously, in the draft constitution for the “United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation,” which was quoted in the Introduction to *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*:

To develop and maintain mutual understanding and appreciation of the life and culture, the arts, the humanities, and the sciences of the peoples of the world, as a basis for effective international organisation and world peace.
(*NTDC* 14)

Later, the assertion that culture has a function of peacekeeping is made clear in the third chapter of *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, “Unity and Diversity: the Region.” For Eliot, whether culture can maintain peace depends on the degree to which “a people” is “united,” or “divided” (*NTDC* 50). In the post-WWII context of

“administrative and sentimental unity,” Eliot questions the assumption that “the unity of wartime should be preserved in time of peace” (*NTDC* 51). During a war, “we may expect a spontaneous unity of sentiment which is genuine, an affection of it on the part of those who merely wish to escape odium, and, from all, submission to the commands of the constituted authorities” (*NTDC* 51). However, it is often regrettable to see that “the same unity, self-sacrifice and fraternity which prevail in an emergency, cannot survive the emergency itself” (*NTDC* 51). Therefore, it is necessary to “distinguish at all events between the kind of unity which is necessary in an emergency, and that which is appropriate for the development of culture in a nation at peace” (*NTDC* 51). He is particularly interested in the exploration of “the kind and degree of unity desirable in a country which is at peace with other countries,” because “if we cannot have periods of real peace, it is futile to hope for culture at all” (*NTDC* 51).⁴²

In order to have “real peace” (*NTDC* 51), Eliot believes that “[t]he universality of irritation is the best assurance” (*NTDC* 59). Eliot does not “approve the extermination of the enemy,” for “the policy of exterminating [...] is one of the most alarming developments of modern war and peace, from the point of view those who desire the survival of culture” (*NTDC* 59). It is even fortunate for a man to meet “the right enemy” at “the right moment” (*NTDC* 59). “One needs the enemy,” Eliot wrote,

⁴² Eliot is aware that “a period of ‘peace’ may be a period of preparation for war, or of continuation of warfare in another form: in which situation we may expect a deliberate stimulation of patriotic sentiment and a rigorous central government control,” so he made it clear that what he is discussing is “a real peace” (*NTDC* 51).

“within limits, the friction, not only between individuals but between groups, seems to me quite necessary for civilisation” (*NTDC* 59). For Eliot, the meaning of an “enemy” is not a hostile opponent but other constituent elements in a system, such as, in Eliot’s phrase, other regions or “cultures” (*NTDC* 54). As was noted in A. N. Whitehead’s *Science and the Modern World*,

[a] diversification among human communities is essential for the provision of the incentive and material for the Odyssey of the human spirit. Other nations of different habits are not enemies: they are godsend. (qtd. in *NTDC* 50)

This passage is quoted by Eliot in the opening of the second chapter of *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, and echoes Eliot’s attitude towards the relationship between different regions, as well regional cultures. For Eliot, “a national culture, if it is to flourish, should be a constellation of cultures, the constituents of which, benefiting each other, benefit the whole” (*NTDC* 58). Meanwhile, a “friction between its parts” (*NTDC* 58), or a so-called “enemy,” is also necessary, and the degree to which an individual, a group, or a nation is related to “the enemy” is also worth considering. On the one hand, “a country within which the divisions have gone too far is a danger to itself” (*NTDC* 59). On the other hand, “a country which is too well united [...] is a menace to others” (*NTDC* 59). Eliot took fascist Italy and Germany as examples. In both countries, “we have seen that a unity with politico-economic aims, imposed violently and too rapidly, had unfortunately effects upon both nations” (*NTDC* 59),

since

[t]heir cultures had developed in the course of a history of extreme, and extremely sub-divided regionalism: the attempt to teach Germans to think of themselves as Germans first, and the attempt to teach Italian to think of themselves as Italians first, rather than as natives of a particular small principality or city, was to disturb the traditional culture from which alone any future culture could grow. (*NTDC* 59-60)

In retrospect, the concern about “the totalitarian spirit released by the war” (Davies and Saunders 17) was often felt by contemporary literary intellectuals, such as Dylan Thomas, Cyril Connolly, Evelyn Waugh, and George Orwell, as they detected the danger posed by “the strengthening of state power,” whose “ultimate instances were the Nazi and Stalinist states” (Sinfield 44) in the post-war era.⁴³ It is clear that Eliot shared the concern with those like-minded literary intellectuals. In this sense, both the unity and the division of the constituents in a culture become critical factors for the maintenance of peace.

Besides, Eliot emphasised that, “without a common faith, all efforts towards drawing nations closer together in culture can produce only an illusion of unity” (*NTDC* 82). This alludes to a religious foundation of Eliot’s concept of culture in *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, which is a continuation of Eliot’s Christian

⁴³ For Dylan Thomas, Cyril Connolly, Evelyn Waugh, and George Orwell’s involvement in the discussion of anti-totalitarianism, see Davies and Saunders 16-9; and Sinfield 44.

hankering in *The Idea of a Christian Society* in terms of its defence of a Christian culture.⁴⁴ In March 1939, Eliot gave a series of three lectures at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, which were published in the same year as *The Idea of a Christian Society*.⁴⁵ Published just after the outbreak of war, the book systematically “summed up much of his thinking in social philosophy” (Kojacký 126). Besides, it also “imagines and desires the uprooting of secular democratic politics” (Levenson, “Eliot’s” 383), while it is “perilously close to promoting a totalitarian theocratic state” (Bradshaw 272).⁴⁶ Religion, particularly Christianity, is a “dominant force” in re-establishing “a common culture between peoples each of which has its distinct culture” (NTDC 122). Eliot once said during the Second World War that “if one tries to fight evil with material means one will soon find oneself infected with the evil one is fighting” (qtd. in Sencourt 143). Eliot then “became more and more concerned about the means and methods of rebuilding Christian order after the devil’s joy-ride” (qtd. in Sencourt 143). When the re-construction of Christian order is associated with culture by Eliot, it “was not simply a question of rebuilding the *status quo ante*, but of reformulating the forms, attitudes and outlook of the Christian church for its mission in the latter half of the twentieth century” (qtd. in Sencourt 143). However, Kojacký points out that, as “the dream of an explicitly Christian society faded” in the 1940s, Eliot “began to fear for the future of the intellectual and cultural life of the nation” (148). For Eliot, “the ground to be defended” became one that “allowed the natural

⁴⁴ See Cooper’s “In Times of Emergency: Eliot’s Social Criticism,” 295-7.

⁴⁵ Donoghue (207) points out that Eliot’s four talks on the BBC in March and April 1932 might be another draft of *The Idea of a Christian Society*.

⁴⁶ See also Cooper’s “In Times of Emergency: Eliot’s Social Criticism,” 292.

development of all culture,” while “[t]he pagan enemy would be neutralized,” because “the new enemy was the mass society and an excessive degree of State competence” (Kojève 148).

Apart from the division of constituent cultures in a nation, Eliot also believes that an organised division of class in a society can benefit the development of culture and the maintenance of peace. “A nation which has gradations of class,” according to Eliot, “seems to me [...] likely to be more tolerant and pacific than one which is not so organised” (*NTDC* 60). In *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, Eliot argues that the state must be hierarchical, and “several cultural levels” will emerge in the “future society” as it has done in “every civilised society of the past” (*NTDC* 25). It is also important to have, “from ‘top’ to ‘bottom,’ a continuous gradation of cultural levels” (*NTDC* 48) in a society. In doing so, different classes would maintain their own cultures, and realise the false notion that “the culture of a ‘higher’ class is something superfluous to society as a whole,” or that “it is something which ought to be shared equally by all other classes” (*NTDC* 35). That is the basis of “a healthy society” and “the health of the culture of the people” (*NTDC* 35). Eliot does not “consider the upper levels as possessing more culture than the lower, but as representing a more conscious culture and a greater specialisation of culture” (*NTDC* 48). He made this point clear in 1922. In December 1922, Eliot published his final “London Letter” in the *Dial*, in which he paid tribute to Marie Lloyd, one of the great popular music-hall entertainers of the age, and explored the importance of

working-class culture.⁴⁷ In “Marie Lloyd”, Eliot “seemed to find the culture of the lower orders the only part of culture which had maintained the continuity of memory through its self-conscious adherence to its own culture” (Craig 210). Eliot considers Marie Lloyd as “the expressive figure of the lower classes,” who “find the expression and dignity of their own lives” in the music-hall comedians” (*CP2* 419). However, they perhaps “will not exist for long” (*CP2* 419) due to the threat from mass culture. Eliot worried that “[w]ith the decay of the music-hall, with the encroachment of the cheap and rapid-breeding cinema, the lower classes will tend to drop into the same state of protoplasm as the bourgeoisie” (*CP2* 419-20), and become “the sweating rabble in cinema” (*FTOD* 29), whose minds was

lulled by continuous senseless music and continuous action too rapid for the brain to act upon, and will receive, without giving, in that same listless apathy with which the middle and upper classes regard any entertainment of the nature of art. (*CP2* 420)⁴⁸

In Eliot’s writings, the question of social hierarchy is one of his “persistent early concern[s]” (Levenson, “Eliot’s” 377). The origin of his class-consciousness could be traced back to his childhood. Eliot was born and raised in a well-off business family in St. Louis, Missouri. According to Crawford (*Young*, 210), Eliot had grown up with

⁴⁷ This essay was revised and published as “In memoriam: Marie Lloyd” in the second issue of the *Criterion* in January 1923.

⁴⁸ Discussions about the extinction of the music hall as a cultural form were common in contemporary journalism. Due to the invasion of Hollywood cinema, a number of audiences were drawn away and many music halls closed throughout the 1920s.

family servants, who took care of him carefully when he was young.⁴⁹ When Eliot was studying at Oxford, he was given greater exposure to the English class system. Percy Brand Blanshard, Eliot's fellow American graduate student, recalled later that at Oxford

the class system was still strong: a man old enough perhaps to be your grandfather waited on you like a footman, built a fire daily in your grate, served in your rooms (and I mean rooms) a hearty English breakfast and a lunch of bread and cheese. (qtd. in Crawford, *Young* 210)

After leaving Oxford, Eliot moved to London, where he “acquired the forms of upper-middle-class social life” (Grimble 49). Perhaps, he considered himself as a member of the upper-middles at the time. In October 1937, Eliot wrote a poem “AMONG the various Middle Classes” in a letter to Virginia Woolf. The speaker of that poem said amusingly that the “poor Old Possum” was “upper-middle through and through” (*P2* 177), which suggested that Eliot's affiliation to the upper-middle-class. It is possible that Eliot's innate and unrecognised class-prejudice with its inbuilt assumptions still exerts an impact on his social commentary in the 1940s, but it is also accompanied by the inspiration drawn from Marie Lloyd's success. For Eliot, he looked forward to “the sort of human connection with an audience that came to Lloyd without contrivance” (Chinitz, *Cultural* 104). According to Chinitz, Eliot's idea of the music hall was “a vanishing possibility of reconciliation between diverging levels of

⁴⁹ See also *L1* 66.

culture that ought to have been simultaneously available to him (Chinitz, *Cultural* 103). Besides, Eliot also considers that “the poet aspires to the condition of the music-hall comedian” (*UPUC* 154). Hence, in 1933, Eliot wrote that “[t]he ideal medium for poetry [...] and the most direct means of social “usefulness” for poetry, is the theatre” (*UPUC* 153), and turned to the composition of the poetic drama in the 1930s in that hope that it could “cut across all the present stratifications of public taste – stratifications which are perhaps a sign of social disintegration” (*UPUC* 153). According to Chinitz, a poetic drama was rooted in the musical hall, and might be able to “bridge, or perhaps bypass, the cultural divide and restore to Eliot the popular adulation that was Marie Lloyd’s and ought to have been the poet’s as well” (Chinitz, *Cultural* 104).⁵⁰

In *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, Eliot also believes that “in a vigorous society there will be present both class and elite, with some overlapping and constant interaction between them” (*NTDC*44), and an elite is supposed to play an important role in each class:

[a]n elite must therefore be attached to some class, whether higher or lower:

but so long as there are classes at all it is likely to be the dominant class

that attracts this elite to itself. (*NTDC* 42)

⁵⁰ Chinitz’s *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide* (2003) investigates Eliot’s relation to popular culture, while charts Eliot’s attempt to reconcile popular with high art. Besides, Todd Avery’s *Radio Modernism* (2006), Michael Coyle’s “Radio,” and Melissa Dinsman’s *Modernism at the Microphone: Radio, Propaganda, and Literary Aesthetics during World War II* (2015), explored Eliot’s BBC broadcasts; Cooper’s *T. S. Eliot’s Orchestra* (2000) includes chapters on Eliot and popular music; David Trotter has considered the influence of cinematic techniques on Eliot in *Cinema and Modernism* (2007).

By using the term “the dominant class,” Eliot does not mean a “governing” class, as Eliot’s hierarchical society is based on intellectual strata rather than social distinction. As Kojecký notes, Eliot’s wish “to maintain a class society” arises “from his view of human nature, not from any wish to condone exploitation, economic or otherwise, of one class by another” (149). Eliot encourages that in a culturally vigorous society “the ablest artists” should “rise to the top, influence taste, and execute the important public commissions” (*NTDC* 45), while in “a healthily stratified society” the “governing elite” from all the classes would have “a greater responsibility” (*NTDC* 84). Eliot also believes that “the emergence of more highly cultured groups does not leave the rest of society unaffected” (*NTDC* 25). By doing so, “a further development of the culture in organic complexity” is likely to be stimulated:

[the] higher level of culture must be thought of both as valuable in itself, and as enriching of the lower levels: thus the movement of culture would proceed in a kind of cycle, each class nourishing the others. (*NTDC* 37)

However, Eliot realised two self-contradictory aspects in the selection of elite. The first aspect is that “we lack a criterion of who are the best people” when we “get the best people, in every walk of life, to the top” (*NTDC* 47). The other is that, “if we impose a criterion, it will have an oppressive effect upon novelty,” because “new work of genius, whether in art, science or philosophy, frequently meets with opposition” (*NTDC* 47). Therefore, Eliot expressed his concerns about the way in which culture is transmitted through in society, particularly whether “education alone”

could “ensure the transmission of culture in a society” (*NTDC* 47).

With regard to the transmission of culture, Eliot considers that “[t]he primary channel of transmission of culture is the family: no man wholly escapes from the kind, or wholly surpasses the degree, of culture which he acquired from his early environment” (*NTDC* 43). If “family life fails to play its part,” the development of culture will “deteriorate” (*NTDC* 43). Eliot made this somewhat snobbish statement on the basis that he was not confident that culture could be transmitted by contemporary education. He noted that “whether education can foster and improve culture or not, it can surely adulterate and degrade it,” because

there is no doubt that in our headlong rush to educate everybody, we are lowering our standards, and more and more abandoning the study of those subjects by which the essentials of our culture [...] are transmitted; destroying our ancient edifices to make ready the ground upon which the barbarian nomads of the future will encamp in their mechanised caravans.

(*NTDC* 108)

Since the mid-1910s, Eliot had been sceptical about the implementation of universal education, especially the contemporary universal education in America. For Eliot, the American educational mode and concepts had become so philistine that the purpose of American education was gradually transformed into helping students “pursue social ideas rather than wisdom” (Hewison, *In* 52).⁵¹ Meanwhile, he was concerned about

⁵¹ When it is used as a noun, the word “philistine” was considered by Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and*

the Americanisation of the British education, as this tendency was gradually expanding across the Atlantic Ocean to the United Kingdom.⁵² According to John Carey, a series of educational legislations introduced universal elementary education in England at the end of the nineteenth century, which “rendered attendance of elementary education compulsory through legislation” (5), such as the Education Act of 1870, Disraeli’s Act of 1876 and the 1880 Act legitimated the children’s compulsory attendance of elementary education. In 1881, the Elementary Education Act eliminated the tuition fees of the elementary education. As a result, an increasing number of Britons received education, and an unprecedented reading public was created. This phenomenon was criticised by a number of modernist intellectuals. Pound, for example, considered the great preponderance of the reading public as “the mass, the half-educated simpering general, the semi-connoisseur, the some-times collector [...] the readers of the ‘Spectator’ and the ‘English Review’” (“New”, 68).⁵³

Anarchy (1869) as the newer middle classes who were generally nonconformist in religion and averse to the cultural activities which they associated with aristocratic decadence. However, by 1920 the word’s meaning had been the people who were not interested in ideas and tastes and indifferent to the arts. In a letter to Pound on 15 April 1915, Eliot pointed out the superficiality of American education, which only offered students the knowledge of “How to Appreciate the Hundred Best Paintings, the Maiden Aunt and the Social Worker” (*LI* 104). Besides, Eliot (*LI* 183) also criticised the mediocrity of American education in another letter to Hinkley on 21 March 1915.

⁵² What my study suggests is that Eliot worried about the Americanisation of the British education system and the academic atmosphere, rather than the impact of American culture on the campus life of English universities, since Eliot was possibly an advocate of the latter. According to Crawford (*Young*, 211), a motion, “this Society abhors the threatened Americanization of Oxford,” was proposed in Merton’s Debating Society on 23 November 1914. Both Eliot and John Bulmer, Eliot’s neighbour, opposed it. This motion did not strike Eliot as grave. On the contrary, Eliot became very “pleased to have worked in references to a brand-new ragtime dance-craze: the fox trot” (Crawford, *Young* 211). He told Hinkley that “I point out to them frankly how much they owed to Amurrican culcher in the drayma (including the movies) in music, in the cocktail, and in a dance’ (*LI* 77). After voting, the motion was lost and “Eliot was on the winning side” (Crawford, *Young* 211). See also *LI* 100.

⁵³ *The Spectator* was a highbrow London weekly magazine, which published articles about politics,

Although “student numbers declined drastically between 1939 and 1945” (Hewison, *In* 46), they increased again after the War. It is clear that the scepticism about universal education is continued in Eliot’s later social criticism. He argued that the numbers receiving higher education in England and America should be cut by two-thirds, and, if necessary, there should be a revival of the monastic teaching orders, which leads students to return to the cloister, where they would be “uncontaminated by the deluge of barbarism outside” (Eliot, *Essays* 174). “Unless popular education is also moral education,” Eliot wrote in as early as 1931, “it is merely putting firearms into the hands of children” (*C10* 309).⁵⁴ Later on, he continued his exploration of the development of education in relation to religion in his lectures delivered at the University of Chicago in 1950, which were published later as “The Aims of Education” (1950).⁵⁵ In his views, after the standard of education is lowered by the universal education, the “barbarism” and the barbarian nomads will dominate the future world in “their mechanized caravans” (*NTDC* 108), which again reminds readers of “those hooded hordes swarming/ Over endless plains” (*CPP* 73) in the post-WWI Europe.

In retrospect, Eliot’s late social ideals end in failure. Perhaps, its failure is

important events, and the arts. It also appeared in Eliot’s “*Le Directeur*,” a French poem published in *Little Review* in July 1917.

⁵⁴ In Eliot’s formulation of moral education, asceticism performed a central role. This is point agreed by both Eliot and Middleton Murry. In October, Murry published an essay on *Northcliffe as Symbol* in *The Adelphi*, in which he wrote that “the social disease is so radical ‘that there is only one real remedy – the slow regeneration of the individual man’” and “‘the need of a new asceticism’ should be ‘upon us’” (qtd. in *C10* 308-9).

⁵⁵ “The Aims of Education” comprises four essays: “Can ‘Education’ be Defined?,” “The Interrelation of Aims,” “The Conflict between Aims,” and “The Issue of Religion.” In the final essay, “The Issue of Religion,” Eliot continued his discussion of “the place of education in religion” (*TCC* 116) in the previous essays. See *TCC* 108-24 and Bantock 103.

determined by the indeterminacy of culture, as “[c]ulture can never be wholly conscious – there is always more to it than we are conscious of; and it cannot be planned because it is also the unconscious background of all our planning” (*NTDC* 94). However, Eliot’s late social criticism explores the political implication of culture, as well as its relationship with society, and proposes his understanding of the post-war cultural re-construction and his thoughts about the ways in which culture could be used to maintain peace in the post-WWII world.

Conclusion

In the recently-published *New Cambridge Companion to T. S. Eliot* (2016), Harding notes that, during the past two decades, “major developments have transformed the landscape of our current preoccupations in Eliot studies” (*New*, xiii). A growing interest in the exploration of the relationship between Eliot’s writings and the theme of war has been shown in many previous studies. However, the desire to understand the connections between the two has, to the best of my knowledge, not previously come to fruition. While some Eliot critics have explored the context of Eliot’s writings, none of them has conducted a rigorous study that primarily examines Eliot’s involvement with the theme of war. Expanding on insights from those scholars, I have shown in this thesis that war, as a destructive/constructive force, becomes a formative factor in Eliot’s intellectual development, and that Eliot responded to war by taking it as a literary theme in his writings.

In Chapter One, I explored that the ways in which Eliot was involved in the War after he settled down in London, and then contextualises Eliot’s wartime writings in the contemporary history. By doing so, I have demonstrated that war has become a literary theme in Eliot’s writings during the Great War, and successfully challenged the point of view that Eliot’s poems during the First World War were silent about the war. In Chapter Two, I took Eliot’s working experiences at Lloyds Bank as an important context to explore Eliot’s post-war writings between 1919 and 1925, and suggested that the Great War as a literary theme was still made present in Eliot’s

post-war writings from 1919 to 1925, while his writings during the post-war period demonstrate an contemplation of both the ironic nature of the post-war peace treaty and the disintegration of Europe in the aftermath of World War One. In Chapter Three, I suggested that Eliot sought intelligent debates on political theories as responses to the feverish political climate of the time in a series of cultural conversations that he participated or formed in the *Criterion*, and argued that the *Criterion*'s involvement in the discussion of the post-war European cultural politics shows not only the War's impact on the ensuing intellectual debates in interwar Britain, but also a war of cultures was created on the pages of the *Criterion*. My final chapter explored *Four Quartets* in relation to wartime England during the Second World War, investigating the ways in which Eliot's three wartime quartets are "patriotic" poems. By doing so, I reached a nuanced understanding of the poem when it is contextualised in its historical context in terms of its composition, form, emotion, allusions, the theme of patriotism, and the poem's pursuit of an English national identity during the Second World War, and showed that *Four Quartets* suggest a notion that art is able to supply what the wartime English society needs – confidence, commitment, and the necessity of a collective English national identity. Furthermore, this chapter also displayed the ways in which war, especially the Second World War, contributes to the formation of Eliot's cultural theory in the late 1940s.

In exploring Eliot's involvements with war, on their own and in the context of other temporally and culturally relevant situations, I have tried to arrive at a richer understanding of the interaction between war and Eliot's writings. However, this

thesis does not claim to have exhausted the subject, as a large number of previously unpublished materials regarding Eliot's reflections on war, such as the sixth volume of *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot*, entitled *The War Years, 1940-1946*, will be very likely to provide supplementary evidence in the future, broadening the scope for the study of the relationship between Eliot's writings and the theme of war. Besides, Nancy Fulford, the Project Archivist of the T. S. Eliot Collection in London, suggests in a private conversation with the author of this thesis at the Senate House, University of London, on 8 July 2017 that a large number of Eliot's unpublished letters after 1935 would also be of great interest to the future study on the relationship between Eliot's writings and the theme of war. Thus, this study may have established itself as a basis, indicating new possibilities for further examinations of the theme of war in Eliot's writings.

Besides, this study will function as the basis for several other studies in the future. One of them is the research on the relationship between Eliot's writings and the theme of peace, or rather, whether an emphasis on war in Eliot's writings helps us re-think the meanings he attaches to peace. In addition, this thesis might facilitate another study on the potential connections between other writers and literary intellectuals of Eliot's time and the theme of war, such as Hulme, Woolf, Pound, Lewis, Ford, Aldington, Read, I. A. Richards, William Empson, Julian Bell, Ian Fleming, Auden, and Christopher Isherwood. Also, this thesis might lead to another study on the ways in which war is represented, consciously or unconsciously, in the literary works. Furthermore, this studies also pave a way for a future study on the relationship

between war, war writings, and mass media, exploring the ways in which mass media exerts an impact on war writings in the twentieth century.

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