Politics of Place in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore

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Contents

Summary

This Ph. D thesis investigates the politics of place in three modernist poets—T. S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore. Through the critical lens of both human geography and social construction theories of place, this project aims to uncover the underlying political connotations of the representations of place in their poetry.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter, I look at the representation of the London Underground in T. S. Eliot's masterpiece *Four Quartets*. By bringing the poem into dialogue with the problem of agricultural decline and suburban degeneracy in the 1930s, I argue that the poetics of movement in "Burnt Norton" and "East Coker" illustrates Eliot's attempt to rescue the troubled notion of "Englishness" and to re-fashion a collective identity in interwar Britain.

The second chapter zooms in on two punctuation marks—the exclamation mark and the dash—that proliferate in William Carlos Williams's epic poem *Paterson*. I argue that the two punctuations are essential components of Williams's localist poetics. They are the two axes by which the textual space unfolds and becomes a receptacle of local objects and subjects. Together they create a new vision of a rooted and integrated place that Williams sees as representative of the American spirit.

The third chapter tackles geographical scales on another level and problematises Marianne Moore's imaginative representation of China in her poetry collection *O To Be a Dragon*. Through detailed archival research, I co-relate the composition of the major poems in this collection with Cold War politics, especially the issue of

territorial control, and I argue that Moore's Orientalism helps her to construct an enclave and to imagine an alternative, fluid subjectivity.

Introduction

"A cry off. Where are we at all? and whenabouts in the name of space? I don't understand. I fail to say. I dearsee you too."[1] The time was 4th May 1939 when the Irish writer James Joyce, now exile in Paris (and Zurich), published a dense, tongue-twisting novel entitled *Finnegans Wake*—the same year when T. S. Eliot went to the British Museum to search for his familial roots in England. The question posed near the end of the novel captures, or tries to capture, the sound and fury, the confusion of living in the early twentieth century. In particular, it questions our sense of emplacedness in a swift-changing world. The inability to locate the distant cry (the only thing one is sure of is that it is "off", de-centred, not anywhere nearby) prompts the speaker to question their own locus—"where are we at all? and whenabouts in the name of space?" The second question is oxymoronic; however, it also belies the dual dimensions of our disorientation in the modern world—we are lost at sea, not knowing when and where in time and space we are. This short excerpt epitomizes the poetics and politics of place representation in modernist poetry, which my project sets out to investigate. The sense of disorientation, the difficulty of emplacing and anchoring oneself in places that are crumbling and falling apart, the backward look at ancient sacred sites that used to provide a sense of permanence and the disenchantment about modern industrial culture that transformed these sites into something monstrous—these outlooks capture the ambivalence and paradox of modernist poetics of place. Modernist literature is, simultaneously, a textual practice of uprootedness and displacement and, as the thesis shall explore, an artistic effort to re-anchor and re-emplace bodies and identities. This project problematises place

[1] James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 558.

representations in three modernist poets—T. S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore. It aims to provide a more diverse and nuanced picture of poetics of place while also being attuned to the political connotations of such representations. It seeks to answer these fundamental questions: how and why modernist poets constellate and represent place(s) in their poetry? How do these representations respond to the socio-political contexts of the day? Finally, what do these representations tell us about the poets' political stances? Before we plunge into the rich connotations of the literary texts, however, I shall first give a brief overview of the interlinking issues I will be discussing time and again in this thesis: modernism's engagement with time, space and place, contemporary theories of space and place I make use of in this thesis and finally a few biographical notes of the three poets I study in this project.

Modernism, Modernity

The protean nature of modernism(s) is a matter of much scholarly contention—it is practically impossible to demarcate what modernism is without arousing variegated questions of its ambivalent chronological and geographical boundaries and its multi-faceted gender, ethnic and intellectual contexts. Furthermore, the term itself invites disciplinary scrutiny: are we talking about modernism(s) as a genre? A mode of artistic expression? A time-bound literary movement? A reactive ideology prominent in the decades before and after the turn of the 20th century? To speak of a singular, monolithic modernism nowadays may only belie academic ignorance, if not arrogance. Still, it would be useful to revisit the classical definition of modernism as a yardstick

against which a more flexible understanding of the term can be established and used in this thesis.

Modernism never was a self-conscious unitary literary movement, but we use the term rather as an umbrella term for a series of artistic and literary experimentations undertaken by torchbearers of Futurism, Expressionism, Dadaism and Surrealism in the fine arts and the pioneers of Symbolism, Imagism, stream-of-consciousness, fragmentations and free verse in literature. In other words, "modernism" is most often spoken of and applied retrospectively, as "a name for an epoch fast receding into the cultural past."[2] When time-bound, modernism was traditionally located in the years 1890-1930, with its peak moment in the Anglo-American context, often referred to as "High Modernism", situated roughly between 1910-1925, intellectually fermented by the late-nineteenth century and turn-of-century thinkers such as Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche, Freud, Saussure and Einstein, to name a few[3]. But, as the following section elaborates, such geo-temporal boundaries have been increasingly contested in the last decades. Its scale and scope has been constantly re-made—scholars fret over the correct term to name the literary movement, ranging from transnational, to global, then to planetary. Current scholarship, too, incorporates and absorbs aspects of regional studies—Latin American, Asian, Spanish American, the Balkans, African, Turkish—into its territory.[4] Therefore we cannot afford to look at modernism(s) again with the same Anglo-American and European focus, and this thesis, too, aims to

[2] Michael Levenson, "Introduction," *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1.
[3] See, Michael Bell, "The Metaphysics of Modernism," *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 9-32.
[4] See, Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3-22.

establish a dialogue with the global discursive networks of contemporary modernist scholarship, paying special attention to its fluidity and diversity.

Differences between its diverse types of expression notwithstanding, modernisms could be said to have a shared characteristics of a rebellious attitude against nineteenth century conventions such as realism and naturalism in novel-writing and traditional metre in poetry. The modernists endeavour, instead, to create an expression that they think captures turn-of-century sentiments and impulses stemming from deeper strata of the human mind, both of which the worn-out paradigms of the past century failed to represent. Peter Childs's list of the modernist preoccupations is useful as a guide to fin-de-siècle sensibilities: "religious skepticism, deep introspection, technical and formal experimentation, cerebral game-playing, linguistic innovation, self-referentiality, misanthropic despair overlaid with humour, philosophical speculation, loss of faith and cultural exhaustion." [5] Childs's account, though by no means exhaustive, gives an apt overview of the Zeitgeist of urban modernity. Marshall Berman captured the paradox of being modern in *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* (1983) as follows:

> To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world—and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are.[6]

What we call "the modern era" is, according to Berman's delineation, a time of seismic shifts both internally and externally, with a kind of chaotic energy

[5] Peter Childs, *Modernism* (London: Routledge, 2008), 6.
[6] Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* (London: Verso, 1983), 15.

transforming social structures and norms that were in place for centuries and challenging established epistemological and ontological tools by which we understand what it means to be human. This "maelstrom of modern life", Berman points out, is underpinned by changes in many arenas—"great discoveries in the physical science," "the industrialization of production," "immense demographic upheavals," "rapid and often cataclysmic urban growth," "systems of mass communication," "increasingly powerful national states" and "mass social movements of people."[7] According to Berman, it is the "ever-expanding, drastically fluctuating capitalist world market" that is the driving force behind these global changes.[8]

Berman's approach is materialist and it suggests that we cannot have a proper understanding of modern life without looking at the material base of modern life. To borrow Berman's tripartite division of modernization, modernity and modernism: capitalist modernization is the need to constantly revolutionize economic production by the use of new technologies and practices in order to extend and maintain profits; whereas modernity is a set of social, psychological and cultural response to the acceleration of everyday life undergoing modernization.[9] Slightly problematic is Berman's definition of modernism as "any attempt by modern men and women to become subjects as well as objects of modernization, to get a grip on the modern world and make themselves in it."[10] Pertinent and insightful as his comments are, Berman is, of course, interpreting modernism as a general cultural phenomenon

[7] Ibid., 16.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Berman's definition finds a fitting complement in Foucault's account of modernity as an attitude rather than an epoch—the placing of humanity, or instrumental reason, at the centre of everything from religion and nature to finance and science. See Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment," *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 34-45.
[10] Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 15.

instead of a specific artistic and literary movement, although art and literature by nature hold up a mirror to the sociological shifts taking place in the social and political milieu of the day (which Berman does not deny). More usefully for the purpose of this thesis, David Harvey articulates the same dynamic in artistic terms in his *The Condition of Postmodernity* in which he calls modernism "a troubled and fluctuating aesthetic response to conditions of modernity produced by a particular process of modernization."[11] Harvey's conception is more pertinent in the sense that it demarcates modernism as an aesthetic response—implying that the aesthetic is secondary to the sociological; it is the social that moulds the aesthetic sphere's particular shape and contour. In this project, however, I build upon and also sophisticate Harvey's response model and argue that modernist works must also be interpreted as not only a respondent but also an actor in the discursive network which narrates the troubled condition of modernity. In other words: through their distinctive position in the polysemic system of their time, modernist artworks both respond to and shape modernity.

As briefly outlined above, the chronological demarcation of modernism as the period between 1890 and 1930 is open to academic contention, not only in regards to its temporal boundaries but also the perspective of seeing Modernism as a time-bound movement itself. Such a view inevitably serves as an impetus for the posterity to regard Modernism as a thing of the past. This is potentially dangerous for it paradoxically advocates an evolutionist point of view while overlooking the fact that the crust of modernism lies in its innovativeness (or the avant-gardeness), its radical nature and progressive values, which may well continue in contemporary artistic

[11] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991), 99.

practices as well.[12] My approach allies itself with that of Michael Bell who insightfully points out that "the change from modernism to postmodernism is not a difference in metaphysic so much as a different stage in the digestion of the same metaphysic."[13] Similarly, Michael Levenson complains about the "contemporary imperative to declare…ourselves citizens of a liberated postmodernism", tolling the bell for the "death" of modernism[14], I argue for not only a long modernism, but for a flexible understanding of the modernist movement as both a literary period and a paradigm of poetics whose achievements remains an event in contemporary culture. Furthermore, the traditional approach to modernism delineates the sphere of modernism too narrowly in geographical terms. In the preface to the section on "A Geography of Modernism" in their classical study of modernism, Bradbury and McFarlane state that "modernism found its natural habitat in cities—cities which themselves in turn became cosmopolitan centres."[15] They contend that these cultural hubs best exemplify the multiple nationalities which gave birth to their distinct modernist literature(s). The present emphasis of modernist studies, however, interrogates the validity of national boundaries as a spatial strategy to categorize modernist literature and in turn explores the dynamic, global discursive networks that produced modernist literature(s), an approach that this doctoral thesis also adopts.

[12] Peter Childs, *Modernism* (London: Routledge, 2008), 13.
[13] Michael Bell, "The Metaphysics of Modernism," *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 9.
[14] See Michael Levenson, "Introduction", *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1.
[15] Malcolm Bradbury and Alan McFarlane, eds., *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 95.

Temporocentrism of Modernism and its Discontents

One of the key elements in the metaphysics of modernism is an altered conception of temporality. In *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) Fredric Jameson has famously argued that literature of the early twentieth century foregrounds "the great high modernist thematics of time and temporality, the elegiac mysteries of durée and memory" whereas postmodernism is dominated by "categories of space rather than by categories of time."[16] David Harvey notes, similarly, that "modernity is about the experience of progress through modernization, the process of *becoming*, rather than *being* in space and place."[17] Michael Levenson had termed such experience "the time-mind". He declares that "in the first post-war decade, at a moment of vaulting ambition in the High Modernist novel, time became such a dominant concern that it can be taken as a cultural signature."[18] Issues of time and temporality, in their varied formulations, are both discursively and formally foregrounded in almost all the masterpieces of modernist fiction, from James Joyce's *Ulysses*, through Marcel Proust's *A la recherch é du temps perdu* to Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and William Faulkner's *The Sound and Fury*. One can easily detect such temporocentrism in modernist poetry. To take but one example of significance for this thesis: T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* opens with a direct address to the three aspects of time—"Time past and time present/ are perhaps all present in time future", and in his "Tradition and Individual Talent," he calls for a notion and experience of

[16] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 11, 16. Terry Eagleton concurs with Jameson and claims that "[i]f modernism was haunted by time, postmodernism is obsessed with space." See, Terry Eagleton, "Fiction Etched by Rain in Rock," *Times Higher Education Supplement* (26 Feb, 1999): 27.
[17] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991), 205.
[18] Michael Levenson, "The Time-Mind of the Twenties," *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 197-217.

history that involves " a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together", which he thinks "is what makes a writer traditional."[19] The belief in the centrality of temporal experiences underlines Eliot's emphasis on timeless "tradition" as the communal heritage that each writer must align their "individual talent" with so that both the tradition and the individual talent can be renewed in the sequence of endless temporal moments; Williams's early poetry such as *Spring and All* makes use of the seasonal cycles to indicate the interpenetration of time and space ("Descent of Winter"); Marianne Moore similarly correlates questions of time and eternity with questions of morality in poems such as "What Are Years".

The impression of the primacy of time in modernist artworks was informed by the intellectual discourse of the fin-de-siècle: most notably, Henri Bergson's *Time and Free Will* (1889), Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), and Albert Einstein's theory of relativity (1905), all of which disrupt the common-sense experience of the daily world by challenging the established epistemology of time. These foundational texts of the modern period question the instrumental efficacy of scientific and social constructs such as the mechanical clock time (so-called "chronological time"), human reason and a stable representational system that tells the "truth" of the external reality. The modernists believe that the only recourse against the levelling of instrumental reason and mechanism lies in interiority, the personal, experiential world of flux, and that a deeper reality is to be discovered in the pre-conceptual flow of appearances, irreducible to rational formulations. Hence the Bergsonian idea of durée—an undivided whole of experience, perpetual flow of inner time, proof against the convenient fictions provided by the construction of the rational

[19] T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and Individual Talent," *Selected Essays* (London: Faber & Faber, 1932), 15.

intellect—gains currency in modernist literature.[20] The modernists' obsession with the non-progressive, non-linear sense of time as a literary trope was also fuelled by contemporaneous skepticism about evolutionary historicism with its "before-and-after" narrative of social progress.[21] The latter would lead Virginia Woolf to declare that "life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged," effectively dismissing the linearity of history with a trope of the modern invention of street lamps.[22]

The temporal dimension of not only modernist art and literature but cultural production as a whole has been addressed by scholars so repeatedly and to such an extent that it provoked American philosopher of space Edward Casey to denounce, explicitly, "the era of temporocentrism that has dominated the last two hundred years of philosophy in the wake of Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard, Darwin, Bergson and William James."[23] On his side, Edward Soja defined such prevalent temporocentric tendency as "an overdeveloped historical contextualization of social life and social theory that actively submerges and peripheralises the geographical or spatial imagination." [24] Its corollary is not a fuller understanding of time, but, paradoxically, a more restrictive one: in turn, such an understanding informs the temporal bias inherent in many traditional studies of modernism, one that sees the period constricted to, for example, 1890-1930 and thereby excludes many modernist texts, including those discussed in this thesis. I shall return to this issue in the next section, but to

[20] Sanford Schwartz, *The Matrix of Modernism: Pound, Eliot and Early Twentieth Century Thought* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), 20-49.
[21] Joshua Kavaloski, *High Modernism: Aestheticism and Performativity in Literature of the 1920s* (New York: Camdon House, 2014), 7.
[22] Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction," *Modernism: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 897.
[23] Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), X.
[24] Edward Soja, "Postmodern geographies and the critique of historicism", *Postmodern Contention* (New York: Guilford Press, 1993), 140.

conclude here I would like to delineate the revisionist trend in human sciences, often dubbed "the spatial turn", in which Soja is an important participant. Discursively prominent since the 1960s, the epistemic shift from time to space is most frequently allied with the postmodern era, and is exemplified by works of Henry Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Edward Soja, among others. Denis Cosgrove, commenting on the contexts of this rise of spatial studies, notes that "a widely acknowledged 'spatial turn' across arts and sciences corresponds to post-structuralist agnosticism about both naturalistic and universal explanations and about single-voiced historical narratives, and to the concomitant recognition that position and context are centrally and inescapably implicated in all constructions of knowledge."[25] But there is plentiful evidence that modernists, too, thought deeply about the space, and made it into both the subject of their inquiries and the form and subject of their artwork.

The Spatial Turn in Modernist Studies

How about modernism and matters of space? What impact does this spatial turn in the general scholarship have on this particular mode of writing known as modernist literature? Where is the space for space and place in modernist studies, if the philosophical paradigm seemingly dominant in the times of the production of works of high modernism—and thus intuitively the most suitable framework of inquiry—was time? A simple yet plausible answer is: we simply cannot think of time without thinking of space and place. Take, for example, Woolf's statement quoted above. Alongside its temporal gestures, one has to notice that the pronouncement is also remarkably infused with a sense of place and that it specifically invokes spatiality in

[25] Denis Cosgrove, *Mappings* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 7.

order to relay its message about human experience. Some pioneering scholars of modernism like Joseph Frank identified early how important spatial imagination is for modernist writers and artists.[26] But they did not attend to the issue of place and the intrinsic connection between specific times and places, in their relationship to history. Russian philosopher and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope (time-place) could be potentially useful here as it articulates "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships" and positions this development of spatio-temporal thought in the modernist epoch. Influenced by the cultural and scientific strides of Albert Einstein's relativity theory (1905-1915) and Werner Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, Bakhtin first proposed the idea of chronotope in his 1937 "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel". There he states:

> We will give the name chronotope (literally, "time space") to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature […] we are borrowing it for literary criticism almost as a metaphor (almost, but not entirely). What counts for us is the fact that it expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space) […] In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history.

[26] See, Frank Joseph, "Spatial Form in Modern Literature: An Essay in Three Parts," *The Sewanee Review* 53, no. 4 (1945): 643-653.

This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope.[27]

Crucial in Bakhtin's re-envisioning of literary statements here is the idea that literary texts are not only composed of a sequence of diegetic events and speech acts, but are fundamentally and primarily shaped by the construction of a particular fictional world, known as the chronotope. Bakhtin borrows extensively from both Emmanuel Kant and Albert Einstein in formulating the notion of the chronotope. From Kant, he uses the idea that time and space are essential categories through which human beings perceive and order their surroundings and hence *both* are indispensible forms of cognition. With Einstein, Bakhtin shares the belief that chronology cannot be separated from (spatially embedded) events, and vice versa. Furthermore, Bakhtin follows Einstein's intuition that there is a variety of senses of time and space, corresponding to different aspects of human experience, and goes on to describe different types of representing/constructing time-space in literary texts, some of which will be engaged hereafter.[28]

Initially designed as an analytical instrument for establishing generic divisions in the history of the Western novel, chronotopic analysis has recently been proposed as a conceptual tool for enriching such diverse fields as narratology, reception theory, the cognitive approach to literature, film studies, gender studies, and even pedagogy. The malleability of the term makes it an ideal conceptual framework through which

[27] Mikhail Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84.
[28] Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson have suggested that "the relation of 'chronotope' to Einsteinian 'time-space' is something weaker than identity, but stronger than mere metaphor or analogy." Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford, CA: Standford University Press, 1990), 367.

modernist literature can be examined, since the chronotope is both a cognitive concept and an artful construction of language. In Bakhtin's conceptualization, specific chronotopes correspond to particular genres, which themselves represent particular worldviews or ideologies. Modernist narratives, too, have their distinct chronotopes, and an overwhelmingly temporocentric interpretation would be perilous because it overlooks the similarly important element of space in what must always be understood as the unity of time and space. To go back quickly to the examples I have cited above: James Joyce's *Ulysses* famously unfolds on June 16, 1904 in the city of Dublin, with the topography of *The Odyssey* overlapping the modern cityscape; Marcel Proust's *A la recherch é du temps perdu*, despite its titular indication of (lost) temporality, opens with a (narrative sustaining) recollection of the narrator's country home in Combray; Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* documents Clarissa's wandering in post-World War I London, mapping the capital's familiar sites and places and interspersing real-world encounters with epiphanic moments of introspection; and one cannot understand Faulkner's novel without taking into account its cultural and political emplacement in the US South. Finally, as we shall see in the chapters that follow, T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* are saturated with spatial movements as Eliot's speaker moves from an eighteenth-century country mansion, to the London Underground and to Eliot's ancestral home in East Coker in a succession of distinct chronotopes; Williams's *Paterson* is filled with natural movements of cascading waterfalls and the meandering Passaic river as well as human activities in various lived spaces such as the walk in the park featured in Book 2; Moore's poetry, too, often portrays uncanny landscapes such as the menacing, vicious seascape in "A Grave". Modernist literature, therefore, has to be conceived in both temporal and

spatial terms to elucidate how these two fundamental cognitive dimensions around which modern subjectivity—the central concern for many modernist writers—is organized, (re)formed and interrogated.

There is a further reason why I focus so closely on the place side of the chronotope in this thesis, though. If we regard space and place not only as narrative configurations within modernist texts but also as constitutive parts of the functioning politics in periodising modernism, such re-emphasizing opens up great opportunities for rethinking the geographical boundaries of modernism. As with the temporal extension of the modernist period, there is also a corresponding geographical expansion from the temporal bounds of the "old" modernist studies. In their influential 1976 study of modernism, Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane demarcate modernism as "the period of concentration the years 1890-1930, and for our geographical map the international span of the Modern movement right across Europe and to the United States."[29] Their geographical imaginary, then, is distinctly Anglo-European, albeit international in character. They denounce the entrenched interpretation of modernism as organized around the "London-Paris-New York axis" and deplore that the prevalent discussion on modernism "ignored the scale and interpenetration of a uniquely international and polyglot body of arts."[30] What they are offering as an alternative is more inclusive "cultural frontiers": "Paris, Rome, Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Munich, Berlin, Zurich, Oslo, Barcelona, Saint Petersburg, even Dublin and Trieste."[31] This "new" geography of modernism is, of course, still restricted geographically to a "pan-European" movement and a "product of an era of

[29] Malcolm Bradbury and Alan McFarlane, eds., *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 13.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.

artistic migration and internationalism."[32] Eurocentrism, in fact, is not the sole problem of Bradbury and McFarlane's conception of modernism. In their reading, modernism is an unanchored product, able to wander around European cities in certain shaped forms of expression. It is fundamentally the literary output of a few selected European metropolises under the influence of high capitalism.

It is with good reason, then, that Alex Davis and Lee M. Jenkins, editor of *Locations of Literary Modernism*, declare that "the construction of modernism as an international, urban and yet placeless, phenomenon"[33] must be debunked. The new modernist studies, spearheaded by the foundation of such professional institutions as the Modernist Studies Association in 1998 (and its scholarly publication *Modernism/modernity* by John Hopkins University Press), seek to re-invigorate the stale name of "modernism" which was under attack from the promoters of "postmodernism" eager to find "the straw man" for all that its promoters disliked.[34] Part and parcel of this project is—to use a spatial trope—a substantial expansion of modernist "territory". In their assessment of the ten-year development of modernist studies since 1998, Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz identify a distinctly "transnational turn" in the new modernist studies, with the following features: the establishment of alternative traditions other than Anglo-American; the focus on "transnational circulation and translation in the product of modernist art"; the exploration of the impact of imperialism and colonialism on modernist literature and

[32] Ibid.
[33] Alex Davis and Lee M. Jenkins, eds., *Locations of Literary Modernism: Region and Nation in British and American Modernist Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3.
[34] See The Modernist Studies Association manifesto, < https://msa.press.jhu.edu/about/index.html> (accessed 29th Oct, 2017).

the conception of "new models of transnational community."[35] In other words, in the new paradigm(s), modernist studies not only look *outside* of established traditions but also *beneath,* at the political, cultural and economic structures and channels of circulation that underpin literary production, which is the reason why alternative modernist canons in other places are offered and literary works and networks within the old bounds are re-discovered. In what follows I will outline the important scales and relations of space and place in the new modernist studies—the planetary, the regional/local and the transnational—as well as tropes (moving, movement) that involve spatiality and place-consciousness, followed by an account of how my own project is situated in the new modernist studies' spatial ambit.

Over the last decade, Susan Stanford Friedman's continuous advocacy of a "planetary modernism" that "breaks the Anglo-European hold on the field" echoes the invigorated vision of the new modernist studies.[36] Friedman posits that past scholarship has defined modernism as "a loose affiliation of aesthetic movements that unfolded in the first half of the twentieth century in the Western world."[37] Such a hegemonic, Eurocentric view has come under fire as literary historians argue for a polycentric modernism that would take into account the emergent postcolonial world and the formations of their new modernities. I agree with Friedman's verdict, however, that even such postulation of multiple high capitalist modernities runs the risk of ignoring how profound post-colonial conditions has influenced and generated multiple modernisms. It overlooks the agency of the colonized world—"the drive to

[35] Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, "The New Modernist Studies," *PMLA*, v. 123, no.3 (May 2008): 741.
[36] Susan Stanford Friedman, "Planetarity: Musing Modernist Studies," *Modernism/modernity*, v. 7, no. 3 (2010): 475.
[37] Susan Stanford Friedman, "Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies," *Modernism/modernity*, v. 13, no.3 (2006): 426.

name one's collective and individual identity and to negotiate the conditions of history."[38] As modernist studies come to embrace a more geographically, culturally and linguistically diverse view of modernism(s), it is necessary, I argue in this thesis, to give space and place their due prominence in modernist scholarship so that a new look could be forged regarding modernism's centre/periphery framework.

In my approach I also align myself with what could be seen as the polar opposite of the planetary focus, namely, a recalibration of the value of "the local" or "the regional" in works such as *Regional Modernisms* (2013) edited by Neal Alexander and James Moran, *Transatlantic Avant-gardes: Little Magazines and Localist Modernism* (2013) by Eric B. White, and *The Reimagining of Place in English Modernism* (2016) by Sam Wiseman.[39] The term "regional modernism" was originally used in architecture studies to describe "a theory that supports resistance to various forms of hegemonic, universal, or otherwise standardizing structures that would diminish local differentiation."[40] When the latter was applied to literary studies, it retained the connotation of anti-internationalism. Regionalism does not boast a natural affinity with modernist inquiries, though—they are more likely to be seen as opposites when the former denotes a quaint local colour, a rural outlook in a confined backwater, "an antiquated and effeminized (dainty, delicate, minute, skimpy) literary

[38] In her radical proposal to juxtapose the eighth-century Tang poet Du Fu with a range of European and postcolonial literature from the twenty-first century, Friedman even posits that we need to look at "modernisms" before the time of industrial modernity in nineteenth century Europe to enable a truly plural view of "planetary modernist poetics" (Ibid., 428).

[39] See Neal Alexander and James Moran, eds., *Regional Modernisms* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Eric B. White, *Transatlantic Avant-Gardes: Little Magazines and Localist Modernism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Sam Wiseman, *The Reimagining of Place in English Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[40] Vincent B. Canizaro, "Introduction," *Architectural Regionalism: Collected Writings on Place, Identity, Modernity, and Tradition* (New York: Princeton Architectural, 2007), 20.

form that international modernisms eclipsed."[41] How, then, might the new modernist studies salvage the regional and the local and demonstrate their value to a renewed understanding of modernism and of such apparently regionally-specific works as William Carlos Williams's *Paterson*? Raymond Williams insists on "look[ing] out[…]from outside the metropolis, from the deprived hinterlands[…]from the poor world which has always been peripheral to the metropolitan system" so that "the metropolitan interpretation of its own processes as universals" can be challenged. [42] In this sense, researching regional and local modernism(s) helps to bring to light the uneven development of modernity, disrupts the universal time and space of canonical modernism and offer alternative narratives of the originary locations of modernism.

In such reading, the planetary and the regional need not cancel each other out. Jahan Ramazani argues that literatures ostensibly defined by geographical units (the regional/local, the national, the global, etc.) are in fact "hybrid, interstitial, and fluid imaginative constructs, not natural, real, eternal, stable, and static units."[43] Therefore, while institutional and disciplinary forces like to categorize literary productions within national bounds and essentialise them with a set of arbitrary national characteristics, in reality their genealogy is often shaped by cultural interpenetration and circulation—just as my chapter on Marianne Moore suggests. In addition, many of the key modernist figures—T. S. Eliot included—were themselves expatriates and exiles, whose displacement was written into their works in "a poetics of bricolage and

[41] Scott Herring, "Regional Modernism: A Reintroduction," *Modern Fiction Studies*, v. 55, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 2.
[42] Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (London: Verso, 1989), 46-47.
[43] Jahan Ramazani, "A Transnational Poetics," *American Literary History*, v. 18, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 333.

translocation, dissonance and defamiliarisation."[44] Distance-travelling technologies such as the telephone, cinema, airplane brought voices, people and cultural products further afield together so that even those who "stayed at home" were coming into contact with non-native culture, as we shall see in my discussions of Williams and Moore.

My own approach to the geographical scales and spatial tropes of modernism in this project has been informed by these new trends in modernist studies from the very outset. The selection of authors in this project has been influenced by the recent regional and transnational turns in modernist studies. Although all the three authors are Anglo-American, my approach to their poetry is characterized by a questioning of the internationalism of modernism, exploring alternative dynamics between the metropolitan and the rural (in T. S. Eliot), the international and the regional/local (in William Carlos Williams) and the West and the East (in Marianne Moore). My investigation of T. S. Eliot's representation of the London Underground in *Four Quartets*, for instance, is influenced by Andrew Thacker's discussion of technologies of movement in early twentieth century in his seminal book *Moving Through Modernity*.[45] I further his investigation of the link between the early-twentieth century development of the Tube and its influence on Imagist poetry by expanding the scope to include the decline of suburbia and the deterioration of agriculture in interwar Britain to explicate the panoramic sociological changes wherein Eliot's infernal representation of the Tube occurs. My discussion of William Carlos Williams's *Paterson* benefits from my reading of scholarship dedicated to regional/localist

[44] Ibid.
[45] Andrew Thacker, *Moving Through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 84-100.

modernism, in particular, in terms of its focus on the local particulars as a counter-space to the universal tenets of international modernism. I also employ the critical term "textual space", coined by Andrew Thacker to describe "the interaction between spatial forms and social space in literary texts", as a tool to investigate Williams's use of punctuation marks in his poetics of place.[46] While I pursue the textual and intertextual networks that form place in modernist poetry, I am also wary of celebrating every literary production that has roots in traversing national boundaries. Ramazani rightly warns that "both global dialogue and imperial imposition are in some sense 'transnational.'"[47] My discussion of Marianne Moore's Cold War Orientalism pays special attention to the question whether a "transnational" literary production reinforces imperial universalism by imposing its pattern over the globe, or whether it is a receptacle that offer emplacement to alien cultural sources. I argue that, in Moore's case, we are facing a complicated process that involves both types of negotiations.

Poetics of Place: The Theoretical Framework

A study of the politics and poetics of place in modernism, naturally, will need to take into account the various strands of theories that underpin our understanding of what constitute place, its differentiation with space and its consonance with other cognitive categories by which we know the world. The seemingly self-evident nature of the word "place", however, frustrates geographers' attempts to set parameters to such a quotidian term. As Tim Cresswell points out, "[p]lace is a word that seems to speak

[46] Ibid., 4.
[47] Ibid., 339.

for itself."[48] However, the conventional interpretation of place has hindered our deeper comprehension of the ways through which we are connected to the world. Before the second half of the twentieth century, the main concerns of the geographers were the categorization and documentation of "regional" characteristics, in other words, drawing boundaries. The central concept, then, was "region" instead of "place". Furthermore, place had to compete with the ascendency of space in the post-enlightenment world where precedence was given to the latter as the scientific "law-like" generalization.[49] Spatial studies gained currency by liaising with Marxism, demonstrating the centrality of space in the structure and functioning of capitalism—space, no longer seen merely as an objective, material entity, comes alive with experiential dimensions and ideological force. In many such materialist-experiential inquiries, and in the early stages of spatial studies more generally, space was indiscriminately conflated with place, and place submerged under the notion of space. This subordination of place, according to Arturo Escobar, is in line with the Western philosophical tradition that "enshrined space as the absolute, unlimited and universal, while banning place to the realm of the particular, the limited, the local and the bound."[50] The postmodern theorists fought to salvage space from the domination of time with the high-sounding rhetoric that a lived, experiential dimension of the human experience was being seriously overlooked by the advocates of temporocentrism. However, their indiscriminate use of space and place was problematic, if not perilous, for it paradoxically also overlooked "the particular, the limited, the local and the bound" that is indispensable to human life. It is against this backdrop of cool, hard

[48] Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004), 1.
[49] Arturo Escobar, "Culture Sits in Places: Reflections on Globalism and Subaltern Strategies of Localization" *Political Geography* v. 20, no.3 (2001): 143.
[50] Ibid.

logic of spatial science that human geographers and philosophers such as Yi-Fu Tuan, Anne Buttimer, Edward Relph, Edward Casey and Tim Cresswell began to formulate a theory of place that would emphasize subjectivity and recover the authentic human experience of place that would align the natural and the human worlds. The development of the theory of place *per se* was in part a reaction to the prominent status of space in spatial science and in part a response to interest in the concept of the region. Further transformations entailed a paradigm shift away from the study of ontology and towards epistemology. With the introduction of the new paradigm, place has come to be understood as more about epistemology (of what is perceived and how it is perceived, that is, the production of place) than about ontology (of what exists, the materiality of place).

A brief account of the genealogy of place studies is necessary here not only because it facilitates our understanding of the disciplinary gestation of this central concept but also because the approaches delineated below will form the backbone of my study—sometimes overtly invoked, sometimes assumed. In this context it is important to note that contemporary study of place was profoundly inspired by continental European philosophy, especially the writings of Martin Heidegger who advocated the lived, experiential dimension of human condition and described the condition of "being-in-the-world" as quintessential constituent of this dimension. This approach to place seeks to define the essence of human experience that can only happen "in-place". Champions of this view of place are Yi-fu Tuan, Edward Casey and Edward Relph. All three theorists place emphasis on the experiential and emotive nature of place, albeit with different emphases. Tuan argues forcefully for the

"affective bond between people and place" in his classic *Topophilia* (1974).[51] Casey uncovers the place-orientedness of our everyday life in his *Getting Back into Place* (1994) and continues to chart the evolution of the notion of place from Plato to modern day philosophers in another seminal book *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (1998).[52] Yet Relph is explicit in his philosophical affiliations with phenomenology in his *Place and Placelessness* (1976): he differentiates space and place in order to make a stronger case for the latter: "space provides the context for places but derives its meaning from particular places."[53] He borrows Heidegger's notion of an authentic life and defines "an authentic sense of place" as unself-conscious rootedness of an individual in a community. Following this line of thinking, then, home is an exemplary kind of place where people feel a sense of strong attachment and rootedness, where people are more inclined to feel "an authentic sense of place". Following a similar line of inquiry Gaston Bachelard launches a phenomenological study of our primal places, stressing the important function primary places, like home-house, have on shaping our emotions.[54] The childhood home is one such primal place, a "first world" where our bodies are passionately connected with an unforgettable house, Bachelard suggests; it is the experiences of this primary home that are mapped into our somatic lives, as our bodies become embedded with the traces of sensory memories. The somatic and emotional influence of place that Bachelard theorizes in the book inspires my discussion in the first chapter of the English rose garden as a disciplinary force that propels the subject's

[51] Tuan Yi-Fu, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (NJ: Columbia University Press, 1974), 4.
[52] Edward Casey, *Getting Back into Place* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
[53] Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), 6.
[54] See, Gaston Bachelard, *Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994).

body to follow and memorize its structural contour. Bachelard's account has much merit and an almost lyrical beauty to it; yet, it is also limited: it is too uncritical of the potential of place to be a site of oppression and conflicts, of contending powers, and this is why I supplant it with other perspectives where appropriate.

The task of exploring the production of place and the relations of power inherent in such a process, i.e., the social-constructionist approach, has been undertaken by theorists such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau, Edward Soja and David Harvey. The phenomenology-driven approach to place often risks being essentialist and exclusionary, based as it is on the notion of a rooted authenticity. The "social-constructionists" seek to amend this partiality. It is worth pointing out, though, that although many of the social constructionists use the word "space" instead of "place", in their discussion of the social process that engenders a particular formation and sense of space, they in fact come close to the notion of the place particulars advocated by the place theorists nowadays. Lefebvre, for instance, calls our attention to the question of "social space" where space is not just an empty receptacle that merely contains other objects and practices but is itself formulated by social practices distinctive in each society—in other words, "space is a product."[55] Soja builds upon Lefebvre's notion of space-production and categorizes space into three types in his *Thirdspace* (1996): Firstspace is the conventional domain of human geography—the spatial outcome of social processes; Secondspace is the domain of representation and image—how space is perceived as a centre of meaning; Thirdspace is practiced and lived, hence always producing and being produced.[56] This branching mitigates against

[55] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 26.
[56] Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996), 11.

the phenomenological notion of a static, established, *a priori* sense of place.[57] Foucault's approach to place is similar to Lefebvre's in their social, historical and political concerns. However, Foucault rejects Lefebvre's privileging of relations of production and substitutes it with the conception of power in place practices[58]. De Certeau's seminal work *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) turns the normal distinction between space and place on its head—place is the empty grid over which practice occurs while space is what is created by practice in place. De Certeau speaks of "the syntax of place" [59] ——the pre-structures that power relations engender in place and that should be challenged by everyday, ground-level practices. Harvey, too, is particularly alert to the politics of place in his *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1996). In his (Marxist-postmodernist) lexicon, place is a form of fixed capital which exists in tension with other forms of mobile capital. The significance of place has increased under the conditions of flexible accumulation and time-space compression in postmodernity.[60] Summarily, three prominent strands of approaches can be found in place-studies: the descriptive and prescriptive approach linked with regional geographers, the phenomenological approach affiliated with the discipline of humanist geography, and the social-constructionist approach undertaken by practitioners of Marxism, feminism, post-structuralism and postmodernism. My own approach to place is a conjunction of the second and third approaches, although I do also avail myself of some selected insights from the phenomenologists. In my project, I endeavour to incorporate the humanist geographers' astute understanding of the

[57] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 185-190.
[58] See, Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16 (Spring 1986): 22-27.
[59] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 126.
[60] See, David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991), 115-121.

richness and intricacy of human experience in place while being fully aware of the matrix of forces (social, economical, historical and political) at play in the production of place.

To give a cursive outline of how place theories frame my reading of the three authors I have chosen to study in this project, I will first give an overview of the key concepts of place I employ throughout the chapters. I want to stress that these concepts are not employed separately; their influence is rather holistic than individual. I start with the concept of spatial imagination, which refers to the imaginative capacity, latent or manifest, to conceive of space as an organizing principle in human activity. The spatial imagination underlines the way we locate and arrange our (often multiple) identities. By deciphering its syntax and grammar, we can bring a person's spatial imagination into dialogue with other forms of cognitive structure. In many cases, such "emplacement" involves making the unhomely home and the strange familiar, because we situate our identities within certain specific locations and environments so as to enable dialogue and integration between the self and the place. To emplace subjects and objects is to first assume the existence of a place—Edward Casey claims that "to exist at all as a (material or mental) object or as (an experienced or observed) event is to have a place—*to be implaced*, [sic] however minimally or imperfectly or temporarily."[61] Hence place is both the limit and the condition for our existence—"a first among equals."[62] It is a receptacle outside which no other non-placial entity exists: even when one says, for instance, that certain objects exist in no place but void, the statement is paradoxical because it still implies place-offering

[61] Edward Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 13.
[62] Ibid.

qualities for the objects to be posited. Therefore, however minimal an existence place has, it is the premise of every other entity. Starting from this premise does not, however, mean that place is to be treated as a transparent background onto which we locate entities and our bodies, nor that we only make it familiar, conforming to ourselves. In fact, one of signature modernist aesthetic practices, "defamiliarization", in which the familiar place is suddenly "estranged" and thus seen anew, seems to suggest the exact opposite. Emplacement, modernists seem to have understood, implies a bidirectional process: on the one hand, the prescribed grammar of the place has a shaping influence on the bodies and entities to be emplaced in it—they are in a state of tension with each other; on the other hand, to make the place inhabitable, bodies and entities negotiate with the existing structure of place, altering it and are altered in the process. Emplacement therefore intimates a temporal dimension as well as a drive to be performed. This is where Bahktin, whose concept of chronotope I have quoted in Section 1.2, becomes useful in the theoretical discussion. I shall argue that to emplace (in literature as well as in real life) means to create a chronotope, because the action of emplacing, first, allows time to "[thicken], [take] on flesh, [become] artistically visible" and, second, it enlivens the dormant place, making it "charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history."[63] I argue that all three authors that I study in this project engage with emplacement in different ways—Eliot through the poetics of movement, Williams through the creation of Thirdspace and Moore in her contention with territoriality—and that it is in and through these engagements that their politics of place come to the fore.

[63] Mikhail Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84.

Places, Biographical and Imaginary: A Summary of the Project

The way biographies normally begin is, for most of the cases, place-bound: we are immediately ushered into the familiar spaces of either the hometown, the birthplace or the family house of our hero or heroine, often with an account of the immediate environs. It is with good reason that biographers practice this mapping: like phenomenologists and many psychologists, they believe that the childhood environment often has formative influence over the mind that carries into later life. It is with this knowledge that that I briefly sketch the lives and "emplacements" of the three authors this project studies here—T. S. Eliot who left the American continent to search for an even earlier beginning, William Carlos Williams who stayed behind and forged a poetics representative of the New World, and Marianne Moore who imbibed inspiration from a semi-mythical, semi-imaginary country she never visited.

Descendant of a scion of New England intellectual aristocracy, T. S. Eliot was born in St Louis in 1888 and spent his first 16 years there. He received a cosmopolitan undergraduate education at Harvard from 1906-1909 in the New England region where his family originally came from. After graduation, Eliot was drawn to Paris, a city where moral, religious and intellectual strictures were less restrained. He arrived in England, which would become his adopted country in 1914. In the last phase of his poetic achievement, he returns to what he construes as his (multiple) places of origin, a move that informs my discussion in Chapter One. William Carlos Williams, on the other hand, never wandered far away from his birthplace—the small town of Rutherford, New Jersey, where he was born into a half English, half Puerto Rican family. He was trained as both a general physician and a pediatrician at the medical

school of the University of Pennsylvania. For the better part of his life, he stayed in Rutherford practicing as a medical doctor while writing poetry at night. He remained well-connected with the New York artistic scene, especially with the New York dada, surrealists, and The Others group. In other words, Williams's localist poetics is more a deliberate decision than a hillbilly provinciality, and the reasons of his choice are explored in the second chapter. Marianne Moore, the last poet I study in this project, was born in the manse of the Presbyterian Church in Kirkwood, Missouri, where her maternal grandfather served as the pastor. Growing up fatherless, she was under the vigilant care of her devoted mother and the company of her younger brother. Puritanism, therefore, remained a strong spiritual anchor in her life, the moralism of which, as we shall see in the third chapter, finds a surprising parallel (for Moore at least) in the Chinese notion of the Tao. Moore attended college at Bryn Mawr as a biology major, which enabled her astute observation of the life-world in her poetry. She settled in New York in 1929 and never left. The ambit of her physical environ, however, did not constrain her poetic wandering nor her spatial imagination. Her lifelong fascination with an imaginary China, as the third chapter discusses, mediates between the mythical and the political, the bodily and the spatial to create an enclave from Cold War politics.

These place-oriented biographical sketches naturally lead to the question: how are places represented in their poetry? How do the poets' spatial imagination engage with their politics? I will suggest some preliminary answers to these questions by brief summaries of each chapter. The first chapter looks at the representation of the London Underground in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*. In this chapter, I discuss how Eliot's infernal vision of this symbol of urban modernity is informed by his

perception of interwar imperial decline. I argue that in the interwar period, the imperial subjectivity was closely associated with space, land and territory. Three interlocking issues I explore in relation to these spatial categories are the decline of the country gentry, the deterioration of agriculture and the degeneracy of the British suburbia. Contemporary development of the London Underground—which Eliot frequently made use of—re-fashioned the place into a site for commercial, aesthetic campaigns, initiated by the London Passenger Transport Board. Their most prominent innovations included Harry Beck's Tube map, which rationalized the Underground space into geometrical grid; the new Underground station that transformed its architecture with a corporate outlook and the English avant-garde artists' poster campaign which sought to turn the underground space into a people's art gallery.

Faced with the crisis of the imperial subject-formation posed by these various spatial transformations, Eliot attempted to salvage what was left of the enchanting qualities of traditional English locales to forge a new communal identity in interwar Britain. The London Underground episodes in "Burnt Norton" and "East Coker" are two prime examples of Eliot's place poetics, which operates in a negative dialectics. The rose garden and the old English village that open both quartets present an idyllic chronotope of permanence and immobility, a paradigm of the identity-endowing function of English locales whose effect was waning in interwar years. The third movements work contrapuntally with two chronotopes of descent (*katabasis* and *via negativa*), demanding the readers to go down—both physically and psychologically—through the space of the London Underground, into an even deeper sphere of solipsism and self-examination. The place politics of the third movements, then, expose the unhealthy ambience of the Underground as a trope of the modern ennui

and suggests a reinvigorated approach to human connectedness in an age of crisis and change.

In contrast to the first chapter's focus on the metropolis, the second chapter takes up a regional approach to William Carlos Williams's epic poem *Paterson*. Positing himself as diverging from the overly international (thence abstract, he says) poetics of Eliot and Pound, Williams, I suggest, focuses on the issue how the textual and the social spaces engage with each other to construct a place for poetic innovation which entails the use of unconventional typography. Williams's selection of Paterson, a medium-sized industrial city in New Jersey dubbed America's "Silk City" which at the time of Williams's writing was undergoing decline in both political and economic self-sufficiency. Williams's representation of the town as a self-contained social unit, a paradigm of quintessential Americanness, then, is half reality and half myth.

This second chapter, then, zooms in on the way in which Williams uses two punctuation marks—the exclamation mark and the dash—as the minimal components of his localist poetics. Williams sees the contemporary America as a disconnected, ungraspable totality and the only way to restore human communication and connection again is through a reinvigorated poetic language. My argument is that the exclamation mark and the dash, which proliferate in the pages of *Paterson*, represent the two dimensions of place poetics in Williams's epic—the exclamation mark as the human subject, superfluous with emotions, the dash as the extending landscape and endless objects found within the landscape. The combined use of them signifies *Paterson*'s effort to emplace human and things in a textually constructed place that would enable communication among and between them. Williams's approach is

democratic in drawing on encyclopaediac resources as his source material and presenting the polyphonic and the cacophonic in the textual fabric of the epic. However, as the epic draws to a close in the fifth book, Williams stealthily changes his targeted audience to a more specific and narrow group of his fellow artists. The circumference of poetic material presented in the fifth book also shrinks to the sphere of high arts. The persistent use of innovative punctuation marks clash with the closing of the epic's ambit. I argue that it is exactly through this tension that the relative success and failure of Williams's poetics of place must be measured.

Marianne Moore's place poetics in her later poetry, which I focus on in the third and last chapter, are distinctly different from Eliot's and Williams's in that, although representations of China and Chinese art are frequently found throughout her oeuvre, she herself never visited China in her lifetime. Implying both flexible "emplacing" and flexible "timing" of modernism, the chapter investigates Moore's Orientalist place poetics in her 1959 collection *O To Be a Dragon*, published when Moore was already a well-established poet and a semi-public figure. The collection opens with a celebratory poem about the oriental dragon. Moore has long been an admirer of "the sublimated wisdom of China", however the collection marks the first time that an oriental symbol, representative of the imaginary landscape of ancient China, is given titular importance in Moore's oeuvre. Through an examination of its historical and literary contexts, I use archival evidence from Moore's source book *The Tao of Painting* alongside with various newspaper clippings found inside Moore's copy of the book to situate the composition of the collection within its contemporary milieu, most importantly, in the context of Cold War international relations and its place-inflected ideology. Looking beyond mere aesthetic Orientalism, I argue that Moore's

Oriental spatial imagination is more than poetic whims or personal idiosyncrasy. Rather, *O To Be a Dragon* is a problematic reaction to the Cold War. It has to be examined in the larger context of the writing of war poetry in America during the two World Wars and Moore's evolving method of writing about warfare. It constitutes Moore's subtle response to Cold War's rhetoric of possessive, xenophobic territoriality through the poet's spatial imagination that constructs an embodied counter space of Cold War ideology.

As the above outline suggests, in this doctoral project, I am keen to explore how a person engages with the process of "emplacement" through which "an alien or neutral space can be transformed into a personalized social place."[64] I am most interested in how a person's politics inform their place imagination and, specifically, how literary artists situate their place imagination within a network of similar discourses, thereby granting it the status of an actor within that network. Eliot, Williams, and Moore, I argue, devised extraordinary strategies to negotiate and actively use their place imagination, creating places out of pages, immersing us in them, and, sometimes against their own wish, activating us for a socially responsible attitude to places.

[64] Cuthbeth Tagwirei and Leon de Kock, "From 'bush' to 'farm': Emplacement and Displacement in Contemporary White Zimbabwean Narratives," *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, v. 51, no. 3 (2016): 484.

1. "In This Twittering World": Imperial Decline and the London Underground in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*

On a regular day of his commute in the 1950s, the Polish painter Feliks Topolski chanced upon T. S. Eliot in a London Underground train. Before Topolski realized who this city gent in a black coat was, he'd taken out his pencil and begun drawing him. In this rough and impressionistic sketch of fierce, eddy lines, Eliot looks askance at the painter with an air of distracted weariness, his countenance gaunt with protruding cheekbones and deep eye sockets. Topolski later explains that his impulsive sketching was elicited by Eliot's obvious contrast with "the subordinate and indifferent secretarial breed around."[1] The way Eliot bore himself with a hint of (not entirely unexpected) haughty contempt must have struck Topolski in a way that set him against the "secretarial breed"—the newly emergent lower middle-class urban professionals commuting daily from their suburban semi-detached houses to the inner city for work. Inspired by Eliot's self-contained composure in the Tube train and his status of a public sage, Topolski went on to make a "largish painting" of "a ceremonially red-robed Eliot in an honour-giving scene."[2] It does not take a Sherlock Holmes to conclude that Topolski probably did it in a compensatory move to place Eliot where Topolski felt he truly belonged—the site of higher learning, commanding reverence and homage. What Topolski perceived to be the jarring opposition between T. S. Eliot and the modern commuting crowd is perhaps not new knowledge. After all, modernist writers and artists are reputed to have had a complicated relationship with movement and speed in the modern era: in canonical readings, modernism itself

[1] Feliks Topolski, T.S. Eliot: Rush Hour on the Underground" *Fourteen Letters*, unpaginated, qtd in Nuzhat Bukhari, "The Distinguished Shaman: T. S. Eliot's Portraits in Modern Art," *Modernism/Modernity*, v. 11, no. 3 (September 2004): 400.
[2] Ibid.

appears as a moving phenomenon, a constellation of works by "migrant artists" who travel across the globe. Modernism in this sense is "a rootless form of expression" that refuses to find anchor.[3] On the other hand, modernism brims with technological innovations of the modern era: Pound's eulogy of the metro and Marinetti's passion for the machine, including the deification of the car, are prime examples of such dynamics; but the mixture of fascination and repulsion relating to technology and movement extend to almost all writers and artists of the epoch. Eliot's treatment of the London Underground, however, is special in the sense that not only was he among the first modernists to thematize it in his poems, but that he continued to go back to it in his later poetry, long after the modernists' interest in modern inventions had waned. This obsession therefore beckons our closer scrutiny: what was Eliot's evolving outlook of this symbol of urban modernity like and what were the reasons for its repeated representation in his oeuvre?

T. S. Eliot was first exposed to the Metro during his year in Paris as a graduate student in 1911 when he experienced first-hand the metropolis dominated by the electrified underground railway; he also likely read Ezra Pound's superior exercise in Imagism, "In a Station of the Metro" (published in *Poetry* in 1913), which poeticized a transient encounter with the "apparitions" of commuters on the Metro.[4] Later, Eliot used the London Tube on a daily basis, travelling first on the Circle Line from South Kensington to Gloucester Road, then on the Piccadilly Line to Russell Square, the closest underground station to Faber and Faber where he worked as the director. He

[3] Andrew Thacker, "Placing Modernism," *Moving Modernisms: Motion, Technology, and Modernity*, eds. David Bradshaw, Laura Marcus and Rebecca Roach (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 13.
[4] Pound explains how the poem was a crystallization of the vortex of emotions he experienced three years ago when he got out of a metro train at La Concorde and encountered the "beautiful faces" first of a child, then of a woman, and was lost for words that were worthy of that sudden emotion. See Ezra Pound, "Vorticism," *The Fortnightly Review* 96 (Sept. 1, 1914): 461-467.

may well have resembled one of those Poundian "apparitions". Hugh Kenner sagaciously remarks that "[i]f Eliot is much else, he is undeniably his time's chief poet of the alarm clock, the furnished flat, the ubiquitous telephone, commuting crowds, *the electric underground railway*" (italics mine).[5] Indeed, inspired largely by the experiential dimension of travelling on the Tube, Eliot repeatedly returned to the topic of the underground railway in the years to follow, always with fascination and ambivalence.

In his 1919 poem "A Cooking Egg", for example, Eliot satirizes the London borough of Golders Green and the eponymous last station of the underground situated in the neighbourhood. At the time, the latter was widely advertised by the Underground companies as a place for Sunday and Bank holiday excursions: to reach this end of the underground journey thus meant to reach a garden-site. Eliot makes the pseudo-pastorality of Golders Green, populated by "red-eye scavangers" , the point of his satiric look at the lower middle-class, middle-age comforts.[6] Yet, in his 1921 review of a new London performance of the Ballets Russes' controversial ballet *The Rite of Spring*, while expressing his admiration for the ballet music (if not the dance), Eliot carefully included "the roar of the underground railway" among the "barbaric noises of modern life" that Igor Stravinsky so successfully sets into music; this "roar", in Eliot's assessment, relays an essential "quality of modernity".[7] And, although not ostensibly named among other staples of modern urbanity such as the gramophone,

[5] Hugh Kenner, *The Mechanic Muse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 25.
[6] T. S. Eliot, *The Poems of T. S. Eliot Volume I: Collected and Uncollected Poems.* eds. Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), 38. Henceforth referenced in abbreviated form as *PE* in the body of the text.
[7] T. S. Eliot, "London Letter," *The Dial*, v. 71, no. 4 (October 1921): 453. *The Rite of Spring* premiered in Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in 1913 and caused a riot when first performed for its cacophonous score. It has since been recognized as one of the twentieth century's most important pieces.

taxis, ragtime Jazz, and tins of food, the Tube looms large in *The Waste Land*. In the opening section "The Burial of the Dead", the walking dead of London commuters are absorbed into the Tube's subterranean realm to be discharged upward, "[u]nder the brown fog of a winter dawn" (*PE*, 56), into the City's offices. This technology-induced movement provokes the poet-observer's amazement—"I had not thought death had undone so many" (*PE,* 57) —in the episode which echoes Dante's stunned encounter with the damned walking across the Acheron into the hellish abyss in the Inferno. Yet, in Eliot's 1934 pageant play *The Rock*, one that prefigures *Four Quartets* in its more public and strident form, the biblical desert of spiritual emptiness and sterility of thought and feeling is "not remote in the southern tropics" but "squeezed in the tube-train next to you" (*PE*, 155). This description anticipates the most eloquent and elaborate pronouncement on the Tube in *Four Quartets* as the underworld of "tumid apathy with no concentration", and the look of modern urban compatriots in the subway train as "strained, time-ridden faces" that are "distracted from distraction by distraction" (*PE*, 182). The last is the culmination of Eliot's troubled depiction of the Underground as a barbaric mode of modernity and the subject of my present discussion.

Given the long history of Eliot's literary engagement with the London Underground, it is curious that scholarly interpretations almost unanimously read it as Eliot's outcry at the barbaric, mechanic order of urban modernity, without adequate consideration of the evolving connotation it might carry and varied functions it is asked to perform.[8] At first sight, the interpretation of Eliot's attitude towards the

[8] Russell E. Murphy points out that Ashford argues that the London tube represents "a type for the vacuity if not hellish inevitabilities of modern urban life." See Russell E. Murphy, *Critical Companion to T. S. Eliot: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work* (New York: Facts on File, 2007), 200. David

metro as one of (solely) outraged negativity appears very convincing: it is supported by Eliot's own invocation, especially in *Four Quartets*, of the duality of what he called The Way of Affirmation and The Way of Negation. In this mythical-religious vision, the Underground, as non-place of inner unrest and discontent, is undesirable, because it is neither the Way of Affirmation that guides the soul's ascension to the realm of plenitude, nor the Way of Negation that demands the seeker to "descend lower" for a deeper purgation.[9] Scholars such as Paul Murray, Dominic Manganiello, Jewel Spears Brooker and Paul Douglass have written insightfully on the analogies between Eliot's text and, on the one hand, Dante Alighieri's underworld journey in *The Divine Comedy* and, on the other hand, the dark night of the soul in the writings of Christian mystics such as St John of the Cross and Dame Julian of Norwich, and have unanimously read his view of the metro as despairing.[10] Valid and fruitful as these readings are, they commit a two-fold mistake regarding the composition of *Four Quartets* and its immediate contemporary social-cultural contexts in 1930s Britain. Firstly, they see Eliot's representations of the Tube as a symptomatically negative response to the accelerated process of modernization, of which the hurtling underground train is the veritable epitome. This is problematic because it projects the role of literature as a mere recipient and overlooks the agency of literature in

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Ashford thinks that it is only through poetic re-organization that this barbaric modernity the Tube represents is rendered in order. See David Ashford, *London Underground: A Cultural Geography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 74. Also, Martin Scofield, *T. S. Eliot: The Poems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 208.

[9] These two terms have their origins in Christian mystic writings such as those of Julian of Norwich and St. John of the Cross. Eliot probably became acquainted with Julian's works through his friend Charles Williams with whom Eliot formed a close spiritual friendship. See Barbara Newman, "Eliot's Affirmative Way: Julian of Norwich, Charles Williams, and *Little Gidding*," *Modern Philology*, v. 108, n. 3 (February 2011):427-461.

[10] See Paul Murray, *T. S. Eliot and Mysticism: The Secret History of "Four Quartets"* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1991). Dominic Manganiello, *T. S. Eliot and Dante* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989). Jewel Spears Brooker, *T. S. Eliot and the Dialectic of Modernism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994). Also, Paul Douglass, *T. S. Eliot, Dante, and the Idea of Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011).

constructing and reflecting a culture's sense of reality. Secondly, and equally relevant, they seem to neglect the subtending political agenda of *Four Quartets*: any mythological and mysticism-related reading of Eliot's *Four Quartets* needs to reckon with the issues of the work's circulation within the immediate discursive field and its contemporary relevance.

Seeking to bolster the mythical-religious reading with considerations of *Four Quartets*' historicity, this chapter looks at the contemporary vicissitude of London Underground in the 1930s and interlaces its historical condition with issues of living amidst the mood of imperial decline, which weighed heavily on Eliot's mind at the time he was writing *Four Quartets*. If early Eliot is unapologetic about his cultural internationalism, post-conversion Eliot seems more preoccupied with finding an anchor for a more localized identity. However, contrary to scholars such as Joshua Esty who argues that Four Quartets signals Eliot's turn away from his early avowal to internationalism to "culturalism"—a more narrowly defined national identity[11], I maintain that Eliot's cosmopolitanism is a constant throughout his career, yet always infused with an imperialist overtone and increasingly inflected by Christianity. As he himself proclaims, somewhat problematically, in *Essays Ancient and Modern*, "any programme that a Catholic can envisage must aim at the conversion of the whole world."[12] The pervasive mood of imperial decline in interwar Britain, felt more acutely by the ruling elite than any other social group, however, prompted Eliot's spatial imagination to find its corollary in two specific spatial-kinetic narratives—*katabasis* and *via negative*—which are employed dialectically in *Four Quartets*.

[11] Joshua Esty, "Eliot's Recessional: *Four Quartets*, National Allegory and the End of Empire," *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, v. 16, no. 1 (Spring 2003):41.
[12] T. S. Eliot, *Essays Ancient and Modern* (London: Faber & Faber 1936), 123.

These two descent narratives are connotative of the mood of imperial decline in interwar Britain, which resonated with Eliot's frame of mind as a (self-professed) public sage and his sense of cultural degeneracy. In this chapter I argue that interwar imperial decline is refracted through place-bound identity politics in Eliot's poetry, among others, a re-working of what it means to be "English", "British" and "international". As Ian Baucom influentially argued, Englishness had long been defined through its "identity-endowing properties of place" by evoking such tropes as "the green meadows of England" and "the sceptered isle",[13] but, in the interwar period, the concept/experience underwent significant decline, mostly due to the new tripartite spatial structure of urban-suburban-rural that marked the incursion of reverse colonialization within the British heartland. The growth of British suburbia in interwar period saw the emergence of a homogeneous suburban lifestyle that was perceived by the elite as a threat to the English identity. The appearance of newfangled centralized institutions in the nation's metropolis like the London Underground, buoyed up by foreign capital and culture, undermined Britain's claim to self-sufficiency and independent technological prowess. As I shall argue, dwelling in interwar Britain became not only a real-life sociological issue, but also (and more importantly) a trope that reflected the need to find new anchor for the imperial subjectivity. The personal/identity-forming investment in these issues explains the peculiar chronotopes we find in Eliot's *Four Quartets*—now a private moment in an English rose garden, now a descent into the semi-realistic, semi-mythological space of London Underground, now a spiritual ascending in the form of staircase-climbing. These various unities of time and space are closely intertwined with Eliot's spatial

[13] Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 3.

imagination, and its overlapping with imperial consciousness is what this chapter seeks to uncover.

The chapter begins by briefly sketching Eliot's public status and his own living conditions in the 1930s to allow biography to interact with and underpin literary production. I then proceed to contextualize the question of dwelling in interwar Britain amidst imperial decline with regard to the urban-suburban-rural triad. Moving on from the sociological broad stroke, the third section of the chapter situates the development of the London Underground in the 1930s within the matrix outlined in the third section to elucidate the particular sense of place it engenders. Finally in the fourth and last section, I examine textually the descent narratives in *Four Quartets*, outlining the principles/methods of *katabasis* and *via negativa* and adumbrating Eliot's literary connection with these two traditions. I argue that in *Four Quartets*, Eliot performs a Hegelian dialectic move by first engaging with the reality of the London Underground then sublating it with spatial narratives that re-instate the imperial subject in its rightful place.

1.1 T. S. Eliot in the 1930s: Living amidst Imperial Decline

If the winning of both the 1948 Nobel Prize in Literature and the Order of Merit represents the zenith of Eliot's fame both at home and abroad, the 1930s already saw the poet of *The Waste Land* maturing and establishing himself as a literary and social critic in England, his adopted country since 1925. Steve Ellis notes that "in the late 1920s and 30s [...] Eliot's writing conspicuously enters areas of public debate, and Eliot himself becomes much more of a public figure, repeatedly pronouncing on issues like government (both ecclesiastical and secular), education and the nation's

cultural health (or impoverishment)."[14] Not only did Eliot publish several major books of literary criticism in this period—*Thoughts After Lambeth* (1931), *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933), *Essays Ancient and Modern* (1936)—as well as sociological texts such as *After Strange Gods* (1934) and *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1936), but his continuing editorship of *The Criterion* also saw this literary journal becoming the leading voice of literary classicism, Anglo-Catholicism and conservative values in politics. Eliot, in particular, uses its "Commentaries"—several of which I shall examine in close relation to the issue of land in the later sections—as a way to address the English public. As for his literary achievements, this period witnessed very little poetic output other than *Ash Wednesday* (1930) and *Coriolan* (1931). Instead, his creativity turned to the theatre which he thought to be a more public venue, capable of reaching a wider audience. His collaboration with stage director E. Martin Browne proved to be extremely successful: together, they produced on stage religiously themed plays like *The Rock* (1934) and *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), and the drawing-room drama *The Family Reunion* (1939).

What unites Eliot's literary and cultural productions in this period is a set of interconnected issues that these texts vocalise: a marked concern for the Anglican Church's role in an increasingly secular England beset by the threats of totalizing ideologies from both the far left and the far right on the international stage; a sharp and prescient perception of Britain's imperial decline in interwar years which saw the rise of new imperial powers Germany and Japan and the Soviet Union under the full control of Stalin; urgent consideration of the social usefulness of a religious poet like himself to construct a utopian communal vision at a time when "there seems no hope

[14] Steve Ellis, *T. S. Eliot: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continuum, 2009), 84.

in contemporary politics at all";[15] and, entangled with it all, an acute sense of urgency in recognizing human situatedness in space and time as the starting point for any programme of social and spiritual transformation. The last brings us back to the question of places, locations and geographies in Eliot's 1930s lived environment and literary productions.

We need not look further than the "biographical shards" of Eliot's life in the 1930s to find telling evidence of how Eliot's thinking was directly influenced by his actual residence in the 1930s.[16] In the beginning of the 1930s, Eliot was still living with his wife Vivienne in their Clarence Gate Gardens flat in Marylebone, London. An Edwardian mansion block built in the 1910s, the Clarence Gate Gardens, with their red brick facade and elaborate Dutch gables, show clearly the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement and Art Nouveau. Just a stone's throw away is the Anglican St. Cyprian's Church where Eliot was a daily worshiper. Baker Street Station, the London Underground station with most platforms and one that constantly got congested for its limited capacity, was a mere five-minute walk from the Eliots' flat. The Eliots' residence at the time, then, was a comfortable niche in an affluent London district nicely tucked away but within walking distance of underground portals that carried the London crowd to and fro beneath the metropolis.

The year 1933, which also saw Hitler's appointment as the Chancellor of Germany, was significant for Eliot for multiple reasons: in February he wrote to his solicitor to prepare a Deed of Separation with Vivienne. This was accompanied by an

[15] T. S. Eliot, "A Commentary," *The Criterion*, 18 (Oct. 1938): 60.
[16] The following biographical details, unless otherwise specified, are taken from Catherine Behr, *T. S. Eliot: A Chronology of His Life and Works* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1983), 37-54.

immediate departure for America to resume his Charles Eliot Norton lectures at Harvard. Upon returning to England, in anxious avoidance of London and Vivienne, he sought refuge in the English countryside—in the cottage on the grounds of Pikes Farm, Crowhurst, Surrey, where his friend Frank Morley lived with his family. Towards the end of 1933, Eliot returned to London and moved into the clergy-house of St Stephen's Church, Gloucester Road, living there alone but in close proximity to local Anglican community. Eliot's biographer Peter Ackroyd notes that Eliot's abode had a distinct monastic style:

> His bedroom was over a railway track leading to Gloucester Road tube station; the walls of his rooms were papered dark green, the furniture was not his own, and the bookcases had shelves missing. This sounds like the habitation of a man who does not pay much attention to his surroundings, and who finds the ordinary comforts of domestic life unnecessary [...] He was growing more aware of his isolation. He was accustomed to it in his intellectual and emotional life—now he had to become reconciled to ordinary physical, and human, loneliness.[17]

The vicinity of Eliot's house to Gloucester Road tube station meant that his room would shake whenever an Underground train passed by, conferring a steady rhythm of the modern urban world moving on its "metalled ways" of "time past and time future" (*BN*, III, xx. 36-37); one could argue it was a world without time present as it perpetually moves from and towards. Eliot was to remain in this location for the next five or six years, save for the beginning of the Blitz in Britain when, due to the

[17] Peter Ackroyd, *T. S. Eliot: A Life* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984), 212.

bombing in London, Eliot was forced to stay at the village of Shamley Green, part of the "Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty", as a guest of Mrs. Mirrlees, mother of the poet Hope Mirrlees. Domestic turmoil intermingled with spiritual assiduity, the proximity of both the Anglican church as a site of Anglo-Catholic values and the Underground as the locus of capitalist modernity, the metropolitan life fraught with mechanical order and personal suffering, the English countryside as sanctuary and spontaneous natural community—Eliot's lived experience of the 1930s as such is a useful pointer when we try to navigate through Eliot's psycho-geographical mapping of these locales in *Four Quartets*.

If biography offers clues to the particular psycho-geographical figuration of *Four Quartets*, social history helps to position it in the contemporary political and cultural landscape, the vicissitudes of which literary production constantly reverberates with. In this section I single out the issue that weighted most heavily on Eliot's mind—dwelling amidst imperial decline in the interwar Britain. As the world found its way into the twentieth century, Britain also entered its fourth and last century of global imperial rule. Britain benefited from the immediate aftermath of World War I through the Treaty of Versailles, gaining new territories such as Palestine and Iraq as the colonies of Germany and the Ottoman Empire were broken up and re-distributed. With these new acquisitions, the British Empire reached its zenith of territorial occupation. However, the heavy costs of World War I dealt the empire a huge blow as Britain lost millions of able-bodied soldiers in the trenches, accumulated unprecedented debts and suffered manpower deficiencies in the colonies. Moreover, the naval powers of the United States and Japan, together with a rearmed Germany after 1933, worked to undermine Britain's military might. The rising nationalist

sentiments in places like India and Ireland also threatened the supremacy of Britishness as a unifying identity. Hence, although the formal process of decolonization and end of empire did not begin until after World War II, a sentiment of imperial decline during the interwar years was already prevalent in the English society.

It is worth noting, especially in the context of my discussion of the London Underground, that the decline of the empire is not solely an international affair: the (d)evolving conditions of the British Empire abroad found its domestic counterpart in the newly formed spatial arrangement—the urban-suburban-rural triad. The connection between imperialism and place awareness is famously noted by Fredric Jameson in "Modernism and Imperialism": Jameson claims that for the reason that the economic structure of imperial regimes is largely located outside of the West, the "daily life and existential experience in the [Western] metropolis—which is necessarily the very content of the national literature itself, can […] no longer be grasped immanently".[18] This sense of loss of immanence, or a graspable totality is, Jameson argues, what prompts the inward-searching for a psychological unity that characterizes much of high modernist writings. In *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams similarly argues that Britain's urban-rural dynamic was replicated in its imperial expansion between Britain and its colonies.[19] I want to engage both Williams's and Jameson's arguments by pointing out, firstly, that the history of the 1930s England demonstrates a new turn of the "imperial structures" from abroad to home, a dynamic which may entail but does not necessitate inward-searches; and,

[18] Fredric Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism," in *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 51.
[19] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 279-288.

secondly, following Todd Kuchta, that the parallel between the urban-rural dyad and British colonies needs to be further complicated by an additional element—the suburbia. The latter both colonized the rural space around the metropolis and became the dwelling place for domestic inhabitants that were "relegated to the status of colonized subjects" in the 1930s.[20] The rise and spread of the suburbia were inextricably linked to the development of an appropriate transport system; the relationship between the metro and the suburbia was one of co-formation.

British suburbia began to develop as early as the 1880s. As Kuchta points out in *Semi-Detached Empire*, it was initially seen as "hygienic, quasi-militaristic colonies that can safeguard the future of the British race".[21] Between the effeminate urbanites and the sluggish peasants, suburbia seemed to offer real hope in supplying Britain with eligible citizens to defend the empire. From the late-nineteenth century to the early-twentieth century, Britain increasingly became a suburban nation, in no small part thanks to the massive amount of wealth it managed to reap from its overseas colonies. The exodus of the population to the outskirts of London generated a new kind of sub-urbanization as the new residential developments swallowed up "ancient townships, middle-sized cities—old and recent—and even semi-rural areas".[22] Between 1880 and 1920, "suburb and the empire shared an intensified ascendance and consolidation."[23] This was all to change in the late 1920s to the 1930s when suburban development and imperial destiny became discordant with each other. Whereas the

[20] Todd Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire: Suburbia and the Colonization of Britain, 1880 to the Present* (Charlottesvillle: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 5.
[21] Ibid., 1.
[22] Francois Bedarida, *A Social History of England 1851-1990* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 232.
[23] Todd Kuchta, *Semi-Detached Empire: Suburbia and the Colonization of Britain, 1880 to the Present* (Charlottesvillle: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 7.

empire began its slow but irreversible decline, suburbia continued its exponential growth in interwar years with the built-up area of Greater London more than tripled, mostly through newly built suburban houses around the metropolitan centre in communities like Golders Green. Thanks to this expansion, London's population peaked at 8,700,000 inhabitants in 1939, the year Eliot started the composition of "East Coker". The suburban lifestyle, with its identical "two-storey houses all alike with brick walls, bow windows, little gardens full of rose-bushes",[24] however, came increasingly under public scrutiny for its homogeneous outlook and stifling conformity; its inhabitants—the lower-middle-class professionals and the upper stratum of the working class—became the embodiment of racial degeneracy, a threat to the health and wellbeing of "the British race" at home.

This new trend in (sub)-urban development and its public perception was matched by a significant transformation in the English class system. The landed gentry—the class of lesser nobility in England who were land owners in the countryside, who lived from rental incomes and who were often local administrators—was dealt a heavy blow after World War I as "the traditional breeding-ground of officers, imbued with patriotism and the spirit of leadership [...] suffered most heavily" in the war.[25] The rapid emigration of rural population to the city meant that less and less land was cultivated, which in turn diminished the incomes of these country gentries: the 1951 Consensus, conducted just six years after the end of the Second World War, showed that four out of five inhabitants surveyed

[24] Ibid., 232.
[25] Ibid., 202.

lived in the city, and out of those who still lived in the country, "only half cultivated the soil".[26]

Eliot himself was apparently alarmed by both the declining of the country gentry and the agricultural problems in England and he repeatedly brought the topic up in *The Criterion*. In a 1938 commentary, for instance, Eliot draws the reader's attention to Viscount Lymington's book *Famine in England* (1938), quoting at length Lymington's strong preference for ruralism as a lifestyle: "Exchangers are less important than producers, and among producers it is those who till the soil upon whom civilization is based, more than upon those who mine or manufacture."[27] Eliot echoes Lymington's sentiment and deplores, from his Gloucester Road flat, what he calls "the urbanization of mind" of those who ruled over England. He makes a somewhat bold claim that an awareness of this psycho-demographic shift helps one "to understand what is wrong with nearly everything else: with the domination of Finance, with our ideals and system of Education, indeed with our whole philosophy of life."[28] The antidote to this urban epidemic, it seems, is a radical proposal that "the greater part of the population, of all classes (so long as we have classes) should be settled in the country and dependent upon it."[29] In an earlier commentary of the same year, Eliot laments the fact that the remedies proposed to revive country life seem to have come from "people who have an urban outlook" and who think therefore that to make country life more endurable is merely to "make it suburban" by bringing the pleasures and entertainments of town life to the countryside.[30] To reverse this

[26] Ibid., 231.
[27] Viscount Lymington, qtd. in T. S. Eliot, "A Commentary," *The Criterion,* 18 (Oct. 1938): 60.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] T. S. Eliot, "A Commentary," *The Criterion,* 17 (Apr. 1938): 482.

urbanization of leadership, Eliot, argues, it is necessary that remedial methods are worked out by the "country gentry"—"people who have been brought up in the country, whose substance comes from the cultivation of the land."[31] For someone like Eliot who had eight years of experience working in the foreign transaction department in Lloyds bank, the maintenance of intimate connection with one's ancestral land, the re-establishment of a de-centralized, local leadership and re-affirmation of the necessity of agricultural labour were the solution to the problematic spatial and social structures in place in interwar England—the metropolitan Leviathan of finance and commerce, the booming suburbia which supplied the metropolis with the manpower, and the declining countryside of meagre livelihood and diminished local leadership.

1.2 The Development of London Underground in the 1930s

London Underground Railways, and its operational institution, London Passenger Transport Board, played a central role in the development of suburbia and of all the "ills" that Eliot ascribed to the modern demographic shifts. London Passenger Transport Board (henceforth LPTB) was established in 1933 with Lord Ashfield as the chairman and Frank Pick the vice-chairman and chief executive. Before its creation, elements of public transport facilities, diversely owned and managed, had not been coordinated. Thus LPTB's main function was to be a centralized power and authority in the London Passenger Transport Area and to run all the buses, trams and underground railways. The founding of LPTB not only facilitated forward planning, but also helped the city to forge a uniform front for publicity and promotion. The ultimate control of London's public transport made LPTB a virtual monopoly financially self-supporting, with a degree of public control but non-political

[31] Ibid.

management and thus an excellent platform for Pick to carry out his master plan to reform London's public transport. In this section, I will address how the LPTB, under the auspices of Frank Pick, refashioned the Underground into a modernist space in the 1930s. Three innovations in the Underground design and architecture, I suggest, had particular relevance to Eliot: Harry Beck's Tube map, Charles Holden's design of Underground headquarter and stations and the English avant-garde artists' poster campaign. Before examining them, however, I would like to contextualize these developments through the figure of Frank Pick and his aesthetic programme for the London Underground.

Frank Pick was a visionary businessman who maintained the Protestant belief that capitalism should seek higher (moral) ends than mere profits. He joined The North Eastern Railway as a management trainee in 1902, only six years after William Morris's and two years after John Ruskin's death. The influence of these two pioneers of the British Arts and Crafts Movement (henceforth BACM) on the young man was profound and instantaneously recognizable to those around him. As he quickly rose up the career ladder and became publicity officer of the Underground Electric Railways Company of London (UERL), his sympathy for the BACM drew him toward the Central School of Arts and Crafts. Established in 1896, the School grew directly from the BACM and its first principle, W. R. Lethaby (Morris's student), sought to break down the barrier between fine and applied arts, an aspiration which would have appealed to the pragmatic and public-mined Pick. Pick was also a founding member of Design and Industries Association (DIA), an organisation

loosely modelled on the BACM and the German organisation Deutsche Werkbund[32]; DIA's aim was to promote better design in manufacturing and finding a proper solution for the problems of everyday life. Just like the post-conversion Eliot, Pick was concerned with how moral and civic harmony could be achieved, and the answer, it seemed to him at least, lay in the integration of art and design with everyday life. Both a traditionalist and a progressive, Pick retained the Arts and Crafts predecessors' moralistic approach to art and design while abandoning their anti-industrial stance. To Pick, commodities could be art, and machine was simply another tool through which the artist-designer's conceptual scheme could be executed.

One of the first things Pick did when he became the executive officer of LPTB in 1933 was to commission posters for the Underground in the late post-impressionist styles, the ubiquitous presence of which Eliot as a daily user of the Tube for more than forty years would have been aware of. This move, Pick thought (after his mentor Lethaby), would help democratize art and aestheticize city dwellers by exposing the public to the "well-made thing" that was modern commercial art.[33] The most high-profile artists commissioned included E. McKnight Kauffer and F. Gregory Brown, both of whom were closely associated with Vorticism. What informed the campaign was Pick's firm belief in art's function in ordering an otherwise ungraspable and chaotic modernity (comparable on its own to Eliot's view on the matter) and the confidence in the transport system as a foundation for a new spiritual communality and a higher form of corporate life. Pick and the corporate power he represented sought to promote a public image of the Tube as a well-integrated, organic unity that

[32] Deutsche Werkbund was an alliance of artists, artisans and manufacturers in German in 1907 aiming to integrate art and industry. For more information, see Oliver Green and Thomas Heatherwick, *Frank Pick's London: Art, Design and the Modern City* (London: V & A Publishing 2013), 53.
[33] W. R. Lethaby, "Art and Workmanship", *The Imprint,* No.1 (January 1913): 1-3.

urban modernity failed to present. Pick even went so far as to declare that the modern transport system was "a religion for city dwellers".[34] Pick's programme to impose order and to educate the commuters was contemporaneously applauded by Danish architect and urban planner Steen Eiler Rasmussen who wrote that, "the moment you enter the London Underground you feel, though you may not be able to explain exactly how you feel it, that you are moving in an environment of order, of culture."[35] London Transport, Rasmussen added, was "the most efficacious centre of visual education in England."[36] As Michael Saler points out, this "vulgarization" of fine arts would sound threatening to cultural critics like Eliot and F. R. Leavis who had serious misgivings about what they saw as the increasing philistinism of both state and corporate institutions. However, the DIA's insistence that "the public must be groomed for its new role as patron of the arts",[37] the premise that artistic manipulation of the given can bestow a sense of order on an unorderly world, and the commitment to a new, profoundly modernist aesthetic also resonated with Eliot on a deeper level. This ambivalent response, based on both commensurability and an irreconcilable disparity of vision, as the later sections shall demonstrate, underpins Eliot's vision of the Tube.

A few aesthetically innovative campaigns embodied Pick's reforms and the results transformed the lived experience of the city's underground travellers like Eliot. In the early 1900s commuters were confronted with two major problems when

[34] Michael T. Saler, *The Avant-garde in Interwar England: Medieval Modernism and the London Underground* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 104.
[35] Steen Eiler Rasmussen, qtd in Christian Barmen, *The Man Who Built London Transport: A Biography of Frank Pick* (London: David & Charles, 1979), 169.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Michael T. Saler, *The Avant-garde in Interwar England: Medieval Modernism and the London Underground* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 85.

planning an Underground journey: for one, they had to consult a number of maps respectively published by different railway companies such as the Underground Railways of London, Central London, Metropolitan, Great Northern & City, and City & South London Railways and this absence of a coordinated map made it difficult for commuters who needed to make transfers in interchange stations. The problem was resolved in 1906 when the first combined map was printed to promote joint interests. Still, another issue persisted: early designers of the Tube map were mostly cartographers who adhered strictly to geographical intricacy and fidelity and were reluctant to discard information. Consequently, early Tube maps were simply street maps with the railway lines overprinted. The inclusion of surface features gradually lost its utilitarian value and became a mere token gesture as the railways expanded to the suburban outskirts of London. This expansion gave rise to another problem for the designers of Tube map: the stations in the London suburbs were often so far apart that, if they were to represent them realistically and show everything to scale, the central area of London would become clogged up with excessive surface features and the periphery too sparsely marked with wasteful open spaces in between stations. A 29-year-old engineering draughtsman on temporary employment with the London Underground Signals Office named Harry Beck had a solution and Pick was quick to adopt it. Beck described his conception of the now famous Tube map as follows:

> Looking at the old map of the Underground railways, it occurred to me that it might be possible to tidy it up by straightening the lines, experimenting with diagonals and evening out the distance between stations. The more I thought about it the more convinced I became that the idea was worth trying, so, selecting the Central London Railway as my horizontal base line I made

> a rough sketch. I tried to imagine that I was using a convex lens or mirror, so as to present the central area on a larger scale. This, I thought, would give a needed clarity to interchange information.[38]

Beck's initial sketch achieved just what he had intended to do. He compressed the outlying portions of London and enlarged the central area. Experiential and representational reality was largely abandoned in favour of utilitarian simplicity that catered to people's tendency to reductionism: stations were now at equal distances with each other, and all placed on straight-line segments. A network of vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines replaced the more sinuous and meandering designs of the past versions. Initially rejected by the Underground Publicity Department in 1931, the map went through subsequent revisions and was ultimately accepted by the Publicity Department a year later. A large print order was in place: in January 1933, 750,000 copies for quad royal posters and pocket versions of the map were ordered at a cost of 33,710 pounds.[39] Another order of 100,000 copies was placed in February. These statistics give evidence that Beck's Tube map was an immediate success with the British public who were otherwise not reputed to be receptive to innovations.

What, then, lay behind the general public's affection for the map? Perhaps credits should be given to the map's apparent utility and its aesthetically pleasing features. The former ensured the commercial value of the design and the latter gave the users the illusion of the Underground space as a coherent, homogenized whole severed from surface features. When the eyes followed the straight-lined, diagonally-cut, colour-coded diagram, pleasure and a sense of control arose as the previously

[38] Harry Beck, qtd in Ken Garland, *Mr. Beck's Underground Map* (Harrow: Capital Transport Publishing 1994), 17.
[39] The size of a quad royal poster is 40 x 50in/1016 x 1270mm.

chaotic, ungraspable reality gave way to the ordered, neat representation of the underground space; this is why Eric Hobsbawm went so far as to claim that Beck's Tube map was the most original work of avant-garde art produced in interwar Britain.[40] LPTB was also pleased with Beck's design as its handiness attracted more people to use the Underground, especially when the suburbs now seemed so much closer to the commercial hub.

Frank Pick was also engaged in using the Underground to promote modern architecture and sculpture, following the functionalist tenet of "fitness for purpose" and "truth to nature", especially through the aid of the architect Charles Holden, another founding member of Design and Industry Association. Holden's working partnership with Pick "created the distinctive London Transport corporate design style that was to characterize a whole city."[41] As Holden's biographer Eitan Karol points out, two elements were central to Pick and Holden's conception of an Underground station: the entrance and the lighting. They defined a station as "an inviting doorway in an architectural setting that cannot be missed by the casual pedestrian."[42] Lighting, too, was crucial to Holden's design: in daytime natural light shall stream into the station vestibule or booking hall, and at nighttime, the station was to be an inviting beacon by the use of floodlight. The floodlighting, in particular, made possible for the façade to take on another life with light and shadow after dark, and its inviting effect helped promote the image of the Underground as a safe, secure and comfortable

[40] Eric Hobsbawm, *Behind the Times: The Decline and Fall of the Twentieth-Century Avant-Gardes* (New York: Thames and Hudson 1999), 39.
[41] Oliver Green and Thomas Heatherwick, *Frank Pick's London: Art, Design and the Modern City* (London: V & A Publishing 2013), 81.
[42] Eitan Karol, *Charles Holden: Architect* (Donington: Shaun Tyas 2007), 283.

venue for the commuters.[43] While, as we shall see, these aspirations and their apparently successful execution profoundly contradict Eliot's mythic re-use of the metro space, both the play of light and shadow and the sanitised whiteness of the underground stations may also have been inspiring, and in varied ways. What may well have provoked his disgruntlement is the visual postulation of these new lights as "prophetic beacons". The last is the phrase used by P. Morton Shand, writing in *Architectural Review* in 1929. Shand described new stations as follows: "lovely in the glistening whiteness of their flood lighting at night, they stand prophetic beacons of the new age amidst a drab wilderness of Victorian edification."[44] The last comment also discloses a further sphere of functionality of the Holden stations: Pick's requirement for Holden was that these aboveground facades should be adaptable to all manners of sites, be it freestanding or inserted into an existing context. In other words, a station should promote a corporate identity while being able to blend into the existing cityscape. A civic focus informed Pick and Holden's planning—their sense of public service dictated that the Underground was not only to provide transport, but also to educate the passengers (including to educate them aesthetically) through better public buildings and space.

After a successful experiment in the design of Morden underground station extensions in early 1920s, Pick was encouraged to commission Holden again for the construction of a new booking hall for Piccadilly Circus station, a site frequented by T. S. Eliot. Pick's ambition was to revamp the "engineers' hole in the ground", that is, the still grimly sub-surface section of the station which had yet to be integrated with

[43] David Lawrence, *Bright Underground Spaces: The Railway Stations of Charles Holden* (Harrow: Capital Transport Publishing 2008), 40.
[44] P. Morton Shand, "Underground," *Architectural Review* (November 1929): 218.

the renovations of above-ground stations. Holden's new design was an oval-shaped booking hall space, with escalator shafts in the centre of the floor carrying large numbers of people vertically at the same time. (In "Burnt Norton" Eliot would call such passivity of the passengers "abstention from movement") A spacious, elegant and elliptical site, the hall was also used as a public subway; therefore, a number of shop-windows were added to provide all-weather shopping. Upon completion, the design, with its "marble wall panels, bronze fittings, glass showcases and roof support columns with hanging lamps", was seen clearly as an extension of the opulent high-class shopping environment of the above-ground Regent Street.[45] Eliot himself was a frequent user of Piccadilly Circus station. As his biographer Lyndall Gordon notes, Eliot in the 1930s and 1940s would take the bus at 6:30am to St Stephen's Church for early mass, and then sit on the top deck of the bus again to Piccadilly Circus to go by the Underground from there to Russell Square.[46] The look of Piccadilly Circus as a simulation of an elegant shopping centre would hardly go unnoticed by the poet.

The same applies to the final signature-edifice that emerged out of Holden's collaboration with Pick, which I would like to highlight here: the Underground Headquarters known as 55 Broadway, built between 1927 and 1929. The skyscraper was an entirely different territory compared with the subterranean Piccadilly Circus station, yet both showcased its architect's functionalist commitments. Upon completion 55 Broadway was the tallest office block in the city. The upper office floors of this magnificent building were on a cruciform plan (two arcades, perpendicular to each other and bisecting the site), with setback top floor for the

[45] Oliver Green and Thomas Heatherwick, *Frank Pick's London: Art, Design and the Modern City* (London: V & A Publishing 2013), 83.
[46] Lyndall Gordon, *T. S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life* (London: Vintage 1998), 457.

central clock tower. This design was meant not only to optimize light and air in the offices, but also to dominate the skyline, much in the fashion a cathedral would in earlier times. Indeed, 55 Broadway was a somewhat strange hybrid of an American skyscraper and a medieval cathedral.[47] Eliot would have almost certainly known of and passed by 55 Broadway, a highly-publicized building hailed as "the Cathedral of Modernity" by *The Observer* upon its completion in 1929. Standing erect right opposite Westminster Abbey, this skyscraper refigured the London skyline. Its cathedral-like elements were at once in unity and conflict with the historical abbey, and indicated both discontinuities and continuities of modern time, not unlike those often invoked by Eliot.

A final development worth noting in this context is the English avant-garde artists' radical refashioning of the Underground space from an urban non-place to a subterranean art gallery, one that, they deemed, exemplified the modernists' obsession with speed, movement and urban modernity. Pick had the luxury of allowing his commissioned artists to indulge in experimental designs largely because the UERL and later LPTB were a virtual monopoly with no real market competitors. Bolstered by the resources and power of the transport company, the avant-garde artists, much like their peers in the Soviet Union and Germany at the time, exalted the status of poster to that of a legitimate art form. The number of posters commissioned testified to this art form's importance and popularity: it reached its apex in the mid-1920s with an annual commission of 50 pictorial posters; the Tube also appeared in daily poster-

[47] Pick visited the USA in 1919, and was most impressed by the architecture of New York; Holden travelled extensively in America in 1913 to examine college buildings.

like illustrations in press, London guide books, and country walks publications.[48] At their best, the space of consumer capitalism and their representation in poster art mutually enhanced each other: the London Underground space became the most prominent venue for Cubists, Futurists and Vorticists to reach the general public, and these soft-sell advertisements not only created good will, if not immediate financial return, for the Underground company, but also elevated LPTB's status as art patron during interwar years. Moreover, London itself was advertised, its places of pleasure and amusement becoming better known through the Underground announcements. In these representations, London was either a consumerist hub boasting of its up-market department stores or a set of Sunday excursion destinations in its pastoral suburbs.

The most prominent figure among the artists commissioned by Pick was Edward McKnight Kauffer who as a painter associated briefly with the avant-garde groups in London art world but in 1921 turned a full-time graphic designer. In a 25 year period, he would design over 100 posters for Pick and additionally made book jackets, interior decoration, carpets and stage sets for numerous other clients. Wyndham Lewis commended that "the tunnels of the Tube became thenceforth [Kauffer's] subterranean picture galleries."[49] His best-known poster artwork, "Winter Sales Are Best Reached by Underground", epitomizes the Vorticist style that most of his Underground posters adopted. The silhouette of two fashionably dressed ladies, barely sheltered under their umbrella and reduced almost to geometric forms, comes under the forceful attack of the diagonal columns of rain, and the only indicator of sanctuary is the warm red colour suggesting the entrance of the Tube. It was, according to David

[48] See Oliver Green and Thomas Heatherwick, *Frank Pick's London: Art, Design and the Modern City* (London: V & A Publishing 2013), 67.
[49] Wyndham Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1937), 211.

Ashford, "the most successful application of Vorticist Aesthetic to the commercial medium of poster-art."[50]

Through the reconstruction of these elements of the London Underground in interwar years, then, I wish to make the point that the Underground space in the 1930s would have been perceived not only as a superiorly functional (under)world but also a cosmopolitan aesthetic space, with palpable associations with the international avant-garde movements, the influence of American architecture and the organizations like the German alliance of artists. This strand of cosmopolitanism was underpinned by an ineluctable optimism of the commercial culture's power to integrate art with everyday life to regain its utilitarian value. What the previous survey of the "modernist" development of the London Underground also symptomatically suggests, however, is a curious disjunction between Eliot's poetic rendition of the London Underground and reality. Although the transformation of the stations and its underground space would have been completed by the time Eliot was writing "Burnt Norton" in the early 1930s, his verdict of the Tube in "Burnt Norton" as "a place of disaffection" in a "dim light" was the exact opposite of the real Tube space of bright light and cosmopolitan avant-garde.

1.3 "O Dark dark dark, they all go into the dark": The Chronotopes of Descent in "Burnt Norton" and "East Coker"

If, in *Four Quartets*, Eliot lives through his personal purgatory in the Underground train, deliberately setting himself apart from the contemporary reality of the avant-garde underground space, it behoves us, then, to interrogate this contradiction. Eliot's

[50] David Ashford, "Blueprints for Babylon: Modernist Mapping of the London Underground 1913-1939," *Modernism/modernity*, v. 17, no. 4 (November 2010), 748.

idiosyncratic textual re-mapping of the underground and its functions could be linked, especially in the interlacing motifs of decline/fall/descent, to the climate of imperial decline outlined in Section 1.1. It is no accident that these carefully selected tropes ("descent lower", "houses rise and fall" and "the Sun and Moon go down") are all spatial, in fact I suggest that interwar imperial subject-formation was deeply implicated with issues of territory, land and agriculture, and, for Eliot, the concerns about their decline. But, to contextualise this development and enable the reader to perceive some poetic continuities, I wish to first trace the roots of Eliot's spatial imagination, then elucidate how Eliot's spatial imagination, which informs much of his earlier work, continues to find its corollary in the descent narratives of *katabasis* and *via negativa*.

Upon receiving the Emerson-Thoreau Award from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1960, Eliot gave a reading of "The Dry Salvages" prefaced by a short essay entitled "The Influence of Landscape upon the Poet". In this essay, he lovingly remembers his childhood landscapes in St. Louis and coastal New England: "My poetry, like that of other poets, shows traces of every environment in which I have lived."[51] He recalls vividly the great Mississippi river, "the strong brown God" in "The Dry Salvages", as "the most powerful feature of Nature in that environment", coursing between St. Louis and East St. Louis in Illinois.[52] New England also impressed the young Eliot with its coastlines, its marine life and birds of the season when his family spent every summer on New England coast—it was where Eliot

[51] T. S. Eliot, "The Influence of Landscape upon the Poet," *Daedalus* Vol. 126, no. 1 (Winter, 1997), 352.
[52] Ibid.

"tasted the oyster or lobster" and became an avid bird-watcher.[53] However, there was another aspect of his US habitats that left lasting impacts on Eliot's spatial imagination: he recalls how the St. Louis neighbourhood he and his family lived in became dilapidated "to a degree approaching slumminess."[54] Out of loyalty to family tradition, both his grandmother and his father refused to leave the house their family built and lived for decades even when the neighbourhood gradually became shabbier and shabbier. Hence for the nine months of the year when Eliot was away from the New England coast, his scenery was "almost exclusively urban, and a good deal of it seedily, drably urban."[55] These composite early impressions informed time and again the topographies in Eliot's poetry: the seedy St. Louis urban scenes no doubt superimposed itself upon Eliot's London and Paris cityscapes in his early poetry, especially "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1917), *Poems* (1920), and *The Waste Land* (1922). Eliot's family home in St. Louis would find its reincarnation in his later poetry, too, namely, in the crumbling houses in "East Coker"; and the delectable bird-songs of New England coast were recaptured in "Cape Ann", published in a series of poems under the title "Landscapes" in 1935—the same year when he started writing "Burnt Norton".

These early site-specific impressions carried themselves over into Eliot's late poetry in the form of unique chronotopes. The chronotope, as the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin defines it, is a term for "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature."[56] The

[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Mikhail Bakhtin, "Form of Time and Chronotope in the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84.

chronotope both embodies and explores the various ways time and space, the two axes on which narration unfolds, are united in literary works, making palpable the relationship between the social and historical environments and their (sometimes counter-intuitive, or indeed oppositional) refiguration in literary language. Bakhtin applied this concept to fictional prose rather than poetry. There are sound reasons for Bakhtin's hesitance to extend his discussion to poetry: poetry does not necessarily have chronotopes, and they are especially rare in certain poetic genres and types of expression such as the dramatic monologue and the lyric, which often feature a speaking voice or an individual consciousness without clear indication of time or space. However, Eliot's poetry is markedly chronotopic, and that in both functions described by Bakhtin: as the means by which a text engages with, or reflects, history, and as the constellation of images of time and space in the text, out of which a (new) vision of history is to be constructed.[57] In particular, I contend that as *Four Quartets* is centrally concerned with three different modes of temporality—the earthly, mortal time of the human, the cyclical, seasonal time of nature and the immortal, transcendental time of God—and each of temporal mode demands a specific spatial configuration for it to "thicken, take on flesh, become artistically visible."[58] Hence Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope is particularly applicable to *Four Quartets*, Eliot's spiritual autobiography in the bleak years between 1935-1941, which bears the

[57] I am not the first one to draw attention to the commensurability of Bakhtin's theories and T. S. Eliot's poetry. In her comment on the use of Bakhtin's theories in the study of Eliot's poetry, Suzanne W. Churchill draws the reader's attention to the fact that Bakhtin himself admits that his ideas apply to all language ("The dialogic orientation is a phenomenon that is, of course, a property of any discourse. It is the natural orientation of any living discourse", Bakhtin writes.) See Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 279. Churchill also points that Bakhtin's apparatus is uniquely suited to the discussion of even lyric poetry that aims to suppress any stable chronotopes or their visible relationship to the spatio-temporal context in which the poet is writing. See Suzanne W. Churchill, "Outing T. S. Eliot", *Criticism*, v. 47, no. 1 (2005), 28, ft. 27.

[58] Mikhail Bakhtin, "Form of Time and Chronotope in the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84.

mark of both the immanent time of interwar contemporaneity and the transcendental time of spiritual immortality within the texts. The quartets, although governed by ostensible musical analogy, are also saturated with localized, site-specific details as well as mythological and historical topographies. The two dimensions are mutually dependent in order to become tangible within the poetic text. The seven years it took for *Four Quartets* to be completed no doubt determined their particular affective and meditative qualities: when Eliot was first composing "Burnt Norton" with bits left out from his play *Murder in the Cathedral*, he did not conceive the poem to be the first in a poetic sequence. It was the outbreak of the Second World War that prompted Eliot to begin plotting out the subsequent quartets as a whole, each anchored in a specific site he associated with: "Burnt Norton" documents his chance visit to a dilapidated English country house in Gloucestershire; "East Coker" records his homecoming to the rural English village where his ancestors set off for New England; the New England wintry scene is unfolded in "The Dry Salvages" whereas "Little Gidding" takes us back to the seventeenth century Anglican community established by Nicolas Farrar. These dormant sites, when animated by the temporal dimension which adds change and process, become, as Bakhtin writes, "charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history."[59] Similar to any other chronotope, the ways the world(s) of *Four Quartets* reveal themselves and make themselves intelligible are underpinned by discernible visions of the (social) self and specific identity politics. Although all four quartets have similar chronotopic arrangements, it is the first two of the quartets—namely "Burnt Norton" and "East Coker"—that feature the chronotope

[59] Ibid.

of descent most prominently.[60] In these two poems, Movement I and Movement III are each other's counterpoints. It is for this reason that I have chosen to discuss the first two of the sequence only, for it best illustrates Eliot's negative dialectics and his politics of place. I argue that the descent narratives and the chronotopes they form in "Burnt Norton" and "East Coker" must be understood in the context of a localist discourse of English identity which Eliot endorses with both urgency and reservation. Eliot seeks to address this issue by engaging in a sophisticated dialogue of spatio-temporal and ideological opposites in the two quartets.

In his seminal book *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire and the Location of Identity*, Ian Baucom argues that Englishness as a discourse of collective identity—that of a pure, self-enclosed, localized community—exerts from the inception "a double logic of affirmation and denial" of British imperialism and Britishness.[61] Although both Britishness and Englishness have been, for the better part of their histories, grounded in rhetoric of place, they demonstrate a sometimes mutually reinforcing, other times mutually exclusive relationship. Britishness was consistently framed more in terms of a legal category—the tradition of *ius soli* dictated that anyone who was born on British soil and swore allegiance to the British monarchy was by law a British subject. As the British Empire continued to expand between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, annexing and colonizing new territories in North America, the Caribbean, the Indian subcontinent and Africa, Britishness had to be stretched, with great elasticity, to include increasingly diverse peoples and cultures

[60] In the subsequent quartets—"The Dry Salvages" and "Little Gidding"—the motif of descent in the third movement is replaced by that of travel and voyage. Hence although they are rich in their own implications, they are not adequate comparators with the first two quartets and hence are not discussed in the chapter.

[61] Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 7.

at its imperial boundaries whom the people of England back home found as their strange compatriots. However, the more global the British Empire became, the harder it was for Britishness to be upheld as both the site of sovereignty and the ground commanding loyalty and national affect. The Empire itself thus ended up "disrupt[ing] the cultural identity of a colonizing nation."[62] Recalibrating signifiers of collectivity then became a necessity. It was against this background that a localist discourse of Englishness, celebrating a handful of carefully selected English *lieux de memoire* as sites of authentic identity, began to emerge during the English Romantic movement in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. English places, represented in William Wordsworth's ruined English cottages and in John Ruskin's watercolour paintings, appeared as a disciplinary force that attempted, through immersion in its particular auratic and affective environs, to shape living subjects passing through its locales. If Englishness was conceived as a reaction against imperial expansion overseas, it was also collusive with it: even when Englishness was first mounted as cultural critique of the expanding Empire, it demonstrated a parallel logic with the imperial agenda to spread its system, its economies and its culture.[63]

Reading *Four Quartets*, especially "Burnt Norton" and "East Coker", in light of these insights into the English national identity's entanglement with place rhetoric, it becomes apparent that the rose garden of Burnt Norton, the East Coker village and the London Underground—sites that exude particular auratic qualities in *Four Quartets*—

[62] Ibid., 14.

[63] This parallelism took two distinct forms. First, it subsumed the present under the sovereignty of a displaced past and re-enchanting it with personal-historical memories, thereby attempting to diachronically homogenize the past, the present and the future in one monolithic identity not unlike the expansionist agenda of imperialism; second, English locales such as the English cricket field, the English schoolhouses, its royal courts were then frequently replicated in the Empire's overseas colonies as identity-shaping sites with an aim to transform the colonized subjects passing through them. Therefore it became a means "adapted by the imperial officials" to "administer the cultural imperatives of the empire" (Ibid., 36).

are deeply implicated in the troubled notion of Englishness. Since both Eliot's spatial imagination and Englishness as a rhetoric of location operate dialectically, before I examine the descent narratives in *Four Quartets*, its opposite, the siting of ascent and utopian fulfilment, must be explored: a garden chronotope that envelops Eliot's "Burnt Norton".

"Burnt Norton" germinated from Eliot's visit to a deserted manor house in Gloucestershire in 1934 with Emily Hale, a family friend Eliot would have married had he not gone to England in 1914. Set between Chipping Campden and Broadway in the Cotswold, Burnt Norton manor house got its name from Sir William Keyt in the 1740s who, when drunk after abandoned by his mistress, set fire to his own house and was burnt alive in it. Overcast by this tragic history, Burnt Norton at the time of Eliot's visit was already dilapidated, the rose garden neglected, and a sense of gloom and decay filled the air.[64] As briefly mentioned in Section 1.1, at the time of the visit, Eliot had just arranged for a formal separation from his wife Vivienne with whom he had a most unhappy marriage. Wandering in the deserted garden of Burnt Norton with Emily Hale occasioned in the poet a series of meditations about life's "might-have-beens", the paths he could have taken, the missed chances not only of a happy marriage, but also a "perfect life" of which marital bliss is a constituent part. This "Vita Nuova" is now denied to the poet who, the implication is, could have enjoyed natural human love and even glimpse into divine charity with Hale. (Following up on and furthering this analogy with Dante's *La Vita Nuova*, Eliot's biographer Lyndall Gordon describes Hale as Eliot's Beatrice.)[65] This utopian chronotope is perceived by

[64] See, Jane Bingham, *The Cotswolds: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 165.
[65] Lyndall Gordon, *T. S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life* (London: Vintage 1998), 233-282.

Eliot as "the way up", one of Heraclitus' epigraphs that inform the quartets: "The way up and the way down are one and the same,"[66] which affirms the validity of both the Way of Affirmation and the Way of Negation to approach the vision of beatitude. The movements in *Four Quartets* can be read as working out/embodying this Heraclitean principle in counterpoints, with Movement I presenting a mirage of idyllic chronotope and Movement III working contrapuntally with a dystopian vision. In my reading of *Four Quartets*, I argue that Eliot interprets Heraclitus' philosophy with certain degree of liberty, hollows out Heraclitus' materialism (he is the one who insists that everything starts and ends with fire—an element with physical presence in the world) and replaces it with a more Christian-inflected idealism—God/universal pattern at the centre of the transcendental realm.

Indeed, "Burnt Norton" could be read as an enactment of the Heraclitean mottos: although there is an overarching pattern outside of time that mythically unites human experience and gives it order and meaning (call it God or the Word/Logos), we can only have transient vision into it in our own fragmented lives, with which we are obliviously satisfied. Jewel Spears Brooker points out that the first epigraph refers to "a common point of stillness" and the second to "a common pattern of movement"[67] (italics mine). The repeated signifier *common* indicates a sense of collectivity, but both Eliot's poem and Brooker's exegesis only dimly allude to what underpins this collective consciousness, while Gordon's interpretation is largely biographical and personal. Mindful of both universalizing tendency and biographical speculation in interpreting this densely philosophical poem, I wish to take a more historically-

[66] Translations taken from Denis Donoghue, *Words Alone: The Poet T. S. Eliot* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press 2000), 252.
[67] Jewel Spears Brooker, *T. S. Eliot and the Dialectic of Modernism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press 1994), 147.

informed approach and suggest a further dimension to the rose-garden epiphanic moment. I argue that the auratic chronotope of "Burnt Norton" is the objective correlative of troubled Englishness: the dilapidated country house was once lavishly built by Sir William Keyt, a southern England country gentry and the rose-garden in which Eliot and Hale wandered was resonant of the prelapsarian idyllic state that Englishness came to represent.

Indeed, Eliot's own epiphanic moment in the garden typifies what the immersive ambience of an English site can do to attune self-reflexive subjects passing through it to its identity-shaping qualities. The poem opens with a series of impersonal pronouncements on the interconnectedness of time past, time present and time future that seem to be lifted from a philosophy seminar. The language of abstraction runs on for ten lines until the readers encounter the first image in the poem:

> Footfalls echo in the memory
>
> Down the passage which we did not take
>
> Towards the door we never opened
>
> Into the rose-garden. My words echo
>
> Thus, in your mind.
>
> ("Burnt Norton", I, xx. 11-15)[68]

These lines translate the abstract and the philosophical in the previous lines into the concrete and the experiential the way each movement of a string quartet embodies

[68] "Burnt Norton", henceforth *BN* in block quotes. The same applies for "East Coker" which is abbreviated as *EC*.

the musical motif in its unique ways. The stanza moves with such a velocity that it becomes hard to say where exactly the movements are taking place. A series of directional adverbials—down, towards, into—keep the verse in flow while the negations ("did not" and "never") counteracts the movements by claiming its opposite. It is important to note that the initial effect of the images that constellate this chronotope is that the site appears as an arrested phantasmagoria: an idyllic, or pastoral, time-space. The footfalls in the passage, the door not open—these images are of course strongly evocative of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, which along with Victorian children's books like Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows* and Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* creates an idyllic picture of reposeful and picturesque England with its curious talking animals, rose gardens and green forests.[69] Mikhail Bakhtin suggests that in such pastoral chronotopes space takes precedence over time and the embedded traces of the historical time, in particular, encounter strong resistance by space. This pastoral chronotope and its constituent images, however, are disclosed in Eliot's poem as nothing more than "echoes", the way Eliot's own words "echo/thus, in your mind." Echoes imply movement across space and time, and are a facet of the physical movement thematized in the poem; they disrupt the pastoral chronotope both by movement and by casting the idyll as unachievable. Bakhtin suggests that in the chronotopes of travel, movement, or uprooted modern life, time holds sway over space. The dialectical tension between the pastoral chronotope and its disruption, the chronotope of the movement/uprootedness thus frames Eliot's poem.

[69] In an interview with John Lehmann, Eliot mentioned three sources for "Burnt Norton": poetic bits left over from *Murder in the Cathedral*, the beginning of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and the garden itself. See Helen Gardner, *The Composition of Four Quartets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 39.

This dialogized space-time produces dialogized subjectivities, and this is the reason why Eliot invites the reader for a walk. By taking the same mental path down the rose-garden, the mind of Eliot's intended readers would be pricked in such a way as if Eliot physically spoke these words to them. The "might-have-beens" then become not only personal but collective, implying a dialogic mythical-historical subjectivity. The dialogism of the stanza benefits much from Eliot's dramatic voice—the entire first stanza was lifted from deleted lines that Thomas Becket speaks in *Murder in the Cathedral*. As the memories that inhabit the site are activated by the movements, "the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves", suggestive of the past with its sensory richness, is disturbed, its fragrance released into the present.

Other echoes

Inhabit the garden. Shall we follow?

Quick, said the bird, find them, find them,

……

There they were as our guests, accepted and accepting.

So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern,

Along the empty alley, into the box circle,

To look down into the drained pool.

……

And they were behind us, reflected in the pool.

(*BN*, I, xx. 19-40)

The poetic persona "I" is unsure "to what purpose" he is disturbing this memento of the past, however the very next minute, he is made aware of other echoes through the auditory attunedness that begins in the poem with an invitation to listen to the footfalls in the passage which in turn breathes life into the dead words on the page. The solitary questioning "I" becomes pluralized in "shall we follow", and in this way a space both for dialogue and for concerted movement is opened up. Drawn even deeper into this imaginary site by the beckoning of birds—yet another creature that demands auditory sensitivity—the plural subject "we" are made to "move…along the empty alley, into the box circle,/To look down into the drained pool." (BN, I, xx. 33-35) The echoes of other dignified beings, accepted by the summons of memory to appear on scene, reciprocate the movements in a "formal pattern" and advance down to the huge drained pool in the garden. It is here that the lyric subject(s) experience a moment of extreme bliss when the dry pool is suddenly filled with "water out of sunlight" (BN, I, x. 37) and the mythical lotus flowers rose "out of heart of light" (BN, I, x. 37)—the mind seems to be in tune with nature as the manifestation of divine will, and in turn, the ghostly presences of the past are there, reflected in the pool, involved and rendered visible in the vision of beatitude.

The gradual expansion of the lyric subject from the solitary to the dialogic and then to the historical-collective is coupled with the poem's topographic unfolding. Movement I of "Burnt Norton" is charged with kinetic energy, with movements and motions that keep opening up new spaces, conjuring up the spirit of place to come on scene. At the same time, the battle between the static/idyllic and the moveable

chronotope continues, illuminating the process through which the disciplinary force of the site shape the attentive subjects caught within its topography, but also consistently challenging these temporarily fortified topographies. The poem becomes an event, taking on ritualistic aspects when first it asks the reader to take part in the psycho-geographical journey down into the rose-garden. Only by strictly following the structure of the manor house and the plot of the garden—"down the passage…towards the door…into the rose-garden…along the empty alley…into the box circle"—can the apparitions of the past be made to appear; only if the readers, like Eliot, are heedful of nature's intimations, can they have access to the epiphanic moment that involves the poet, the reader and their shared past in a vision outside of time (while also imparting a distinct vision of history). The manor house's actual decay and dilapidation—yet another living proof of the decline of the country gentry and diminished imperial power—remains discernible under the palimpsest of the poem's multiple layering: the resuscitation of the site's enchanting power over the lyric subject hence is collusive with the chronotope of Englishness as a disciplinary force.

However, the enchantment is no sooner here than it is gone. The bird, which previously alerts the lyric subject to the presence of the echoes, now urges it to leave, to go far away from the excited laughter of the children hidden in the leaves, for "human kind/cannot bear very much reality." (I, xx. 39-43) Englishness as an utopian state, as the perfect equilibrium of things is, after all, "only ever confidently present in the past", Baucom suggests: "it manifested itself in the auratic locale only at the cost of displacing itself in time, rendering itself recollectable but, finally, ungraspable."[70] Here I would like to suggest that Eliot's endeavours to make Englishness both

[70] Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 37.

recollectable and graspable while taking account of the modern uprootedness necessitated a dystopian mapping of the London Underground, and that this effort at negative dialectics constitutes Movement III.

If Movement I is Eliot's version of *Paradiso,* then in Movement III he takes us to the limbo (which is not Hell proper but an intermediate realm between earth and hell), a world of pseudo-light and pseudo-darkness which we only come to recognise as the London Underground in retrospect, despite the fact that Eliot himself makes this reference explicit in his commentary on the poem—both John Hayward and Hugh Kenner report that Eliot acknowledges the place to be the London Tube, with Kenner further specifying it to be Gloucester Road Station near where Eliot was living.[71]

> Here is a place of disaffection
>
> Time before and time after
>
> In a dim light: neither daylight
>
> Investing form with lucid stillness
>
> Turning shadow into transient beauty
>
> With slow rotation suggesting permanence
>
> Nor darkness to purify the soul.
>
> (*BN*, III, xx. 1-7)

[71] See commentary in T. S. Eliot, *The Poems of T. S. Eliot Volume I: Collected and Uncollected Poems* (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), 917.

With the beginning of each movement, we are thrust instantly into an entirely different chronotope. In Movement III, however, what is immediately perceived is the affects, or the lack of affects, of this amorphous space—amorphous because we are not given any coordinates by which we could fix our position. We are not sure where exactly this "place of disaffection" is, except that it is a place cast "in a dim light." It is an artificial light that is neither the natural daylight which perennially bestows moving shadows even on stationary objects as the sun courses through the sky (shadows in the London Underground, let us remember, would always appear stationary), nor the potent darkness that cleanses our temporal desires through the emptying-out of sensuality. Eliot's religious imagination casts the natural daylight—the first creation of God by utterance (i.e. words spoken) and a manifestation of divine will—as axiologically more valuable than anything else: the daylight infuses the form with a stillness characteristic of the pivot around which the world whirls.

> Neither plenitude nor vacancy. Only a flicker
>
> Over the strained time-ridden faces
>
> Distracted from distraction by distraction
>
> Filled with fancies and empty of meaning
>
> Tumid apathy with no concentration.
>
> (*BN*, III, xx. 10-14)

When Eliot makes a compound word ("disaffection"), especially with a prefix, he always manages to make the root word more pronounced through negation. The

same is the case with his censure of this place of pseudo-darkness and pseudo-light. One feels more strongly about the potent daylight and the purifying darkness than one does about this "twittering world" in which there is "neither plenitude nor vacancy." In this flickering space, we are suddenly made aware of the presence of the others—the "strained time-ridden faces", almost apparitions that appear out of nowhere, "distracted from distraction by distraction." It gives the impression that the attention of these ghostly faces is largely kinetic, that is, dependent upon the intensity of stimulation and lacks the directional orientation and purposive movement that the cosmic dance at the still point of created order manifests (II, xx. 16-23).[72] Although the appearance of these faces is transitory, it is nonetheless the first marker of real-world subjects and objects in this stanza. In other words, details of the contemporary experience begins to seep through the otherwise abstract and unanchored poetic space.

Men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind

That blows before and after time,

Wind in and out of unwholesome lungs

Time before and time after.

Eructation of unhealthy souls

Into the faded air, the torpid

Driven on the wind that sweeps the gloomy hills of London,

[72] To Eliot, dance is a symbol of order, on both social and metaphysical level, because it requires measured movement in time. See, Terri Mester, "Dance," *T. S. Eliot in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2011), 114-124.

Hampstead and Clerkenwell, Campden and Putney,

Highgate, Primrose and Ludgate. Not here

Not here the darkness, in this twittering world.

(*BN*, III, xx. 15-24)

The stanza becomes more concretized as it moves forward. The men and the swirling fragments of paper, the cold wind that blows before and after time, the "belching" of unhealthy souls into the faded air and the seven gloomy hills of London suburbs—these images are strongly evocative of the sordid urban scene in *The Waste Land*. These associations give us just enough hints to work out where this place may be located—the eructated souls are not unlike the crowd that is undone by death, flowing over London Bridge in "The Burial of the Dead"; "bits of paper" recalls the urban garbage bore by the Thames in "The Fire Sermon"; the cold wind reminiscent of the "cold blast" in which the speaker hears the rattle of bones in the back alley. It is the familiar world of the urban commuters—made up largely by lower middle-class professionals living in London suburbs. It is noteworthy that in the original draft of "Burnt Norton", xx. 109-xx. 110 reads "Into the faded air, the torpid/ Fuddled with ~~images of picture~~ papers [sic]/ Driven on the wind".[73] One cannot but spot behind the crossed-out "images of picture papers" hints of the Underground posters and leaflets that shaped the daily commute experience for the London citizens. Eliot deliberately deleted the line in the final version, and the reason for doing it is intriguing: it could have been done simply to avoid unnecessary repetition, because only 5 lines before it there is also a latent reference to the posters ("Men and bits of paper, whirled by the

[73] Helen Gardner, *The Composition of Four Quartets* (London: Faber & Faber 1978), 87.

cold wind"); however, it is more likely that Eliot did not want the place to be over-determined by real-world pointers. Eliot wanted the space-time of his poem to be a palimpsest, and refrained from introducing too many concrete details to enable concatenation of multiple chronotopes. The seven London inner suburbs in the next two lines sounds almost like Underground announcements; yet the invocation of Ludgate, one of the gates within which Roman London was founded, also points to a reading of these seven hills in the gloomy London suburbs—the destination of the Underground commuters—as suggestive of the seven hills upon which the original City of Rome was founded by Remulus.[74] Eliot's depiction here speaks to his attempt to override the grim suburbia topography with the Eternal City that is the centre of Virgil's *imperium romanum* (which later became the Holy Roman Empire), and in turn, Eliot's ideal of a Christian world.

Before examining the second half of the movement, we need to pause and consider the effect of the overlapping chronotopes in the first half, and investigate their relations to the first movement's exhortation of Englishness in the symbol of the rose-garden. Why does Eliot feel it necessary to exile his lyric subject from the rose garden of felicity? I would suggest that the reason for it may lie in the fact that English *lieux de memoire* were quickly losing its identity-shaping power in the re-configured cultural topography of interwar Britain. For Eliot, the modern condition begins not in Eden, not even at the point of exile from Eden—rather, it starts at the bottom of Hell in a post-apocalyptic dystopia. Rachel Falconer posits that post-1945 *katabatic* narratives typically have their protagonists beginning at the bottom of Hell,

[74] See commentary on "Burnt Norton" where Hayward notes that the seven hills suggests comparison with Rome. Also a further note pointing to William Blake's *Jerusalem* where Highgate was referenced in relation to the "Foundation" of a new Jerusalem in London. T. S. Eliot, *The Poems of T. S. Eliot Volume I: Collected and Uncollected Poems* (London: Faber & Faber, 2015), 919.

having already reached the end. While this is a valid claim, I want to argue that for Eliot, interwar Britain, especially its imperial capital, already signals an infernal chronotope.[75] Whatever collective identity Eliot wants to forge, therefore, cannot germinate from a nostalgic backward look at an Anglican site. The imperial London encompasses a wider spectrum of contemporary experiences both at home and distant in space and time, thanks to its position as the cosmopolitan hub in Britain. The heterogeneous chronotopes that can be found in Britain's capital are evidence of the de-centring of collective identity as they exert different identity-shaping influences on their inhabitants. The consumerist campaign of LPTB is one such case. In re-fashioning the Underground space into an ordered commercialized site, LPTB's campaigns work as "hypnotism", aided by its soft-sell advertisements which "has become the great weapon of the industrial companies and the poster designer their great ally."[76] The development of the Underground space in interwar years, to Eliot, made the old vision of Hell/Underworld disappear from the cultural imagination as the underworld is completely rationalized by commercial capitalism and made a replica, an extension of the aboveground urban space. For Eliot, such moves were destructive of a collective cultural identity in the sense that the underworld was both a site of sedimented historical memory and tradition as well as a place to seek prophetic wisdom from one's cultural ancestors, as exemplified in *The Odyssey*, *Aeneid*, and *The Divine Comedy*, all of which heavily influenced Eliot's classicist outlook. The Underworld is needed, even necessary, but not in the form of Frank Prick's corporate aestheticism.

[75] See, Rachel Falconer, *Hell in Contemporary Literature: Western Descent Narratives Since 1945* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 4.
[76] Roger Fry qtd in *Frank Pick's London: Art, Design and the Modern City* (London: V & A Publishing 2013),72.

It is not to say, however, that Eliot's negative response to the Underground is merely nostalgic or reactionary. We need to look at Eliot's infernal mapping with models more complicated than "reaction". Critics like to read *Four Quartets* as Eliot's spiritual autobiography of a Christian soul[77]; however, I wish to emphasize Eliot's militancy in promoting his cultural/political agenda—he is the one who claims that "any programme that a Catholic can envisage must aim at the conversion of the whole world."[78] In this sense, *Four Quartets* invites the readers to immerse in the poem's structure of feeling and identify with the lyric subject through the poem's spatial strategies that act as a disciplinary force in subject-formation. I have discussed how the site of the rose garden in Movement I of "Burnt Norton" is charged with kinetic energy that induces Anglicization but ends up paradoxically sending its subjects into exile—into the Underground space of Movement III. The readers are not able to immediately recognize the place as the London Underground, despite Eliot's confession in his letters that he intends this place to be the Tube. The deliberate abstraction then performs a two-fold function: it first delineates only the auratic qualities of the place, which are revealed to be detrimental to one's spiritual well-being[79]; then in the second half of Movement III yet to be analysed, it pronounces a series of mandates for self-emptying and self-purification. This marked departure from the external to internal space, I argue, signals Eliot's changing perception of identity-formation.

[77] Both Glenn Hughes and Kenneth Kramer, for instance, make similar claims on the autobiographical element of *Four Quartets*. See Glenn Hughes, *A More Beautiful Question: The Spiritual in Poetry and Art* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2011), 92. Also, Kenneth Kramer, *Redeeming Time: T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets* (Lanham: Cowley Publications, 2007), 3.
[78] T. S. Eliot, *Essays Ancient and Modern* (London: Faber & Faber 1936), 123.
[79] There is barely any active movement in the first half—all actions come in passive voice. The "time-ridden faces" are constantly "distracted", "filled with fancies"; the men and fragments of paper "whirled by the cold wind"; the torpid souls "driven" by winds that sweeps over the hills of London.

English locale, as Ian Baucom points out, "not only occupies space, but is occupied by living subjects who, as they visit, inhabit, or pass through it, leave their estranging marks upon it."[80] Hence the identity-shaping influence of locale is always destabilized by the subjects it seeks to shape and mould. As a result, Englishness is revealed to be "continuously discontinuous with itself."[81] Relying on the locale for its transformative power then is no longer adequate, since living subjects who (tres)pass into the locale bring with them affective structures that can work against the prevalent mood of the place. A place such as the London Underground, with the constant influx and outflow of various subjects, is incapable of transmitting any inherent essential quality of place other than the impression of accelerated time and compressed space. Eliot is aware that the Tube is inadequate as a place to generate and stabilize collective identity, which is why the Tube becomes a catalyst for self-reflection, but the subject ultimately withdraws from it and trades it for an introspective, almost solipsistic look within, which is exactly what happens in the second half of Movement III:Descend lower, descend only

Into the world of perpetual solitude,

World not world, but that which is not world,

Internal darkness, deprivation

And destitution of all property,

[80] Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 6.
[81] Ibid.

Desiccation of the world of sense,

Evacuation of the world of fancy,

Inoperancy of the world of spirit;

This is the one way, and the other

Is the same, not in movement

But abstention from movement; while the world moves

In appetency, on its metalled ways

Of time past and time future.

(*BN*, III, xx. 25-37)

The locale of the London Underground is immediately negated in the very first line. As if the subterranean space is not already deep in the ground, we are asked to "descend lower," abandon any recognizable form of associativeness—what Eliot calls "the world" —into a complete solitude. We cross over from the sphere peopled with listless commuters looking as if they have been discharged from the classical underworld into the Christian-mythical "dark night of the soul." The transition from the *katabasis* narrative (the descent into the underworld, an occasion for both remembrance and revision of tradition) to *via negativa* (the negative way to approach God) is important for Eliot's purpose—it is through the combination of the two descent narratives that Eliot counters the commercial cosmopolitan identity that the

London Underground of the 1930s seeks to offer and reconstructs a viable collective identity that draws from but is not dependent upon Englishness.

For this purpose, Eliot deliberately intertwines the *katabasis* narrative with *via negativa*: *katabasis* narrative template originates in classical antiquity, in the stories of the hero's descent into the twilight kingdom to seek counsel from prophets or ancestors representative of a collective past, usually at the nadir of his journey. The narrative of *katabasis* is predicated upon a downward journey into the classical hell (Dis or Hades) and the traveller's return. The protagonist undergoes a series of trials and tribulations to reach the inner depth of the terrain where his old self dissolves and dies, often as a consequence of encounter with either prophetic wisdom from a seer (in the case of Odysseus), one's ancestor (in the case of Virgil) or an unspeakable evil (in the case of Dante). What is unique in Eliot's combined chronotope is that the return is not featured: we are in hell and we stay there. *Katabasis* narrative always involves a transformative moment when a life crisis is overcome only by plunging into the depth of the underworld: Virgil's Aeneas wanders in hell to find prophetic wisdom that transforms him from the gods' plaything into the founder of Imperial Rome; Dante loses "the correct path" midway through his journey of life and has to undergo the infernal descent to mend his way and find communion with the Christian god. [82] This narrative of transformation is what Bakhtin calls "the chronotope of

[82] For more discussion on the tradition of *katabasis*, see Rachel Falconer. *Hell in Contemporary Literature: Western Descent Narratives Since 1945* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 1-6. Also, Michael Thurston, *The Underworld in Twentieth-Century Poetry: From Pound and Eliot to Heaney and Walcott* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1-12.
Eliot's *katabatic* journey in *Four Quartets* is mainly informed by his reading of Virgil and Dante. In Book 6 of *The Aeneas*, Aeneas seeks the prophetess Sybil's guidance to enter the underworld in search of his father Anchises. Ferried across the infernal river Acheron by the boatman Charon, Aeneas's wandering in the infernal depth takes him to meet Trojan War heroes, his abandoned lover Dido, a host of evil sinners whose punishments are being doled out by Rhadamanthus. In the end Aeneas finally finds Anchises among the blessed who foretells the significance of Aeneas journey to Italy--to found

threshold"—a chronotope connected with "the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life."[83] The site of the threshold in "Burnt Norton", however, does not appear as the artificial hell of commercial modernity but a deeper descent into complete solitude[84]—the *via negativa* as the negative way of preparing oneself to approach or to know God. Instead of outlining the positive qualities of God (that he is all-knowing, benevolent, omnipotent), *via negativa* both describes what God is not and prescribes the way the faithful discipline themselves in order to be filled with divine grace.[85] From the rose-garden to the London Underground then to the narrow confines of interiority, the constantly changing chronotopes resemble the troubled Englishness that kept losing its footing—the rural England being demystified, the underground space commercialized, and the modern self atomized.

Given that the localist discourse could no longer be a valid anchor for the declining imperial Britain, Eliot found the last battleground not in the reconstruction of an enchanting locale, but in the re-formation of modern selfhood—the minimal component of sociality. This is exactly why Eliot adopts the apophatic theology from the sixteenth-century Spanish mystic St John of the Cross, best known for his *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *The Dark Night of the Soul*. In a 1930 review in *The*

Imperial Rome. The *katabasis* of Book 6 then signals the change of Aeneas from the gods' plaything to the founder of Imperial Rome. In a similar vein, Dante the pilgrim undertakes an underground journey guided by none other than Virgil himself. Going down through the nine circles of Hell witnessing the hideous punishments doled out to the sinners at different pouches of the infernal, Dante the pilgrim comes face to face with Satan, the incarnation of pure evil who is frozen in the lake. Dante the pilgrim is only able to get out of the Inferno by climbing up the body of Satan towards Purgatory.

[83] Mikhail Bakhtin. "Form of Time and Chronotope in the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: Univesrity of Texas Press 1981), 248.

[84] The notion of hell as the unspeakable horror within oneself is echoed in Eliot's own play *The Cocktail Party* (1949), the protagonist Edward Chamberlayne, who tries to resolve his midlife crisis by having an affair with a young woman Celia but finds such frivolity demeaning to both, utters in a moment of epiphany: "Hell is oneself/Hell is alone, the other figures in it/ Merely projections. There is nothing to escape from/And nothing to escape to. One is always alone." See T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950* (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1952), 342.

[85] Eliot's use of *via negativa* also refracts his idiosyncratic interpretation of Heraclitus' mantra which he used as epigraph in "Burnt Norton."

Listener Eliot accords St John a great eulogy as "the greatest psychologist of all European mystics."[86] Indeed, Eliot's personal temperament and his cultural diagnosis of the early twentieth century Europe as "the waste land" find clear resonance in St John's dark religious psychology. Eliot's in-depth engagement with St John of the Cross's thought started with his reading of E. Allison Peers's *Studies of the Spanish Mystics* (1927).[87] The recurring images of stair-climbing symbolic of the soul's ascent towards God in St John's works began to appear in works such as Eliot's 1928 poem "A Song for Simeon" ("mounting the saints' stair") and the 1930 poem "Ash Wednesday" where the third stanza features an elaborate description of the faithful's difficult ascent of the staircases.[88] In "Burnt Norton," however, it is the other way around that is emphasized: xx.28-32 describes the operations of active self-emptying—"Internal darkness; deprivation/And destitution of all property,/ Desiccation of the world of sense,/Destitution of the world of fancy,/Inoperancy of the world of spirit." In contrast with the passivity of the commuters, the purgation is expected to be actively taken by the attentive readers, in the way St John of the Cross lays out as "the dark night of the senses." The modern sinner actively empties themselves of worldly attributes and cleanses themselves of the putrid air in the Underground. There is yet another way—"not in movement/But abstention from movement". The meaning here is again two-fold: on the one hand it refers to the way

[86] T. S. Eliot, "Thinking in Verse: A Survey of Early Seventeenth-Century Poetry," *The Listener*, III (12 March 1930): 61.
[87] Barry Spurr, "'Oh Dark Dark Dark, They All Go into the Dark': The Via Negativa in the Poetry and Thought of T.S. Eliot," eds. Christopher Hartney and Andrew McGarrity. *The Dark Side: Proceedings of the Seventh Australian and International Religion, Literature and the Arts Conference, 2002 (*Sydney: RLA Press, 2004), 43-53.
[88] Bakhtin is a useful point of comparison here when he notes that the threshold position and its related chronotope such as the staircase and the corridor are "places where crisis events occur, the falls, resurrections, renewals, epiphanies, decisions that determine the whole life of a man."See Mikhail Bakhtin, "Form of Time and Chronotope in the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: Univesrity of Texas Press 1981), 248.

of going down to the Underground platform via the elevator in which the commuters only need to stay immobile[89]; on the other hand, it points to the second "the dark night of the soul" when the sinner progresses into a phase of passivity, waiting for God to take over so that they can be entirely receptive to his will. Eliot's palimpsestic mapping takes the Underground reality and re-makes it as the site for the alienated modern individual to hearken onto the divine ordinance as the world whirls by "on its metalled ways."

The remaining question, however, is how Eliot's theological rigor relates to his vision of an emergent collective identity? The answer, I think, lies in the fact that Eliot is adopting the concept of *kenosis*—the self-emptying and self-sacrificing of Christ by incarnation as a human being. In this theological reading, then, the kenotic ethic urges the believer to imitate Christ, empty themselves of hubris, embrace humility and become subservient to God. In this likeness to Christ, not only are the believers are united and sociality between fellow members of the faithful renewed, but also the intrinsic connection between men and nature as God's creation can be restored. This explains the child-like wonder in the subsequent movement of "Burnt Norton": "Will the sunflower turn to us, will the clematis/Stray down, bend to us; tendril and spray/Clutch and cling?" (*BN*, IV.xx.3-5) The natural attunedness between the created beings hinges on the purgation of the possessiveness that characterize modern individualism. Eliot's revised communal vision then absorbs the influence of the localist discourse of Englishness in retaining the auratic impacts of locales, but

[89] The Underground station at Russell Square, one that was Eliot's last stop on his Tube journey to Faber & Faber office, had no escalators. To get to the platforms, one had to either descend a very steep spiral staircase of 171 steps (16 flat, 136 spiral, 19 curved), or to use the three lifts available which were often out of service or crammed with people like sardines. The Underground advised the commuters to take the lift, a safe and easy way to move large crowd of people vertically after they had completed their horizontal journey on the Tube.

negatively—the emphasis now is on the individual's perception of the insalubrious aura which then occasions the volitional self-purgation that promises restoration of the affinity between god's created beings.

If "Burnt Norton" takes individual selfhood as the building block of Eliot's communal vision and shows how atomized individuals can be re-aligned with other created beings, "East Coker", the second of the quartets, continues to refine and refract Eliot's sense of community in chronotopes that does not simply engage (dis)enchanting locales and the attuned individual but expand to include a cyclical view of space and time and recalibrate individual efforts to search for beginnings and ends within the framework. Just one year after the appearance of "Burnt Norton" in Eliot's *Collected Poems 1909–1935* and three years before "East Coker" was published in the Easter number of *New English Weekly* in 1940, Eliot wrote in the commentary of *The Criterion* that "[p]erhaps modern art is international, and if so, that may help account for its weakness. I cannot think of art as either national or international—these, after all, are modern terms—but as racial and local[…]an art which does not represent a particular civilization, but only an abstract civilization-in-general, may lose its sources of vitality." [90] Eliot's denouncement of a "national/international art" perhaps stems from his distaste for the overtly political connotations of the word "nation", especially in the 1930s when the notion of "nation" was upheld by totalitarian regimes of fascists and/or communists. Eliot opted for an even more narrow and primitive definition—art as the representation of a particular race—perhaps an art that would capture the essence of Englishness. Interestingly, Eliot's statement contradicts with the vision he had for *The Criterion* as the platform

[90] T. S. Eliot, "A Commentary," *The Criterion* 17 (October 1937): 82.

to promote literary and intellectual exchange in European intellectual community which Eliot saw as bound together by a shared cultural tradition going back to Christianity instead of Renaissance or Enlightenment heritage.[91]

In Terry Eagleton's assessment of *The Criterion*, he asserts that there is a incongruity between Eliot's poetry and prose—the former being cryptic, allusive and ambiguous while the latter lucid, oracular and loftily self-assured, and he argues that this is because Eliot consigned the role of cultural criticism to prose while leaving poetry to the realm of private devotional discourse.[92] I shall argue against Eagleton's dichotomy and maintain that "East Coker" is Eliot's exploration *par excellence* of the potentials and limits of English culturalism.[93] Such discourse is prominent in Eliot's late poetry and prose (*Four Quartets*, *Idea of a Christian Society*, and *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*) and finds its representation in the small rural community held together by the plough and the altar—that is, in the physical labour of cultivating their ancestral land and in the daily worship of God administered by the institutions of the Anglican Church. Eliot's depiction of the Tube in "East Coker", then, is the antithesis of Eliot's rural idyll. It furthers Eliot's dark conception of London Underground in "Burnt Norton".

If "Burnt Norton" has an air of finality to it as Eliot's valediction to the world of poetry (it is after all the last poem of what Eliot thought was to be his final collection of poetry), then in "East Coker" he starts again, finding once more the voice of a public man and seeking to validate the value of poetry in the search of communal

[91] Jeroen Vanheste, "The Idea of Europe," *T. S. Eliot in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2011), 56.
[92] Terry Eagleton, *Figures of Dissent* (London: Verso 2003), 80.
[93] The idea that individuals are culturally bound and determined and can only achieve self-realization within their own culture.

transcendence. It is not only for individuals but for the English community as a whole in mid-century England. In "East Coker", Eliot amends the path to transcendence in "Burnt Norton" through an individual's epiphanic moment. He establishes a hierarchical order and firmly plants the indigenous culture as the medium between individuals in a Christian community and the eternal kingdom of heaven.[94] "East Coker" is rooted in the chronotopes of England, in its here and now, its insular provinciality rather than its cosmopolitanism and international characters. In its more specific social-historical context, it is rammed up closely against the discourse of national recession and insular retrenchment in interwar England.

The Tube and the space of London Underground in "East Coker", as this concluding section shall illustrate, crystallize everything that insular England is not—its poster campaign inspired by Italian Futurism, its executive manager affiliated with an institution modelled upon the Deutsche Werkbund and its headquarter reminiscent of American skyscrapers. It is antithetical to the rural English village of East Coker grounded in tradition. Eliot's political agenda in "East Coker" could be further exposed if we delve into biographical details: East Coker is a small rural village in Somerset, England where Eliot's ancestor Andrew Elyot set sail to America in 1669. Andrew Elyot, however, was not the most prominent Elyot in the entire family, nor was he the earliest recorded. According to Eliot's biographer Lyndall Gordon, in 1939 Eliot searched out his familial roots in the Sketch of the Eliot Family in the British Museum. He found an earlier phase of the family in Devon whose members included respectable squires in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Nevertheless, Eliot chose

[94] Joshua Esty rightly points out that in "East Coker", "the path to impersonality and universality is routed through the poet's relationship to a culture." See Joshua Esty, "Eliot's Recessional: *Four Quartets*, National Allegory and the End of Empire," *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, v. 16, no. 1 (Spring 2003), 41.

to ignore this and concentrated on the East Coker branch of the family.[95] Moreover, he was to adapt the work of another ancestor of his—Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Boke named the Governour*—in the first movement of East Coker in which the countryside lads and lasses engage in country dance, a mirthful but also solemn ritual displaying harmony. This deliberate identification with the rural past of Eliot's ancestry showcases Eliot's intent to unite the personal, the familial and the national in the icon of English countryside.

The triad of Eliot's concern is evident in the very opening of "East Coker" as it presents the rise and fall of houses as they are built, extended, removed, destroyed and restored. Houses, of course, carry with them multiple connotations: it is the familial home as well as the royal houses that rule over the British Isles. In fact, Eliot appropriates Mary the Queen of Scots' motto "En ma fin est mon commencement", inverts its order and places it at the start of the poem—"In my beginning is my end." The falling and crumbling of the houses participate in the natural cycle as their constituent parts become "old stones to new building, old timber to new fires" (I, x. 5). Following it are several lines where "bone of man and beast, cornstalk and leaf" are part of the seasonal cycle of the living generation. The cadence is distinctly biblical ("there is a time for building…and a time for living and for generation…"), lending the poem an ambience of continuous life. No sooner are we lulled into this biblical chronotope than we are ushered from the chimera into the reality of East Coker village in a dark afternoon, with the sole entrance into the isolated village—a deep lane "shuttered with branches" in the "electric heat, hypnotized." In this slumberous ambience, a phantasmagoric scene appears in the open field, accompanied by "the

[95] Lyndall Gordon, *T. S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life* (London: Vintage 1998), 348.

weak pipe and the little drum" (*EC*, I, x. 27), of rustic men and women dancing around the bonfire, "holding eche[sic] other by the hand or the arm" (*EC*, I, x. 33) and "lifting heavy feet in clumsy shoes." (*EC*, I, x. 37) The static and overly spatialized nature of this idyllic sketch-chronotope is underscored: the dancers are locked and frozen in this perpetual loop so that what they signify is a bygone lifestyle no longer valid for the speaker who must now exchange this chronotope for the one of travel. He therefore departs for a sea voyage that takes him to a new beginning:

> Dawn points, and another day
>
> Prepares for heat and silence. Out at sea the dawn wind
>
> Wrinkles and slides. I am here
>
> Or there, or elsewhere. In my beginning.
>
> (*EC*, I, xx. 48-51)

The rural village of East Coker distinguishes itself from the Burnt Norton garden in that although both locales are charged with kinetic energy and physical movements, the lyric subject is no longer called upon to follow the contour and pattern of the locale to a revelatory moment of heightened awareness. The lyric subject transits from the actor in "Burnt Norton" to the observer in "East Coker", while the idyllic landscape in both poems is presented as a static site of enchantment (the pastoral chronotope) which the speaker nevertheless has to depart for the "real" world of experience (the chronotope of travel, movement, and uprootedness). If the chronotope in Movement I of "Burnt Norton" is the mythological/biblical garden of men's prelapsarian state, and yet also a very distinct, emotionally charged garden from

Eliot's personal history, in "East Coker", the time-space unity is more strongly implicated with history, both personal and national—the village of East Coker is both Eliot's ancestral place and the nation's pre-industrial past.

The expanding of the poem's circumference is matched by the evolving chronotope of descent in Movement III of "East Coker". If anything, it appears much more populated than the lonely solipsism in "Burnt Norton":

> O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark,
>
> The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant,
>
> The captains, merchant bankers, eminent men of letters.
>
> The generous patrons of art, the statesmen and the rulers,
>
> Distinguished civil servants, chairmen of many committees,
>
> Industrial lords and petty contractors, all go into the dark,
>
> (*EC*, III, xx. 1-6)

In other words, Eliot is sending the pillars of modern society into darkness, into the "vacant interstellar space." Surprisingly, despite the great number of eminent passengers Eliot sends onto Charon's ferry, Eliot proclaims that it is "nobody's funeral, for there is no one to bury." (III, x. 11) There might be two reasons for Eliot to make this paradoxical statement: for one, these eminent men of influence, of which Eliot himself is one, are all highly dependent upon the capitalist economic system and its concomitant liberal political superstructure, hence rendering their agency close to

"a cog in the machine", not distinguishable enough to be called an individual; second, the underground darkness is a purgatorial space to transform, not to annihilate. It is not the eternal resting place for these souls who must undergo trial and transformation in a gestative waiting:

I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you

Which shall be the darkness of God. As, in a theatre,

The lights are extinguished, for the scene to be changed

With a hollow rumble of wings, with a movement of darkness on darkness,

And we know that the hills and the trees, the distant panorama

And the bold imposing façade are all being rolled away—

Or as, when an underground train, in the tube, stops too long between stations

And the conversation rises and slowly fades into silence

And you see behind every face the mental emptiness deepen

Leaving only the growing terror of nothing to think about;

Or when, under ether, the mind is conscious but conscious of nothing—

(*EC*, III, xx. 12-22)

The three examples illustrating the gestative waiting are worth exploring here. I'd venture to call them chronotopes because these situations hold distinctive mode of

temporality—a sense of suspended, prolonged time between events. What also unites them is the fact that in these chronotopes, the human agency is reduced to that of a waiting subject. It is a continuation from Movement III of "Burnt Norton" where the second way of descent—not volitional, but abstention from volitional movement—is advocated but not elaborated upon. "East Coker" takes up where "Burnt Norton" leaves off: the theatre space between the acts, the underground train in transit and the patient under ether—they are materials either appropriated from Eliot's life (his theatre experiments) or recycled from his earlier poems (the underground train in "Burnt Norton" and the etherized patient in "Prufrock"). The politics of place in "East Coker" is to turn the sites of modern ennui into productive silence. It expands its frame of reference from "Burnt Norton" so that the space for divine intervention is no sacred site, but modern spheres of public engagement and private inspection. It is in this way that passive hiatus is transformed into active waiting. Eliot prescribes the antidote for modern lethargy in the exact site where it occurs.

Through the close reading of relevant movements in "Burnt Norton" and "East Coker", Eliot's politics of place comes unmasked: while he is cognizant of the old enchantment of English locales and their influence over subjects passing through them, he is also mindful that the magic is quickly fading away under new historical circumstances, and he devises the chronotopes that dialogically engage both, the enchantment and the disenchantment of the world. His modified place politics engage the residual identity-shaping power of sites and locales dialectically, exposing both the unwholesome environs and the modern atomized individuals as they are. Only then does Eliot propose his antidotes minimally, suggesting renewed approach to the question of human associativeness in an age fraught with crises and rupture.

2. "Say it! No ideas but in things—": Punctuation Marks and American Locality in William Carlos Williams's *Paterson*

More than 10 years before T. S. Eliot's cogitations on the beginnings and the ends, and the ways to convey the material and immaterial worlds in striking chronotopes, another poet, hailing from New Jersey, US, addressed similar concerns in a very different idiom:

> The rose is obsolete
> but each petal ends in
> an edge, the double facet
> cementing the grooved
> columns of air—The edge
> cuts without cutting
> meets—nothing—renews
> itself in metal or porcelain—[1]
>
> ("The Rose", xx. 1-8)

William Carlos Williams is T. S. Eliot's compatriot and fellow modernist, yet their poetics are strikingly different. "The Rose" opens with a rejection of poetic platitude—"the rose is obsolete" as a worn-out symbol of love and trite poetic subject—yet the poem quickly qualifies such rejection by drawing the readers to the form of the rose. Williams promises that there is still much to write about this flower, laden with symbolic weight. Subverting the literal-metaphysical hierarchy of

[1] William Carlos Williams, *Spring and All* (New York: New Directions, 2011), 107. It is a facsimile reprint of the original 1923 version by Contact Publishing Co.

interpretation, Williams insists on looking at the flower *in itself*—noting how its petal has "an edge" that cuts through the air as if it were not immaterial, "cementing" and holding the columns of air between its grooves (within its form). What is more unusual is the way Williams makes the poem into a visual object—the dashes in the second half of the stanza fragments the syntax the way the petals of the rose cut up the air. Yet the poem doesn't stop at verisimilitude—it returns to the materiality of the rose and suggests its innovative malleability: the poem was inspired by the 1914 Cubist collage *Flowers* by Juan Gris, which montages a vase of roses cut and pasted from woven papers with modern trinkets like coffee cups, newspaper scraps and a porcelain plate with rose patterns, blending the "edge" of the vase of roses with the rose motif on the plate—the same way as Williams's poem imagines the real rose renews its life "in metal or porcelain."

"The Rose" is paradigmatic of Williams's poetics in that it combines the conventional with the innovative and consistently pays close attention to the way the surface of the poem and its typography present a new venue for meaning-formation. Williams is especially fascinated with punctuation, which mark the textual fabric of the poem in the same way as signposts are erected in a landscape: they direct the reader-traveller as they traverse across the surface of the poem-place. Sometimes they ask you to pause for a brief repose (","); other times they demand that you stop and camp for the night (".”). They might flash red and shriek "danger" ("!") , or they might ask you to leap from one spot to the next ("—"). Each of these marks has a tonality of its own and denotes a sometimes subtle (e.g. between semi-colon and comma), sometimes drastic difference in the semantics and mood of utterance.

Most of these mark-signposts do not draw attention to themselves. They are meant to be the handmaid, an auxiliary to the writer and a guide to the readers. However, some marks have more agency than others: the exclamation mark and the dash stand out as two most autonomous marks, ones that do not just play second fiddle to meaning-formation. They complement each other in their formal resemblance to the vertical and horizontal axes. The exclamation mark is the human subject, loud in its proclamation, determined in its desire not to be assimilated into the landscape. It originated from the medieval scriveners' practice of writing *io* (Latin, denoting joy) at the end of a sentence ("Hurray!")—the inextinguishable human (and humanist) expression of delight, one imagines, that accompanies the lines in a sacred text. It is not unimaginable that, at a moment of great excitement and cheerfulness, a certain scrivener would have had a slip of hand and would have written the *i* above the *o*, thus forming the exclamation mark we use today. The dash, on the other hand, retains a degree of self-governance while also being inextricably linked with what goes before it. It is the misty, glimmering horizon beyond the immediately visible landscape, constituting part of the locality, demarcating the boundary between the shadowy and the substantial, beckoning our attention with its promise of abundance behind the screen. (One is reminded of the insatiable ambition of Tennyson's Ulysses to "sail beyond the sunset.")

Fanciful as such exegesis is bound to sound, it points to, I think, the basic human instinct for spatial affective expression even in the most unlikely sites. It is not a far stretch, then, to correlate the inventive use of punctuation marks and the sense of locality in modernist poetry, a mode of expression whose self-appointed mission is to invent a new heaven and earth for poetic inscription. Punctuation punctuates the physical, metaphorical, and interactive space of the page and rearranges it in a time-

space entity in the same way in which a chronotope constellates the times and spaces of the represented, but also of writing and reading the represented, William Carlos Williams has presented himself as an ideal candidate for my investigation of this juncture because he is one of the poets most conscious about the alignment of "the *form* [sic] and the gist"[2] and most insistent on the validity of poetic examination of the local, or regional, "gist" in the US culture. In his two letters to Horace Gregory, written in May 1944 as his response to T. S. Eliot's high-minded "Notes Towards a Definition of Culture,"[3] Williams stressed, in opposition to Eliot, the importance of "the provinces," the local from which the flow of good poetry should stream: "The flow must originate from the local to the general as a river to the sea and then back to the local from the sea in rain."[4] Although Eliot and Williams share a similar definition of culture as the whole expression of the whole people (hence trying to purge the connotation of highbrow art from definition of culture), what is different in Eliot's stance is his insistence that a meritocratic governing body must impose a conscious management from above in all arenas of life: arts, sciences, religion, philosophy and government. Williams writes in an essay "Importance of Place" collected in *Embodiment of Knowledge* that "before knowledge begins it must be placed" and "there is a place, anterior to all philosophical, aesthetic, or scientific arguments actively. It is the basis upon which all rests."[5] Hence, place for Williams is both actual locality and a literary trope, an objectification for pre-rational understanding, from

[2] William Carlos Williams, *The Selected Letters of William Carlos Williams*, ed. John C. Thirlwall (New York: New Directions, 1957), 227.
[3] Eliot's treatise first appeared in *The New English Weekly* in 1943, and was then republished in *Partisan Review* in early May, 1944. In the essay, Eliot sets out his critique of postwar Europe and a defense of conservatism and Christianity. See T. S. Eliot, *Notes Towards a Definition of Culture* (London: Faber & Faber, 1948).
[4] Ibid., 225.
[5] William Carlos Williams, "Importance of Place," *Embodiment of Knowledge* (New York: New Direction Publishing, 1974), 132.

which systematic knowledge stems. Although Williams conventionally compares the poetic inspiration to "the flow," what is unique about his statement is that there is a bilateral influence between poetry and locality: it draws its nourishment from the local soil before it advances any claim of universality; as the river flows into the sea, its former shape and contour lost in the wide expanse of waters, it ultimately gives back to its native soil in the form of rain—a re-arrangement of elements through poetic expression. Here, the local placedness emerges as both the provenance and the ultimate destination of poetry. This orientation is coupled in Williams's thought by a commitment to poetic exploration, a fluid endeavour in itself. Another persistent thread in his letters is his avowal that "our chief occupation as artists […] should be the clarification of form, new alignments, in our own language and culture."[6] It is only natural that Williams's dual concern with locality *and* form would manifest itself in his use of typographical inventiveness to represent an American sense of place as an anchor of post-war collective belonging.

The last trend in Williams's thought emerged in direct interaction with, indeed in opposition to, Eliot's poetics of space, and it was first articulated in William Carlos Williams's 1923 *Spring and All*, a volume of prose and poetry that came into being as a response to T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Although both Williams and Eliot are concerned with a poetics of place, their positions in many ways form interesting counterpoints. The latter merits a closer look, not only for the purpose of comparison but also, and primarily so in this chapter, to tease out Williams's "Americanism". My use of this term here is informed by the circumstance that Williams's poetry stays faithful to the locality of America (as opposed to the more European character of Eliot's poetry), but it also self-consciously tries to capture the American vernacular

[6] Ibid., 226.

(whereas Eliot pursues a more classically-inflected diction). It is not surprising, then, that, throughout his literary career, Williams openly acknowledges his discontent with the way Eliot is (supposedly) contaminating modern poetry. In his *Autobiography*, he writes: "I felt at once that *The Waste Land* had set me back twenty years and I'm sure it did. Critically, Eliot returned us to the classroom just at the moment when I felt we were on a point to escape to matters much closer to the essence of a new art form itself—*rooted in the locality* which should give it fruit"[7] (italics mine). Indeed, Williams could be seen as the antidote to the foreign languages, arcane references and footnotes that abound in Eliot's poetry. Many Williams scholars (Conarroe, Koch, Lloyd) have pointed out how *Paterson*, Williams's five-book epic poem about the city of Paterson, New Jersey, has had the status of a "detailed reply" to the Eliot strand of modern poetry, from its very inception.[8] However, it would be reductionist to argue that Williams is only an American localist while Eliot is the cosmopolitan expatriate (a view that I have also challenged in the previous chapter). Specifically, Williams does not simply try to re-produce the American scene in *Paterson*. The city of Paterson might be his provenance, yet his primary goal is to "make a start/ out of the particulars/ and make them general" and to return and inscribe his intervention in the very place it originated from.[9] The vision of making a material place and its inhabiting "particulars" into a poetic reality of their own—a defining task of poetry, according to Williams—has to be realized, though, within a specific region with its vernacular culture.

[7] William Carlos Williams, *Autobiography* (New York: New Directions Books, 1951), 174.
[8] See Joel Conarroe, *William Carlos Williams' Paterson: Language and Landscape* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970). Vivienne Koch, *William Carlos Williams* (New York: New Directions Books, 1950). Also, Margaret Glynne Lloyd, *William Carlos Williams's Paterson: A Critical Reappraisal* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1980).
[9] William Carlos Williams, *Paterson* (New York: New Directions, 1963), 3. Henceforth *P*. All subsequent quotations and page numbers refer to this edition.

2.1 A Poetics of Localism: *Paterson* and Paterson

How, then, does Williams envision and articulate a sense of collective belonging through a poetics of place? If Eliot is intent upon remaking the structure of feeling that place engenders and the subjects that pass through the place, Williams suggests instead that these two are one—that a man in himself is a city, amalgamating all aspects of life within its bound:

> *Paterson* is a long poem in four parts—that a man in himself is a city, beginning, seeking, achieving and concluding his life in ways *which the various aspects of a city may embody*—if imaginatively conceived—any city, all the details of which may be made *to voice his most intimate convictions*.[10] [Italics mine]
>
> —"Author's Note," *Paterson*

As this "Author's Note" makes abundantly clear, Williams's notion of the inner correspondence between the man and the city is a distinctively modern one. Whether or not Williams's extended metaphor actually holds, his focus is palpable: it is the man—supposedly the poetic voice of Williams—who finds the equivalents of his faculties in the "various aspects" of the city which proffer the emotional and intellectual contours for "his most intimate convictions." Williams's conception of the man-city union should be compared and contrasted with his rough contemporary Georg Simmel's influential study "Metropolis and the Mental Life," which suggested that the metropolis, as a social unit, presents itself as the site of great inner and outer freedom for individuals and that it effectively reshapes the human. The qualitative and

[10] William Carlos Williams, "Author's Note," *Paterson* (New York: New Directions Books, 1963).

quantitative explosion in value, energy, and sheer nervous stimulation in the city means that the objective culture, money economy (or in Marxist term, the material infrastructure) rules over the subjective (the individual spirit) so much so that the collective spirit (*Geist*) is only "followed imperfectly and with an even greater lag by the intellectual development of the individual."[11] The individual is forced to develop one "organ" – the brain – at the expense of all others, including the "heart." What Williams is doing in *Paterson* seems to be the exact opposite: the mental and intellectual life of the individual is embodied (but not limited) by the city, which is not necessarily its originary site. The relationship between the individual and the city is thus symbiotic rather than hierarchical, as one described by Simmel. But there is an even more important difference: Williams expressly refused to write a poem about a metropolis (New York City, he says, wouldn't do it), as well as writing about a village. He wanted to zoom in on a provincial locality, a medium-sized industrial city like Paterson, thereby inserting an interesting corrective to what could be seen as a relatively simplistic binary between the countryside and the metropolis in Simmel and a huge range of other thinkers of the time.

Williams's insistence on localist Americanism, therefore, posits his poetic dictum against the ailments of metropolitan life that over-determine the individual spirit and the flow of material goods and human capital that sustains the system, which proves too complicated to comprehend. Countering this ungraspable metropolitan reality, Williams's localism seeks to restore the individual's capability to understand and transform the modern life-world they are living in. To Williams, Eric B. White has argued, the local offers "the dynamic crucible of experience," a totality

[11] Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," *The Blackwell City Reader*, eds. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), 18.

nearest at hand to test poetic conception's relevance to modern life.[12] Insofar as this is true, Williams's thinking finds confluence with John Dewey's pragmatism. The latter's guiding principle requires finding a concentrated sphere of activity (which one can understand in spatial terms, too) to test philosophical hypotheses. Williams quoted Dewey's mantra "the local is the only universal" to justify his own poetics in his *Autobiography*:

> I wanted, if I was to write in a larger way than of birds and flowers, to write about the people close about me: to know in detail, minutely what I was talking about—to the whites of their eyes, to their very smells.
>
> That is the poet's business. Not to talk in vague categories but to write particularly, as a physician works, upon a patient, upon the thing before him, in the particular to discover the universal. John Dewey had said (I discovered it quite by chance), "The local is the only universal, upon that all art builds."[13]

In this short excerpt, Williams compares the poetic vocation with that of a physician—his daytime job—and likens the locality which the poet sets out in writing to the patient that the physician operates on—"the *thing* before him." Thus he turns the centrifugal, unknowable life-world into a graspable totality, an object of scrutiny. Williams is following closely the line of thinking in Dewey's "Americanism and Localism" in which Dewey states that the vast country of the United States of America must be examined in the form of "a spread of localities", "a loose collection

[12] Eric B.White, "William Carlos Williams and the Local," *The Cambridge Companion to William Carlos Williams*, ed. Christopher MacGowan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 8.
[13] William Carlos Williams, *Autobiography* (New York: New Directions Books, 1951), 391.

of houses, of streets, of neighbourhoods, villages, farms, towns."[14] Such a vision speaks to Williams at multiple levels, political and poetic. Against the institutional/state force that imposes a monolithic national identity and commands loyalty to an abstract collective entity, Williams proposes to start small, to adopt a bottom-up approach and use Paterson the city as a microcosm of the nation.

For all these reasons, the selection of locale for the setting of Williams's epic poem is particularly important. The city of Paterson is a particularly apt subject for Williams's poetic re-imagining of the visible. In terms of size, geographical location, and representational "value", the city of Paterson is a convenient middle point between Williams's hometown Rutherford, and the big metropolis like New York. Williams dismisses Rutherford as being "not distinguished enough for my purpose" and rejects New York as "not local enough, not individual enough"; New York, he writes, "belongs to the world."[15] Paterson is distinguished by being America's first planned industrial city, but, long before, it had been the homeland of the Lenni Lenape Indians, and it played host to the Dutch settlers. A particularly important figure in the history of Paterson was Alexander Hamilton, a leader in the Industrial Revolution, the first treasurer of the United States and president of the Bank of New York at the end of the eighteenth century. Driven by the desire to free America from its dependence upon foreign goods, Hamilton established a "New National Manufactory", an institution whose aim was to boost America's domestic manufacturing capability by providing the articles of prime necessity, for instance, cotton goods. For him, "not only the wealth but the independence and security of a

[14] John Dewey, "Americanism and Localism," *The Middle Works: 1899-1924 XII* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), 13.
[15] Margaret Glynn Lloyd, *William Carlos Williams's Paterson: A Critical Reappraisal* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1980), 55-56.

country, appear to be materially connected with the prosperity of manufacturers."[16]It was Hamilton who helped the founding of the Society for Establishing Useful Manufacturers in 1791, the organisation which chose the Great Falls as its site, and set out to develop the first planned industrial city in the US around the settlement of Paterson. The latter became the beacon of the American industrial revolution. The industries in Paterson, producing train engines, paper, revolvers, and silk, were all powered by the hydraulic power of 77-foot high Great Falls—a might natural energy resource whose power inspired the image of the watery giants in Book 1 of *Paterson*, "The Delineaments of the Giants". By 1825 Paterson had gained itself a reputation of being "the cotton town of the United States" and in the latter half of the 19th century, its silk production became dominant enough in the city to earn itself another epithet as the nation's "Silk City", attracting Irish, Germans, Italians, and Russians to its textile mills. With the mixed working class population, at the turn of the century, the town also became known as a seed for labour struggles, community galvanizing, minority protests, and industrial actions.[17] In terms of its local governance, David Russo notes that "after World War II it was quite clear that by itself town government could not serve the needs of the people within its jurisdiction. Thus many of the functions of local governments were gradually assumed by county, state, and federal government."[18] Paterson, too, suffered a slow decline in economic self-sufficiency in the early twentieth century, and became, like many US small towns, unable to contain within its bounds its institutional sovereignty. Hence it became both a reality and a myth, a material ripe for poetic treatment. With this history of exceptional natural

[16] Alexander Hamilton, qtd. in Marcia Dente, *Paterson Great Falls: From Local Landmark to National Historical Park* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2012), 20.
[17] On the history of these, with a focus on one of the most significant such events, see Steve Golin, *The Fragile Bridge: Paterson Silk Strike* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988).
[18] David J. Russo, *American Towns: An Interpretative History* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 112.

resource, industrial innovation, hard work, and immigration, Paterson presented itself to Williams as the microcosm of the United States, with its diverse and powerful nature, international character and continuous expansion of industry.

Although *Paterson* has a palpable New Jersey landscape behind it, the epic poem is polyphonic in voice and it juxtaposes historical documents, newspaper accounts, geological surveys, literary texts, and personal letters, all montaged together, thus yielding a structure that resembles a cubist painting of, for example, one Juan Gris (whom Williams particularly admired). For an encyclopaediac poem that mobilizes such a rich reservoir of resources, *Paterson* had a long inception and even longer fruition. Its origin was the 1927 version of 85-line verse entitled "Paterson" which won the Dial Award the same year. It was here that Williams's famous mantra "no ideas but things" first appeared, signalling his fundamental break with the erudite, learned strand in modernist poetry: Williams wants no metaphysics, no philosophizing, but the very "thingness" of things, the objects that can be visualized, cemented in images. Not insignificantly, the 1927 poem was inspired by Williams's reading of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, a text which, while parading extreme, indeed arcane, erudition, grounds itself not in spiritualised metaphors but in materiality, in the "thingness" of things. The Joycean seed for Paterson is also palpable in the decision to zoom in on the (issues) of a specific place, and to create, out of the innumerable objects and bodies of its material world, a new reality. In short, Williams wanted to do for Paterson, New Jersey, what Joyce had done for Dublin, Ireland. Such a project necessitated expansion. As the work on the longer poem progressed, Williams became aware that he was also situating himself in the tradition of modernist long poems such as Eliot's *The Waste Land*, *Four Quartets*, or Pound's *The Cantos* and Hart Crane's *The Bridge*. In the long decades leading up to the final

publication of Book 1 of *Paterson* in 1946, Williams always had this idea of writing *the* poem—"the single work which would gather together and articulate all the environments of his world."[19] Poems leading up to the ultimate five-book version include "Life along the Passaic River" (1933), "Paterson, Episode 17" (1937) and "Morning" (1938). Books 1—4 were published in 1946, 1948, 1949 and 1951, respectively. Then there was a long hiatus until the publication of Book 5 in 1958. Williams began composing another book but soon abandoned the idea due to his severely declining health in 1961, and only a few fragments of Book 6 remained after his death in 1963. Book 5 in particular had a rather difficult birth: its early conception dates as far back as 1950. Williams himself vacillated between conviction of its necessity and qualms about its quality and the damage it would do to the integrity of the previous four books—so much so that he felt he needed to insert an almost apologetic note before the proper text, explaining that he had to "take the world of *Paterson* into a new dimension if [he] wanted to give it imaginative validity," and that he hoped he had kept "a unity directly continuous with the *Paterson* of Pat. 1 to 4." (*P*. vii) Immediately after its publication in 1958 he became decidedly dissatisfied with it. In a general state of physical decline (he was 74 and suffered a series of strokes) and mental depression, he writes that "I had to say what I wanted but the results is [that] the text turned out rather forbidding."[20]

Williams was clairvoyant in his self-criticism. *Paterson* does have irresolvable inherent tension that cannot be explained away by its complex composition history. Williams is never just a home-grown Americanist: he is thoroughly cosmopolitan,

[19] James Guimond, *The Art of William Carlos Williams: A Discovery and Possession of America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1968), 153.
[20] William Carlos Williams, qtd. in Paul Mariani, *William Carlos Williams: A New World Naked* (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 1981), 720.

although his influence is more French than British, and more French painting than French poetry. What is Williams's deepest concern? Is it the real Paterson, the city lying within the curves shaped by the Passaic River and bounded by Garrett Mountain that Williams is truly concerned with, or is it more the potentials that this symbolic American industrial town holds for inspiring an American vernacular poetics? Many critics have pointed out the purported failure of *Paterson* in that it stretches the man-city metaphor/allegory/analogy too far: David. R. Weimer wrote in 1966 that "[h]is notion of a city that is seeking and achieving somehow failed to grow into a sustained or persuasive structure for the poem. It seems to have served Williams as an inspirational source, but as an operative idea in the various books [of the poem] it is almost an excrescence."[21] Ian Hamilton, a British literary critic reviewing for *Times Literary Supplement* in 1967, points out what he sees as the limitation of *Paterson*, remarking that "its locale is selected not because it offers an urban complex which is representative of modern America but rather because Williams felt it to have an 'important colonial history' it invited further excavations in the American grain."[22] (Hamilton's comment is worth highlighting here because Hamilton, who grew up in Norfolk with Scottish parents and attended college at Oxford, seemed confident that he had a good idea what is "representative" of modern America, and deemed the city of Paterson ineligible for that ideal.) While acknowledging the validity of these criticisms, I would like to supplement them in the following pages with a further exploration of the inherent paradox of Williams's small-scale, knowable world as a site of home-grown literary invention, and to find value in, precisely, the paradoxes of

[21] David R. Weimer, qtd. in Margaret Glynn Lloyd, *William Carlos Williams's Paterson: A Critical Reappraisal* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1980), 53.
[22] Ian Hamilton, qtd. in Margaret Glynn Lloyd, *William Carlos Williams's Paterson: A Critical Reappraisal* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1980), 53.

his expression—the paradoxes that I find also contained, visually, in his use of punctuation.

2.2 "To Make a Start": On Place-Particulars and Space-Universals

To begin with, then, we need to look at Williams's literary manifesto—the opening pages of *Paterson,* where he sets out his master plan for his epic. In the Preface to Book 1 of *Paterson,* the poet speaks of a quest for a kind of inflexible beauty, one of the verities which demands expression: it cannot simply be "locked in the mind" as Williams questions that "[r]igor of beauty is the quest. But how will you find beauty when it is locked in the mind past all remonstrance?" (*P*, 1). On the other hand, it also signals that the emphasis of the epic poem is aesthetic and linguistic at once, hence the search for the perfect language then becomes inevitable. The rhetorical question in prose is answered by the ensuing verse with an infinitive verb phrase, indicating a resolution as well as an uncompleted action:

> To make a start,
>
> out of particulars
>
> and make them general, rolling
>
> up the sum, by defective means—
>
> Sniffing the trees,
>
> just another dog
>
> among a lot of dogs. What
>
> else is there? And to do?
>
> The rest have run out—

after the rabbits.

Only the lame stands—on

three legs. Scratch front and back.

Deceive and eat. Dig

a musty bone.

(*P*, 11)

Williams's self-appointed mission, then, is to reach a certain universalism through reinvigorated poetic language as well as rediscovered particularities of place; this universalism then feed back to the locality in a re-orchestrated form. As soon as this quest is set down in prose, Williams begins this quest in verse. The sudden transit from prose to verse indeed is "start[ling]." The poet proposes to investigate, like a dog sniffing about its immediate surroundings, the "particulars" that would add up (note that the mathematical metaphor is going to recur throughout the section) to "the sum" that is the human condition. The metaphor of sniffing is not accidentally introduced here. Williams avowedly had a penchant for sensing the odour/fragrance of the environment and the people in it as a way to engage with the lived world; he commented once: "I wanted, if I was to write in a larger way than of birds and flowers, to write about the people close about me: to know in detail, minutely what I was talking about—to the whites of their eyes, to their very smells." [23]

The poet is determined to make the best out of this "sniffing". Self-deprecatingly, he describes his tools as the "defective means", referring to both language, the faulty medium for thought, and to the poet's imperfect mastery of said language (probably

[23] William Carlos Williams, *Autobiography* (New York: New Directions Books, 1951), 391.

his American vernacular). This is a very typical conundrum in literary modernism: the simultaneous faith and doubt in the signifying potency of language. The long dash after "defective means" introduces a reiteration of the previous lines in *concrete images*: as previously discussed, the lame dog seems to be the avatar of Williams who stayed behind whereas Pound and Eliot went away. In likening his excavation of the American heritage to a lame dog digging up a musty bone, not only is a note of humility sustained throughout, but—as I have suggested before—a subtle message is sent to T. S. Eliot who admonishes against the exhumation of buried corpses in the garden in *The Waste Land*. We *should* exhume and discover objects and bodies, and do so in our own garden, Williams suggests. The self-deprecatory image of a three-legged lame that must "deceive and eat" thus veils a strong and confident poetic voice; material and strikingly corporeal, and it signals the precise length of difference between Eliot's and Williams's poetics. The orientation towards the "musty bone" towards which these lines hurl is also the orientation of Williams's work as a whole. Williams intends *Paterson* to be "[a] reply to Greek and Latin with the bare hands," (*P*, 11) although it is palpable that he is masquerading here since he knew his "Greek and Latin" well enough through his privileged education, and his comfortable social position as a family doctor was really anything but a life earned by "the bare hands".

The poem proceeds by invoking an image familiar from Williams's "The Rose":

> For the beginning is assuredly
>
> the end—since we know nothing, pure
>
> and simple, beyond
>
> our own complexities.
>
> (*P*, 11-12)

Vivienne Koch comments upon the similarities between these lines and the opening lines of "East Coker" ("In my beginning is my end"), saying that "the clause 'since we know nothing' reverses the philosophical implications of the assertion that 'the beginning is assuredly the end' and reduces it to an ironical tautology."[24] Joel Conarroe also speaks of the conscious echoing of Eliot's "East Coker" in the rejected lines of this section.[25] The lines, however, also echo, most directly, Williams's own 1923 poem with which I have opened this chapter. However, there is little of Eliot's ever self-renewing life cycles in Williams, and no epistemological growth whatsoever. Here the beginning is the end not in the sense that we have come to a full circle with a heightened awareness of our being in history, but because we cannot know anything with the same amount of certainty as we do about our immediate environs.

Yet there is

no return: rolling up out of chaos,

a nine months' wonder, the city

the man, an identity—it can't be

otherwise—an

interpenetration, both ways. Rolling

up! obverse, reverse;

the drunk the sober; the illustrious

the gross; one. In ignorance

a certain knowledge and knowledge,

[24] Vivienne Koch, *William Carlos Williams* (New York: New Direction Books, 1950), 118.
[25] Joe Conarroe, *William Carlos Williams' Paterson: Language and Landscape* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 10.

undispersed, its own undoing.

(*P*, 12)

As I have suggested in the previous section, there is a distinctly modern(ist) sentiment in aligning the man with the city. Williams seems to be also indicating that the reactionary and conservative stance is unfeasible: we are already fully immersed in the modern world. Whether we like it or not, "there is/no return." One of signs of urban modernity is, precisely, the mutual identification between the city and man, and this relationship is primarily spatial, juxtapositional (just like a cubist collage) as opposed to temporal (chronological, or even cyclical). We cannot return to our beginnings, but can only fare forward, from the primordial chaos to our own birth ("a nine months' wonder") into an identity; The identity in question is not individual; rather, it is one that is collectively shared, uniting polarities.[26] The dash inserted between "the city/the man, an identity" and "an/interpenetration" performs the exact act of intersection and interpenetration as it breaks up conventional syntax and fragments sentence structure. Thus the drunk and the sober are one, and so are the illustrious and the gross. This dash paves way for the collective persona of Paterson the man to appear in the last line of the section. The use of "a certain knowledge and knowledge" is not mere tautology: Williams is saying that both a specialized "certain knowledge" (closer to expertise) and the knowledge of the human condition lies "undispersed" (with sexual overtone), and communication becomes blocked as its consequence. Williams's refutation of erudition is palpable: it is the very fact that the institutions of knowledge are hoarding it like a miser, subsuming art under myth-

[26] "Identity" carries the connotation of "sameness" in its etymology.

making metaphysics, which Williams castigates; he calls this wasteful accumulation of knowledge "the prime intellectual offense of my day."[27]

.....

and the craft,

subverted by thought, rolling up, let

him beware lest he turn to no more than

the writing of stale poems...

Minds like beds always made up,

(more stony than a store)

unwilling or unable.

(*P*, 12-13)

Symbols of frozen fertility appear in the wake of such intellectual stasis. The multiple seed that is packed tight with details is "lost in the flux and the mind", and the beds, employed as a simile of the mind with a strong suggestion of marriage and sexual intercourse (extensive to any procreative activity), remain unused and unruffled. Such minds are incapable of intellectual procreation but merely churn out "stale poems" that reek of pedantry and erudition. The antidote to this sterile practice would be a true marriage between art and the common life, captured by the American vernacular:

Rolling in, top up,

under, thrust and recoil, a great clatter:

[27] William Carlos Williams, *The Selected Letters of William Carlos Williams*, ed. John C. Thirlwall (New York: New Direction Books, 1957), 239.

lifted as air, boated, multicolored, a

wash of seas—

from mathematics to particulars—

divided as the dew,

floating mists, to be rained down and

regathered into a river that flows

and encircles:

shells and animalcules

generally and so to man,

to Paterson.

(*P*, 13)

After the denouncement of the unfructified scholarship, frozen in its abstract learning, Williams turns to the natural scene, this time suggestive of a creative birth. To foster this spectrum of meanings, Williams uses a quasi-mythological motif of the procreator seas cast in evolutionary light: the mention of a stony shore in the previous section leads naturally to the waves coming in from the sea, rolling upon each other, thrusting, recoiling, being lifted, evaporating, falling, being re-gathered as water drops into a river, providing habitats for "shells and animalcules", the simplest form of life that will evolve into more complex beings such as man, and to Paterson the man-city.

The proliferation of place details is matched again by the use of the dash ("a/wash of seas—/from mathematics to particulars—"), this time placed at the end of the line indicating continuousness and the rich infinity of particulars in the same way the majestic river is "divided" into infinitesimal particles.

Therefore, the preface ends with a section in which a whole issues out of division and multiplicity. This vision is in concord with Williams's statement in "The American Background" that

> [Culture] is the realization of the qualities of a place in relation to the life which occupies it; embracing everything involved, climate, geographic position, relative size, history, other cultures—as well as the character of its sands, flowers, and the condition of knowledge with its borders. *It is the act of lifting these things into an ordered and utilized whole which is culture*.[28] (Italics mine)

To produce a cultural artefact, then, means to realize (rather than mimic, or directly represent) the qualities of a geocultural site, in themselves created through and only through "life" that takes place in it. Williams's totalizing predilection is unmistakable. His conceptualization of culture is premised on the synthesizing of the sociological and natural elements of a particular locality into an *ordered* (if interiorly diversified) whole. Importantly, though, this whole can only come into being as a realization of those social practices that constitute a locale as an active site. Such conception finds resonance with Michel de Certeau's notion of collective and individual social practices, which, taken as a whole, transform mere place into a space

[28] William Carlos Williams, *Selected Essays of William Carlos Williams* (New York: New Directions, 1969), 157.

of activity, or a field of action.[29] In De Certeau's definition, place is the empty grid over which practice occurs while space is what is created by practice in place. This goes against accepted definition of place and space in spatial studies: the conventional definition of space is that of the empty void whereas place is the lived locus of experience. Such a view would benefit from a contextualization from another important concept in place theory proposed by postmodern geographer Edward Soja—thirdspace as the lived, practiced and humanized place, "a simultaneously real-and-imagined, actual-and-virtual locus of structured individuality and collective experience and agency."[30] Soja's concept builds largely on Lefebvre's theory of place as a space structured by human activity. Soja develops Lefebvre's dualism: space is first conceptualized rationally into place, which is then represented by art, advertisement or other medium. Thirdspace combines the two, signaling the simultaneous existence of reality, spatial mapping of reality and artistic representation of the spatial mapping in any given moment of living experience. Hence in contrast with dead and arcane space which is an artifice only observable from the vantage point in which particulars disappear, thirdspace is the active space of hope and change, produced by many and diverse particular actions in space that amount to a collective action. Williams expresses similar views in two important essays: in "The Importance of Place", Williams cautions against mere inheritance of a place (as in a case of an aristocrat inheriting a land) because only a man who has "worked" or seen from a position of place purely, i.e. from lived experience, can be said to have an emplaced understanding. If then a commoner could feel a sense of community from

[29] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 126. In de Certeau's definition, place is the empty grid over which practice occurs while space is what is created by practice in place. This goes against accepted definition of place and space in spatial studies: the conventional definition of space is that of the empty void whereas place is the lived locus of experience.

[30] Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996), 11.

this emplaced understanding, he is a true democratic.[31] Moving from this sociological observation, Williams then calls for poetic action in "The Poem as a Field of Action" where he advocates "sweeping changes from top to bottom of the poetic structure[…]to liberate the possibilities of depicting reality in a modern world."[32] Williams's conception of poetry as a field of action finds concord with Soja's idea of thirdspace which is a space for radical change made possible by diverse lived particulars—hence poetry is not merely mimesis but partakes actively as a field that both depicts and influence reality. Culture is forever in the making, and it is tied to the inherent characteristics of a place, previously latent but brought into coherence by the hands of the poet.

To produce a genuinely progressive artefact is not an easy task, though. The preface to *Paterson* paints a bleak and apocalyptic of the contemporary world: in particular, Williams zooms in on the great "divorce" between sexes and regards it as paradigmatic of the failed communication of conventional language. Hence, Williams's self-appointed mission must be two-fold. Communication and human connectedness could be made possible again only through a struggle to achieve a truly re-invigorated language. In turn, such language would be expressive of the natural human connection not only between sexes, but also in communities, and between communities and the locality to which they give life.

It is worth noting at this point Williams's repeated reference to "things": Williams seems to conceive things, the material being of objects, as the minimum component of the organic whole he calls "culture." For non-specialist readers,

[31] William Carlos Williams, *Selected Essays of William Carlos Williams* (New York: New Directions, 1969), 134.
[32] Ibid., 281, 284.

Williams is perhaps best known, besides being the author of "The Red Wheelbarrow", for his quasi-Imagist mantra "No ideas but things" which first appeared in the 1927 poem "Paterson." Williams's obsession with things and objects is, however, evident even in his earliest works: in *Spring and All*, published in 1923, Williams declares that "the artist is … A CREATIVE FORCE AT WORK MAKING OBJECTS."[33] [sic] The last statement implies a bidirectional inward-outward movement: the artist "makes" things, or objects, and yet these objects exist in the external world and command themselves to the poet for poetic metabolism. If Williams's commitments to both a poetics of locality and a poetics of thingness is consistent throughout his life, one must ask: how do these two commitments relate to each other? How are they manifested in Williams's poems, especially in *Paterson* which is the focus of this chapter? My answer is that the two commitments work in tandem with each other to counteract the internationalism and subjectivism of the mainstream modernists. The first point I have discussed in the beginning of the section, the second point I wish to elaborate further: *Paterson* is filled with natural and man-made objects "locally sourced" to the extent that it almost becomes an encyclopaedia, and Williams's scrutiny of objects and their thingness tries to re-direct modernism's attention from the exploration of consciousness and subjectivity to what Bill Brown described as "an inquiry into the fate of the object world, an account of how objects produce subjects, and an effort to encounter or effect a kind of thingness."[34] Modernism's relation with things is decidedly fretted: not only were things perceived as alienated from their producers and devoid of their "aura" in a mass-produced consumer society of high capitalism, but they were also deprived of their "thingness", abstracted into symbols

[33] William Carlos Williams, *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams, Vol. 1: 1909-1939* (New York: New Directions, 1991), 199.
[34] Bill Brown, "Materialities of Modernism: Objects, Matter, Thing," *A Handbook of Modernism Studies*. ed. Jean-Michel Rabate (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 282.

in the hands of poets such as Eliot and Yeats through French influence. Imagists, with whom Williams tended to associate himself in the beginning, wanted "direct treatment of the thing" without extraneous ornamentation and metaphysical investment.[35] And one contemporary scholar, Victor Shklovsky, professed a vision both profoundly similar and unlike Williams's, when he suggested that "art exists [so] that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony".[36] The last pronouncement served a rallying call for the Russian Formalists to pursue an autotelic literary inquiry into the literary devices (e.g., defamiliarisation) rather than the external world; yet this vision of the mandate to recover the sensation of life, or the relationship between the subject and the world, by accentuating stoniness of stones and creating, in literary text, a stone all its own, is also curiously compatible with Williams's poetics.

Williams does not aspire merely to present a world cluttered and filled with objects; his concerns are less about objects in themselves than they are about how to re-configure the subject-object relation which is much troubled in modernity and which manifests itself as a symptom in modernist poetry. Zachariah Pickard notes that "the more one looks at Williams's poetics, with its emphasis on voice and *the poem as an object*…the less interested…in real objects he appears."[37] [Italics mine] In fact, Williams himself speaks of poetry as "new form dealt with as a reality in itself."[38] Pickard's comment is insightful in that the crucial difference of Williams's poetics from one of verisimilitude is that language and concomitantly text as linguistic

[35] Williams was included in the anthology *Des Imagistes*, edited by Pound and published in 1914, alongside with figures such as Richard Aldington, James Joyce and H. D.
[36] Victor Shklovsky, "Art as Device," *Theory of Prose*, trans. Benjamn Sher (McLean: Dalkey Archive Press, 1993), 13.
[37] Zachariah Pickard, "William Carlos Williams, Description, and the Avant-Garde," *American Literary History*, v. 22, no.1 (Spring 2010), 85.
[38] William Carlos Williams, *Spring and All* (New York: New Directions, 2011), 133.

construction for Williams also have a dimension of objecthood and materiality. It is not surprising, then, that typography became central in Williams's conception of poem as an object. Williams's innovative punctuations, as we shall see in the next section, are in line with what Bill Brown terms as one strand of literary modernism's insistence "to dramatize the thingness of things [… through] the design of books and journals as objects […] or the effort to insist on the material presence of language itself."[39] Hence locality, objecthood and typography form the triad of Williams's poetics, with the following functions: locality as a small knowable world, a receptacle that offers emplacement to the various things found within its bound, objecthood which is not over-determined by consumer culture or metaphysical investment but holds an interiority that negotiates ideas, physicality, and a community's life, and finally typography in the form of unusual stanzaic arrangements, idiosyncratic line breaks and innovative punctuations. In the next section, I shall cast this inquiry from the focal point of the last of these components, often neglected in scholarship: I will focus more specifically on Williams's innovative use of the exclamation mark and the dash to relay an affect of place and its historicity.

2.3 Punctuation, Localized and Objectified: the Case of the Exclamation Mark and the Dash in *Paterson*

Punctuation does not normally draw attention to itself. When it does, it is usually startling: it immediately returns our depth-seeking gaze back to the surface of the text, making the physicality of the medium felt and raising our awareness of the text as a linguistic "thing" which has an existence independent of its semantics. *Paterson*'s unconventional punctuation are no exception: the text teems with rebellious

[39] Bill Brown, "Materialities of Modernism: Objects, Matter, Thing," *A Handbook of Modernism Studies*. ed. Jean-Michel Rabate (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2013), 293.

exclamations, flying dashes, dangling colons and proliferating periods. They constantly jolt the readers awake and out of their inert reading habits, making them negotiate in each instance whether such unconventionality is justified or simply whimsical. In other words, they try to exert formative influence on the reading subject that the habituated usage of punctuation cannot do. "Habitualization", writes Shklovsky, "devours work, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war".[40] To battle it, and to "recover the sensation of life", the writer must defamiliarize the representational and (para)linguistic objects and constellations, using the tools in unpredicted and emphatic ways, laying bare, or accentuating, the artistic device itself. Such is precisely the politics and poetics of Williams's unconventional punctuation: we are made to look *at* instead of *through* the text to mine for meaning. Through unconventional use of punctuation, the text rises above the mere mimetic and the representational—it gains materiality and the status of an authentic object. In the case of *Paterson*, punctuation co-exists with *Paterson*'s other idiosyncratic typographies and esoteric source materials; the poetic text then becomes a receptacle of these assorted "things." Unlike Williams's compatriot and fellow modernist Wallace Stevens's "jar" which is put on shrine as a sacred object for aesthetic worship (see Stevens's "Anecdote of the Jar"), Williams's "things" are ready-made everyday "things" artistically reconstellated so that their relations with the life-world—not the world of art—are reaffirmed. Their "thingness" then spreads to the very paralinguistic devices that constellate them. Two of the punctuation marks—the exclamation mark and the dash—come closest to the status of objecthood: the former embodies reified emotion (as discussed in the introduction of the chapter) while the latter objectifies

[40] Victor Shklovsky, "Art as Device", *Theory of Prose*, trans. Benjamn Sher (McLean: Dalkey Archive Press, 1993), 13.

connection and association. This section explores what these two reified punctuation marks mean for *Paterson*'s localist discourse and its poetics/politics of place.

When reading *Paterson*, one gets an impression that Williams is not speaking, but *sounding* his Whitmansque "barbaric yawp"[41] through the pages of his epic poem; the sheer number of exclamation marks testifies to this point. In his critical assessment of *Paterson*, Fredric Jameson wittily remarks that "we need, incidentally, not merely a study of Williams's punctuation.....but more importantly some disquisition on the philosophy of the exclamation point in Williams".[42] Jameson's statement might seem paradoxical: among the cohort of punctuation marks, the exclamation point is hardly the blue blood. Known as an *exclam*, a *bang* or a *screamer*, it is, in fact, more often abused and maligned as the spoiler of taste. Its purported emphatic and hyperbolic nature as well as its vulgarity connotations constantly come under fire by purists with scorns like " 'less is more' rings true in the case of exclamation marks...[F]orming a small army of exclamation marks to attack your reader with excruciating force is entirely unnecessary."[43] However, Jameson's half-joking, half-serious remark indicates that it is more than simple sarcasm to say that Williams's exclamation points need some "disquisition" to explicate the "philosophy" of his text. How, then, are we to take Williams's idiosyncratic typography seriously? Further, how does Williams's "screamers" attest to the importance of locality in *Paterson*?

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[41] "I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable/ I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world." Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself* (New York: Dover Publications, 2001), 54. For Williams's indebtedness to Walt Whitman, see William Carlos Williams, "An Approach to the Poem," *English Institute Essays* (1947) : 50-75.

[42] Fredric Jameson, "The Poetics of Totality," *The Modernist Papers* (London, New York: Verso, 2007), 20.

[43] Jennifer DeVere Brody, *Punctuation: Art, Politics, and Play* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008), 151. Here Brody is parodying the purists rather than voicing her own views.

To answer this question we need to go back to the very beginning of Section 2, Book 1:

> There is no direction. Whither? I
>
> cannot say. I cannot say
>
> More than how. The how (the howl) only
>
> is at my disposal (proposal) : watching—
>
> colder than stone .
>
> (*P*, 28)

Continuing the semantic field of the place-consciousness in the Preface, Book 1 opens with another spatial imperative, or rather, the lack of spatial imperative: there's no direction for the kind of poetry Williams wants to write for America. Neither Eliot nor Pound, the two most prominent American expatriate poets of Williams's time, can be said to represent American vernacular in their poetry. Eliot might have spoken about "purify[ing] the language of the tribe" (T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"), but which tribe (British? English? American?) is he talking about? And is it necessary to "purify" it in the first place rather than finding in the language of the tribe—in its very "contaminated" form—expressive possibilities? Similarly, Williams's lyric subject presents himself as disoriented in a landscape that should have been familiar to him—neither the destination (whither) nor the means (how) is available to him. The repeated note of dejection "I cannot say" here takes on double meaning: "I/ *cannot* say. I cannot *say*." [italics mine] The failed articulation of a way forward in the first refrain prompts a reexamination of the poetic expression in the second—that only *saying* the lines is far from adequate. Parenthesis is normally used to bracket *supplementary* information, however, the phonetic resemblance between "how" and

"howl" destabilizes the hierarchical space inside and outside the parenthesis: Williams seems to be offering both and preferring neither. In addition, in its undecided state, here the poem purposely reads more like a working draft than a finished product, accentuating the process of creation itself. When Williams/Paterson admits that "the howl", resonant of the Whitmansque "yawp" but bereft of its optimism, is the only thing left at his disposal, there is a sense of fatal deprivation born of a drying-up of poetic tools. In fact, Williams is consciously echoing/responding to the barbaric sound of the Whitmansque tradition in American poetry. In an essay published in 1947, just one year after the appearance of the first book of *Paterson*, Williams pointedly remarks that modern American poetry since Whitman has bifurcated into the reactionary and the avant-garde:

> Since Whitman...the poems written in our circumference may be divided into two categories: those that have regressed from his bold stand and reverted to previous standards—with the prestige natural to such a position—or those that have constantly attempted to recombine the elements of a new verse (which he more envisaged than accomplished) into the poems he wanted to compose.[44]

Williams's observation of the dichotomy in modern American poetry is polemic. It is not hard to discern the self-identification in the second strand—the avant-garde, experimental features of *Paterson* resemble an attempt to "recombine the elements of a new verse" and Williams is keenly aware that his experiment is a destiny/destination for American poets who want to write authentic poetry. While Whitman might have not been able to accomplish fully the revolution in language he envisaged, his heirs

[44] William Carlos Williams, "An Approach to the Poem," *English Institute Essays* (1947), 74.

might. In addition, Williams's half-serious self-deprecation suggests, it is more important to *envisage* and continue envisaging this new style than to actually *accomplish* it. (One is reminded of the Beckettian mantra from *Worstward Ho*—"Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better."[45]) Williams thus presents himself as an inheritor of a very specific mandate, the fulfilment of which he must forge, against all the odds, with hard artistic labour.

Williams's alleged vulgarity, then, must be read as an act of masquerade, a carefully prepared riposte to the Poundian/Eliotian genteel tradition, or, as Williams himself says in the headnote—"a reply to the Greek and Latin with bare hands". Williams's place-positionality and its connoted language is, of course, a stratagem. For all his self-proclaimed parochialism, Williams stayed well-connected with the New York cultural scene. He interacted with poets like Wallace Stevens, Mina Loy, Marianne Moore, Robert Creeley and painters such as Marcel Duchamp, Charles Demuth and Alfred Stieglitz. Williams's idiosyncratic use of the exclamation mark objectifies part of this calculated rivalry in the guise of hillbilly provinciality:

Beautiful thing, your

Vulgarity of beauty surpasses all their

Perfections!

Vulgarity surpasses all perfections

—it leaps from a varnish pot and we see

it pass — in flames!

(*P*, 145)

[45] Samuel Beckett, *Worstward Ho* (London: John Calder, 1983), 1.

Here the leitmotif of the poetic text as a "thing" appears again, compounded with an earlier reference to a black woman as "beautiful thing". This particular reference has its genealogy in "Paterson: Episode 17" (1937), an earlier originary poem for *Paterson* the epic. The earlier episodic poem was avowedly inspired by a chance event of Williams's spotting of "a colored girl beating a rug in the yard of the Episcopal rectory in Rutherford"[46] in the summer of 1936 from the window of his attic study, This episode taken from ordinary life scene was then reworked into poetry. "Paterson: Episode 17" opens with a series of instructions: "Beat hell out of it" , "lift the stick" and "drive it down"[47]—as if it came from a stern slave-master overseeing the work of his domestic maid. Besides the palpable sense of superiority, there is also a hint of erotic male gaze in Williams's description of the maid: her "long fingers spread out/among the clear grass prongs", her "caressing body kiss/and kiss again/that holy lawn—" to a point where it becomes synonymous with "sacrament/to a summer's day."[48] Williams then deliberately blends the image of the black maid with another black woman, a victim of gang-rape whom he had been called on to attend to as the doctor. Williams eulogizes this "drunk and bedraggled" woman, beautiful in her "white lace dress" like "the dying swan"[49], horrifically abused first by a gang from Paterson, then another gang from Newark. By the end of the poem the two black women are intertwined into a (capitalized) "Beautiful Thing":

> The stroke begins again—
>
> regularly

[46] William Carlos Williams, qtd in Charles Doyle, *William Carlos Williams and the American Poem* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1982), 121.
[47] William Carlos Williams, *The William Carlos Williams Reader*, ed. M. L. Rosenthal (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1966), 42.
[48] Ibid., 46.
[49] Ibid., 44.

automatic

contrapuntal to

the flogging

like the beat of famous lines

in the few excellent poems

woven to make you

gracious

and on frequent occasions

foul drunk

Beautiful Thing

pulse of release

to the attentive

and obedient mind.[50]

This episode bespeaks an ambivalent fusion of social engagement, exoticization, aestheticism and creativity: Williams likens the stroke of the black maid beating the rug to the beats of a poetic line, while simultaneously invoking a history of slave abuse and a very material circumstance of gang rape. Williams's celebratory self-referentiality makes it clear that it is his poetic craft ("famous lines/in a few excellent poems") that sculpture the image of the women—either gracious or foul drunk. When transposed to Book 3 of *Paterson* decades later, this reference to "The Beautiful Thing", fresh and re-enactable in everyday life, was juxtaposed with the image of an old, stale library full of archaic lore and dead knowledge, catalogued to scientific precision ("Beautiful thing, your vulgarity of beauty surpasses all their/perfections!").

[50] Ibid., 46.

Williams is playing with the spectrum of connotations of "vulgar" here (1. Common; 2. Lacking in refinement). "Vulgarity" in the *Paterson* text at once denotes a commonplace, everyday beauty (the black girl carrying out a mundane errand) and an intentionally coarse language that defies pretentiousness. The apostrophe of the first stanza is the poet's spontaneous admiration at the "natural" beauty of the black maid, hence the exclamation point is congenial to the orality of speech. However, when the refrain is repeated at the beginning of the second stanza, the personal pronouns—"your" and "their"—have been taken out. What has been an address to a specific, concrete instance then distils almost to a point of abstraction from experience. As if aware of the danger of being ossified into an idea, the emergent abstraction is quickly cut off as a conceit arises in its place—the "vulgarity" keeps leaping out of its generative context (the primitive, unadorned "varnish pot"), defying reification by thought and eluding abstraction of experience. However, the poetic license that Williams have taken backfires and undermines the validity of his claim: his sympathy with the downtrodden women remains simple and superficial, his synthesization of the two black women is arbitrary, and most fatally, his view of these two women is that of a male gaze from the doctor's attic study. Nevertheless, Williams's more general point is clear: art is only alive and living in so much as it does not simply capture and exalt everyday objects; rather it needs to come down from the self-enclosed sphere of high art, to co-exist alongside with everyday things which are its sources, acknowledging their commonness—"vulgarity"—their clunky weight as ready-to-hand, make-do objects that burst "in flames!" (another exclamation mark).

One of the reasons why exclamation marks proliferate over the virtual space on the pages of *Paterson* is thus to reinforce the sense of vulgarity and the emotional impact on the reader is. To reiterate a tired critical platitude, the uncouth tongue is

homologous with a pristine, wild America yet untainted by European sophistication and worldliness, and it requires exclamation. For this virgin landscape, Williams has his own theory of genesis, again peppered with exclamation marks:

> And derivatively, for the Great Falls,
>
> PISS-AGH! the giant lets fly!
>
> (*P*, 18)

The birth of the Great Falls is attributed to the giant Paterson—the man-city. The use of onomatopoeia is another of Williams's trademark poetic tools. Jameson is insightful when he observes shrewdly that "sexual flagrancy, general disreputability and lack of bourgeois respectability" [51] are marked in the giant's act of excretion/ejaculation (the ambivalent nature of this act is kept by the hyphen deliberately separating "piss" and "agh"). Furthermore, the emphatic tone generated by the capitalization and the (grammatically incorrect) use of exclamation marks cuts off abstraction and what would be a pristine, virgin landscape.

Yet, this is not the sole rationale behind Williams's seeming abuse of this particular punctuation mark. An exclamation mark also startles and provokes. It is the punctuation mark that is perhaps most self-conscious about its own intentionality and one that most readily acknowledges the existence of a readership. Insofar as this is true, Williams's use of exclamation shares the quality of hyper-communicativeness with the illocutionary language found in a number of manifestos from avant-garde movements. Williams first witnessed Dada when Marcel Duchamp arrived in New York City in 1915 but did not establish extensive contact with the Dadaists and

[51] Fredric Jameson, "The Poetics of Totality," *The Modernist Papers* (London, New York: Verso, 2007), 39.

surrealists until the late 1930s when Breton and others retreated to New York escaping the hostilities on the European soil.[52] Williams sympathizes with the Dadaists' attack on American complacency and genteel sensibilities with a "savage wit"; Dada manifestos famously shout, screech and shriek with their bullet points, bold fonts, endless capitalization and excessive use of exclamation marks. But Williams seems to have been particularly influenced by one key dimension of Dada manifestos, namely, their marked self-referentiality and their generic meta-criticism. The opening of Tristan Tzara's *Manifesto Dada 1918* famously declares that, "To put a manifesto you must want ABC/ to fulminate against 1, 2, 3 [...]/ *to sign, shout, swear.*"[53] (Italics mine)

This way of presenting an artist's agenda criss-crosses with how Williams introduced his famous mantra in *Paterson*: when it first appears, upon constellating the image of the anthropomorphized giant Paterson in Section 1, the motif is introduced into the textual fabric of the poem sandwiched between two dashes: "—Say it, no ideas but in things—" (*P*, 14). It interpolates between the mythologizing of the poetic impulse (which supposedly animates the modern ennui) and the concrete "things" that follow the pronouncement. The emphasis, however, is more on the actual pronouncement ("no ideas but in things") than its particularity of articulation (to *say*) with its unobtrusive comma proffering a conventional caesura. The content-orientation is sustained in the following lines that juxtapose varied forms of "things"—houses and trees—and produce an expansive spatial vista of the river crashing over the edge of the gorge in straight line on the city of Paterson. It is the

[52] For a fuller account of Williams's involvement with the Dadaists, see Dickran Tashjian, *William Carlos Williams and the American Scene 1920-1940* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1978), 55-64.
[53] Tristan Tzara, qtd in Martin Puchner, "Screeching Voices: Avant-garde: Manifestos in the Cabaret," *European Avant-garde: New Perspectives.* ed. Dietrich Scheunemann (Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2000), 118.

latter image that takes (visual) form of the exclamation mark here, halting the reader in awe, and I shall scrutinize these lines later in this section. Here, however, I would like to point out that Williams's poetic credo is repeated only four pages later, but then with a proper exclamation point that reconstellates the utterance: "Say it! No ideas but in things" (*P*, 18). This time, with its forceful exclamation mark segregating the two parts, the accent falls on the illocutionary act (*say* it), highlighting the performativity of the utterance while leaving the contents a secondary place. It finds interesting parallel with another of Tzara's Dada Manifesto 1921: "DADA doesn't speak. DADA has no fixed ideas."[54] There is an ineradicable irony in both speech acts—Tzara is speaking as a Dadaist despite denying the very fact and Williams's mantra is itself an "idea," an abstraction—as elaborated in this precise section, which all revolves around thinking, reflection, immobility out of which the line "Say it" should jolt us.

Williams's proclamations are loud throughout *Paterson*—"A wonder! A wonder!" (*P*, 19), "—the language/is divorced from their minds,/the language . . the language!" (*P*, 21), "Stale as a whale's breath: breath!/Breath!" (*P*, 31) "Clearly!/speaks the red-breast his behest. Clearly!/clearly!" (*P*, 31) While these signalled emphases may impart the impression that they are overcompensating for the lack of substance behind the howl, what is more important, I think, is Williams's insistence that modernist poetry is both visual and verbal—which the exclamation mark serves to emphasize as a visual object and a reified verbal act. Adorno remarks that exclamation marks are "intolerable" because they are "gestures of authority with which the writer tries to impose an emphasis external to the matter itself."[55] However, Williams's "matter" is

[54] Ibid., 119.
[55] Theodor W. Adorno, "Punctuation Marks," *The Antioch Review*, v. 48, no. 3, Poetry Today (Summer,

exactly the enquiry into what constitute legitimate "poetic matter" to trouble the notion that poetry partakes in the universal aesthetic discourse and that it is primarily subjective, locked somewhere in the mind of the creative genius.

If Williams's blaring utterance is both performative and programmatic and its rhetorical "excess" points to another strand of modernist poetry that is both locally situated and objectified, we are tempted to ask: what about its horizontal counterpart—the dash which is noted for its connective capability? What does it have to do with Williams's sense of place and conception of thingness? In the following discussion, I suggest that, rather than serving as a re-enactment of observation, Williams's dash is poised between endless itemization and intimation of totality that em-places and connects the objects in a particular locality.

The dash is known for its versatility: depending on the context, the dash can take the place of commas, parenthesis or colons. In its more creative (or loose) use, it is protean to the point that it can substitute almost every other mark. John Lennard, author of *The Poetry Handbook*, demonstrates its pliancy in the following witty parody: "[L]ike commas, dashes are used in pairs to create dash'd off parentheses, or singly in (infinite) sequence—to chop sentences up—and change subjects—to anything—even dragons—without the inconvenience of grammatical stops."[56] In a fashion of purist exactitude, Lennard admonishes against the abuse of dashes that "sacrifice[s] subtlety and range to worthless ease (as too often in Shelley)."[57] Unsurprisingly, it is Shelley that Lennard picks on for his liberal use of dashes as an emotive gesture for the Romantic expressive subjectivity.

1990), 301.
[56] John Lennard, *The Poetry Handbook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 132.
[57] Ibid.

One wonders what Lennard would have to say about William Carlos Williams's equally generous application of the dash in *Paterson,* and whether he would place Williams's use of the mark in any known poetic tradition, and, in particular, Romanticist heritage. In fact, Williams might be closer in spirit to Emily Dickinson, his American compatriot and fellow poet, than he is to Shelley. In an interview which he gave to *Paris Review* when he was in his late 70s, Williams himself acknowledged: "Emily [Dickinson] was my patron saint. She was also an American, seeking to divide the line in some respectable way. We were all of us Americans."[58] Interestingly, it is in Dickinson's prosody—her line division in particular—that Williams thinks her "Americanness" shines through. In the same interview Williams relates how Dickinson followed "the American idiom" and how she consistently broke free of restraints and "too strict an interpretation" much in the same way as Williams persistently deviates from the interviewer's prompting questions in this interview. Such a pledge of allegiance is rare for Williams and one should heed it. Importantly, one of most palpable—indeed most visible—characteristics of Dickinson's poetry is the poet's idiosyncratic use of the dash to present the many voices through which poetic subjects enter language.[59]

Williams's use of the dash has similar fragmenting functions. The dash in *Paterson* is normally placed in one of the following two syntactical situations: dashes are either used in pairs mid-sentence, signalling an insertion stronger than parenthesis ("the city/the man, an identity—it can't be/otherwise—an interpenetration"); or they appear at the end of a line, sometimes accompanying itemization. ("Split, furrowed,

[58] William Carlos Williams interview, qtd in Philip Gourevitch, *The Paris Review Interviews* (London: Canongate Books, 2008), 89.
[59] For a more detailed discussion, see Paul Crumbley, "Dickinson's Dashes and the Limits of Discourse," *The Emily Dickinson Journal*, v. 1, no. 2 (Fall 1992): 8-29.

creased, mottled, stained—") The dash persistently stalls our depth-seeking hermeneutical instinct and returns our attention to the textual fabric of the poem, woven intricately with descriptors of the specificities of place. Lines unfold in time as words fall in the footsteps of one another. However, when the dash dangles at the end of a line, it points to something unfinished, as if this unnamable something is not able to be semantically contained in words alone but must brim over and be embodied/emplaced in the physical form of the dash. However, the dangling dash itself is also a mere pointer, a visualized effort to extend the semantic progression into the void: with the dash, the poetic voice trails into a gestative silence. The dash is often paradoxical in its signification, as Adorno comments "In the dash, the thought becomes aware of its fragmentary character.[60] Its inherent paradox is that it both fragments and connects. The dangling dash stretches itself uneasily over the space between one line and the next, attempting to connect two disparate elements while remaining doubtful of its own competence to do so.

Crane Doyle notes Williams's penchant for this particular mark, remarking that

> [Williams] employs conjunctions or dashes to mark the consecutive nature of occurrence, while eschewing the causal or logical connections we customarily use to establish a cumulative knowledge of situation. Williams's typical syntax reproduces in some degree the living procedure of perception, a linear, disjunctive, groping movement; the grammatical "total view" can be gained only in hindsight.[61]

[60] Theodor W. Adorno, "Punctuation Marks," *The Antioch Review*, v. 48, no. 3, *Poetry Today* (Summer, 1990), 302.
[61] Crane Doyle, *William Carlos Williams: Critical Heritage Series* (London: Routledge, 2013), 283.

Doyle seems to think that the dash in Williams's poetry testifies to his championing of nominalism—his mantra "no ideas but in things"—and indicates that only individuals and no abstract entities exist. In Doyle's interpretation, there seems to be no religious/social totality behind the assorted phenomena: they are at best an Eliotian "heap of broken images."[62] In my reading of the use of the dash in *Paterson*, I propose a more nuanced understanding that builds upon Doyle's reading.

Jameson argues that, for Williams, "where to define and celebrate America is at one and the same time [sic] to identify a specifically American language as such, so that the poem's form is here also its content."[63] In his discussion of Williams's localism, Eric B. White contends that "Williams's use of connective punctuation marks link geography, seasons, culture and language in crafty ways, suggesting at once the problems and possibilities of creating the 'distinctive terms' for a new locally sourced poetics."[64] Jameson and White are in agreement that Williams's formal innovations—his connective punctuation marks—are idiomatic evidence of Williams's localism: such "dashed" utterance connects the assorted items found in its geography and subjects within society without a definite sense of hierarchy, dangling between a celebration of pluralist values while pointing to a single utopian vision of the poetic Language.

[62] In this particular quotation, Doyle speaks of a "grammatical" total view, indicating how the meaning, once the sentences are fragmented by dashes, can only be gained by the reader's retrospective construction. Interestingly, Doyle does not indicate whether this totalizing vision amounts to anything beyond the mere "grammatical," which, I think, belies Doyle's uncertainty whether Williams's observation rises above its immediate phenomenal level.

[63] Fredric Jameson, "The Poetics of Totality," *The Modernist Papers* (London, New York: Verso, 2007), 7.

[64] Eric B.White, "William Carlos Williams and the Local," *The Cambridge Companion to William Carlos Williams*, ed. Christopher MacGowan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 22.

To examine this point further I should like to return here to the lines in which Williams first introduces his poetic credo and constellates an interactive nature-culture chronotope:

> —Say it, no ideas but in things—
> nothing but the blank faces of the houses
> and cylindrical trees
> bent, forked by preconception and accident—
> Split, furrowed, creased, mottled, stained—
> Secret—into the body of the light!
>
> (*P*, 15)

The visual effect of dashes used in a pair is an insertion stronger than ordinary parenthesis. It creates sentence fragments that facilitate the transition between narrative voices and points of view. Semantically, the poetic credo itself also merits a closer look—rather than stating the syntactically more habituated "no ideas but things," it reads "no ideas but *in* things". The insertion of "in" reconfigures the sentence and its scope of meanings. It suggests that Williams does not categorically refute abstraction ("ideas"); rather, he is against the top-down approach that involves the preconception of a totalizing myth outside of concrete language, or things themselves. Poetry starts from "the *blank* faces of the houses", blank because Williams rejects any teleological appropriation that does not see the blank faces of the houses simply as *blank* faces, that is to say, without any interpretative inscription. Yet, this is only half of the picture: the stanza hovers between a featureless landscape and its abrupt deformation by either natural force or human intervention. There is a small hint of humanization of objects in the invocation of the "faces" of houses, but not enough to

call it a full anthropomorphism. Likewise, it is uncertain whether the trees are trimmed in cylindrical shape or it is their natural form. There is an intricate working in these lines between bare phenomena and transformative seeing: the dash between "preconception and accident" and "split, furrowed, creased, mottled, stained", as it breaks up the syntax, allows the ideas to be given physical substance. However, it is also hard to decide whether the itemization of "things" in their various states of deformation or transformation is what Williams actually sees. The whole stanza reads more like a practice in perspectivalism—one that Wallace Stevens have perfected in his 1917 "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird", which Williams, as Stevens's admirer, would most certainly have read.

With yet another dash, however, the stanza moves once again stealthily into shades of anthropomorphism ("Secret—into the body of the light!"). The trees seem to be hoarding a "secret" opaqueness impregnable by the poetic imagination. The three dashes in the last three lines leave enough syntactical ambiguity to justify multiple readings of the key issue at stake here: how does the poem proceed into a miraculous moment of revelation, "into the body of light?" If we read the dashes as pairs around the word "secret", hence an insertion, then Williams would be implying that it is the assorted phenomena shaped by ideas that is granted the "intimation of immortality"; however, if we interpret the semantic continuum as being broken off after the dash, then it is the opaque "thingness", rejecting the penetrating gaze of the poet, that ultimately gains access to the embodied light. Either reading seems plausible. Upholding these ambiguities by the use of dashes, Williams suggests to the readers a more bi-directional and less hierarchical understanding of poetic ideas and concrete "things". As things are also em-placed objects, tangible details of the locality start to seep into the next stanza and construct a "particularized" chronotope:

From above, higher than the spires, higher

even than the office towers, from oozy fields

abandoned to grey beds of dead grass,

black sumac, withered weed-stalks,

mud and thickets cluttered with dead leaves—

the river comes pouring in above the city

and crashes from the edge of the gorge

in a recoil of spray and rainbow mists—

(*P*,15)

Continuing in observation from a kind of bird-eye point of view, the next stanza does leave the reader up in the air with a sense of built-up suspense. Indeed, what is presented here is the perspective itself rather than the subject/object of our perception, which will not appear until the last three lines. For now, however, the only known fact about the mysterious subject is its position—from "above," higher than the spiritual symbol of the church spires, higher even than New York's metropolitan skyline glimpsed from the office towers, and, by virtue of this elevation, having some sort of transcendental aura of its own. But Williams deliberately keeps the perspective unstable: no sooner are we up in the air, we are plunged back onto earth to a nearly worm eye's point of view with the zoomed-in look at "grey beds of dead grass,/black sumac, withered weed-stalks,/mud and thickets cluttered with dead leaves". This barren landscape is evocative of the modern(ist) waste land, one that invokes both infertility and the potential for fertility, contrasting more benign forms of nature seen in the Romantics and their descendants. By placing the bleak landscape within literary

tradition, then, Williams responds to both his modernist fellows whose imagination is held captive by the dialectics of the city and the country as well as to the Romantics who are obsessed with the tapestry of the verdant English pasture. Out of this seemingly grim landscape pours the mystic, life-giving river, majestic with its crashing waves from "above the city" and the cultured environs it represents to fall heavily and transubstantiated into "a recoil of spray and rainbow mists". The first dash right after "dead leaves" suggests a cinematic eye that follows the course of the river whereas the second dash after "rainbow mists" would seem semantically redundant. However, just as the river—the symbol of poetic inspiration—is broken up into infinitesimal particles of "spray and rainbow mists" in which the power of the river remains immanent, the dash is semantically homologous with the ever continuing division and transmission of the poetic source that informs the whole epic.

Williams's use of innovative punctuations underlines his effort to re-align the human subject ("!") and the endless objects ("—") resident within its bounds and to intimate a vision of totality without losing the individual agency of its components. Whether his agenda has been successful and consistent throughout the epic is the question I engage in the next section.

2.4 *Paterson* Book 5: Locating Failure

If we read *Paterson* as a quest to re-negotiate, indeed challenge, the tendency in mainstream modernism to emphasize subjectivity and universalism, and the use of punctuation marks as the exemplary component of this mission, then there comes the inevitable question: how successful has Williams been in this complicated project? How does such complex address to the politics and poetics of place contribute to our

understanding of the modernist poets' re-visioning of the relationship between humans and their created or existent environment?

In the previous sections I have focused mainly on the Prologue and Book I of *Paterson*, gauging the ways in which it objectifies and em-places paralinguistic elements for the purpose of creating a fused yet particularized human/nature chronotope and the concordant hybrid subject-position. But we cannot talk about the success or failure of the constituent aspects of the poem without placing them within the larger structure of *Paterson* the epic. Williams himself composed the poem in accordance with the principle of the ecological unity of the Passaic river's descent into the sea as well as the physiological organicism of the man-city motif. Thus here I will commence by first evaluating *Paterson* as a whole, and then I shall proceed to examine how the use of punctuation marks figures in the assessment.

As the epic is by and large a narrative with a clear indication of beginning and ending (however successful they might be), one needs to start by delineating and taking into account only those parts considered complete in themselves and calibrate their structural success by looking at the beginning and the end. Since the beginning of *Paterson* has been discussed in depth in the preceding sections, I would like to focus here on the closure of *Paterson*. But such an interpretative strategy is complicated by the unclear boundaries of Williams's epic. The first question arises when we begin to talk about the "end" of *Paterson*: are we to take *Paterson* as an epic in four, or five, or six parts? Williams himself admits that for a poem like *Paterson*, "there can be no end to such a story." (*P*, 7) It is tantalizing to ditch Book 5 and Book 6 in favour of a more "united" or "coherent" structure. However, it will be tautological to discuss the wholeness of the epic if we simply set aside the seemingly

less-integrated parts. Book 6, however, will not be a point of consideration here, largely because only a few pages of it are available to the readers; hence, it will be next to impossible to construct what kind of structure Williams is contemplating for the book. Instead, I will turn my attention to Book 5 here and discuss its (non)-closure.

The early critics of Book 5 seem to have had difficulties evaluating its merits. Those who expressed warm sympathy with Book 1 either dodged the question of evaluation for later books when they came out, or were generally dismissive about the following instalments. Hugh Kenner's combined review of *Paterson* Book 5 and Williams's interview-turned-book *I Wanted to Write a Poem* contents itself with cherry-picking quotes from Book 5 for admiration.[65] Randall Jarrell, who enthusiastically praised Book 1 in *Partisan Review* when it first came out in 1946, passes the verdict on Book 4 that "[*Paterson*] doesn't seem to be a whole [with the addition of the fourth book]" and that "[it] has been getting rather steadily worse [...] both form and content often seem a parody of those of the 'real' Paterson."[66] Walter Sutton, in his discussion of *Paterson*'s formal quest, entirely side-lined the question of evaluation of Book 5 and opted to argue for the intellectual coherence of the whole epic.[67] Following on this assessment, J. M. Brinnin in 1963 seems to have taken a tentative appraisal attempt to declare that *Paterson* has "an all-of-a-piece consistency on an intellectual level, but on an emotive level the poem is vastly uneven."[68] Brinnin's comment exemplifies the tone used in some of the later criticism of *Paterson* as a modernist long poem: critics with pattern-seeking habits instinctively

[65] Hugh Kenner, "To Measure is All We Know," *Poetry, v. 94* (May 1959): 127-132.
[66] Randall Jarrell, qtd in *William Carlos Williams: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Charles Tomlinson (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1972), 173.
[67] Walter Sutton, "Dr. Williams' 'Paterson' and the Quest for Form," *Criticism*, v. 2, n. 3 (Summer, 1960): 242-259.
[68] J. M. Brinnin qtd in *William Carlos Williams: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Charles Tomlinson (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1972), 149.

base their evaluation on whether the poem adheres to the blueprint set out by its maker. On that account, *Paterson* Book 5 would seem to have largely missed the mark. However, the issue of consistency needs not be a problem in the first place. The dichotomy between the poem's "intellectual"/"symbolic" and "emotive" levels is something that Michael André Bernstein also notes in his reading of *Paterson* as a modern verse epic. Like Brinnin, Bernstein agrees that what he calls "the mood" in *Paterson* fluctuates dramatically from "self-mockery, to despair, and then to triumphant, if short-lived, exultation."[69] He insists that the disparity between the symbolic and the emotional scaffoldings eventually becomes a theme of *Paterson*, meaning that Williams deliberately deconstructs and challenges *Paterson*'s own symbolic coherence and epistemological certitude.

Another type of criticism is more directly linked to my concerns in this thesis: it opens fire at the alleged withdrawal of place in Book 5. Williams himself only lends ammunition to such criticism by claiming that "all places remain the same: all are 'Paterson' to me if I make them so . . . whether Hong Kong or the past: their details are interchangeable if I have the eyes for it."[70] His liberal approach to selecting a locale for the later books of *Paterson* means that it loses the local flavour Williams is eager to capture in the earlier books: if all places can be the designated locale, what, then, is the point of using local particulars as an anchor of identities, and what of the projected value of Paterson as an epitome of Americanness which Williams crystallizes in the earlier books? Erin E. Templeton has recently noted, with regret, that "Book V changes its referential scope *from local figures and histories to*

[69] Michael André Bernstein, *The Tale of the Tribe: Ezra Pound and the Modern Verse Epic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 219.
[70] William Carlos Williams, qtd in Charles Doyle, *William Carlos Williams and the American Poem* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1982), 141.

Williams's contemporaries and artistic influence."[71][Italics mine]. Yet, Williams's self-proclaimed disciple Charles Olson, a poet of Black Mountain College, is divided in his comment on *Paterson* and his evaluation of Williams as a poet. In a letter to his friend and fellow poet Robert Creeley in 1951, Olson first compares Williams with Pound in terms of their methodology in composing a modernist long poem. He concludes that "Bill HAS [sic] an emotional system which is capable of extension & comprehension the ego-system (the Old Deal, Ez as Cento man, here dates) is not."[72] In other words, Pound's ego as a structuring unity in the *Cantos* comes too dominating and overshadows the contemporary objective reality outside of Pound's mind whereas Williams, as exemplified in *Paterson*, allows the actual locality and its socio-historical configurations to shine through. However, in a 1959 review of Book 5 of *Paterson*, Olson criticizes this instalment for lacking the "struggle" of the first four books and for celebrating the achieved artefact of the tapestry.[73]

At the heart of Book 5 is an attempt at soldering the mythical and the local through an engagement with the French or Flemish medieval Unicorn Tapestries—"A WORLD OF ART/THAT THROUGH THE YEARS HAS/SURVIVED!" (*P*, 244). Williams saw the tapestries on display at The Cloisters, a branch of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art dedicated to the art, architecture, and gardens of medieval Europe which opened in upper Manhattan in 1939, and whose construction in the years 1934-39 Williams followed with interest. The construction included the building of a replica of a medieval monastery, with original parts from Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa, Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert, Bonnefont-en-Comminges, Trie-sur-Baïse, and

[71] Erin E. Templeton, "An Epic of Four or Five or Six Parts," *Cambridge Companion to William Carlos Williams* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 110.
[72] Charles Olson, qtd in Michael André Bernstein, *The Tale of the Tribe: Ezra Pound and the Modern Verse Epic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 216.
[73] Charles Olson, "Paterson [*Book Five*]," *Evergreen Review 3*, no. 9 (Summer 1959): 220.

Froville monasteries that had been disassembled stone-by-stone and shipped to New York City, where they were reconstructed and integrated into a whole. Singed out, then displaced, travelling, then re-emplaced, and finally reconstructed into a cohesive whole (both close and twice removed from their purported point of origin), these stones/things/objects remind one of the constructive component parts of Paterson and their "architect's" effort to unite them in this book. The medieval tapestries Williams appreciated are a series of seven exquisite tapestries dating from between 1495 and 1505 and they depict the pursuit of an elusive unicorn by a group of noblemen and hunters. The unicorn cannot be captured except when a virgin is brought before him, when he will lay his head on her lap and fall asleep. Mythologically, the capture of the unicorn can be interpreted as the search and capture of the lover-bridegroom by his adored lady or as an allegory of Christ's suffering and crucifixion.[74]

The retreat back into the self-sufficient world of art would seem to move Williams further away from the communal goal laid out in Book 1. Indeed, structurally Book 5 seemingly derails *Paterson* from its localist quest and re-places it in a celebration of an artefact which, although a communal artform back in medieval times, is nonetheless not easily appreciable by the general public now. The criticism that Williams retreats from engagement with concrete place in Book 5, however, misses the point that *Paterson* is not a place-bound, but place-based poem.[75] In the epic the cohesive mimetic representation of the real town of Paterson always takes a second place to the pursuit of a common language that would rescue some particulars of place rather than the place itself—this is, at least, the "plan for action" which

[74] For the history and various interpretations of the tapestries, see Margaret B. Freeman, *The Unicorn Tapestries* (New York: The Met Publications, 1976).
[75] The distinction is noted by Doreen Massey. See Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 120-141.

Williams identifies in the headnote to the poem. Furthermore, there *is* a sense of place in Book 5, albeit imagined and artistically rendered: the French landscape peopled by the fifteenth century nobles and huntsmen is just as relevant to Williams's imagination as twentieth-century industrial Paterson is, as is, implicitly, the site of the (dis)placement of the tapestries, the carefully (re)constructed building in the US metropolis, and both an artifice and an artefact in its own right. The heavy use of allegory in Book 5 is consistent with the topic of poetic creativity spurred by erotic love, and the theme of construction of a whole out of disseminated place-particulars dominates the Book. A greater problem, I believe, lies in the fact that, with the shift into the world of art, Williams has quite a different audience in mind, and the changed perception of the work's reception jars with the typographical features of the poem. In the summer of 1957, six years after the publication of Book 4 of Paterson and one year before the appearance of Book 5, Williams told an interviewer:

> *Paterson* IV ends with the protagonist breaking through the bushes, identifying himself with the land, with America. He finally will die but it can't be categorically stated that death ends anything [sic]. When you are through with sex, with ambition, what can an old man create? Art, of course, a piece of art that will go beyond him into the lives of young people, the people who haven't had time to create. The old man meets the young people and lives on.

Why does Williams feel the need to start again when Books 1-4 have achieved a structural and symbolic completeness? Williams proffers two rationales. In the more public form of an interview, he speaks in the persona of an old sage of the tribe, arguing that he wants to create "a piece of art that will go beyond him into the lives of

young people", to disseminate (in the etymological sense of the word) his poetic influence to the younger generation. Curiously, Williams remains ambiguous about the nature of his tribe by the deliberately humble self-reference as "an old man" (instead of as "a poet") and the generic signifier of "young people". Does Williams's tribe encompass all the citizens of the town of Paterson (which is itself a miniature of quintessential American locality), or of any other town, or a community of young poets and readers of poetry? The choice of readership would naturally determine the degree and modality of communicativeness of *Paterson*'s already public epic form. I argue that what Williams has in mind as his audience for Book 5 is, in fact, the younger generation of poets and artists of the likes of Allen Ginsberg, who, accidentally, grew up in Paterson and whom Williams considered to be his literary "son".[76] Williams's other rationale for extending *Paterson* to include the fifth book is that he started to reconceive Paterson as a life-poem, a living biography like Pound's *Cantos*, and thus the book that transcends its "purely physical" parameters within finite volumes; the continuing inner life of the poet dictates that the poem shall go on even after its symbolic closure. Indeed, in Williams's private testimony in the form of a letter to his friend Edward Dahlberg, Williams readily acknowledges that "the purely physical aspect of the story, the descent of the river to the sea, was completed. *But I in my own person had not died but continued to live and go on thinking. The mind, my own mind persisted*."[77] [Italics mine]

In his own account of continuing the literary life of *Paterson*, then, there is a strong desire in Williams to foster a literary progeny that will carry on his torch. It

[76] In the early conception of Book 5, Williams even considered making Ginsberg "the center" of the poem. See Paul Mariani, *William Carlos Williams: A New World Naked* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), 702.
[77] Ibid., 720.

explains Book 5's recalibration of its audience: the poet now steers away from the engagement with a general American public—increasingly caught in the Cold War ideologies in the 1950s, as we shall see in the following chapter—and re-addresses himself to a small group of practising, like-minded artists. While in Book 3 Williams enthusiastically envisions the burning of the library with its antique and oppressive lores, in Book 5 he curiously returns to the museum (albeit an ambivalent architectural re-creation in its own right) to sing praises for the medieval tapestries the allegorical message of which may well be inaccessible to the general public. The parameters within which its earlier blueprint is mapped seem to have shrunk significantly in Book 5.

It is within these contexts that the relative success of Williams's strategic use of punctuation marks to both create and deconstruct place and to emplace human and objects needs to be examined. The semantic and syntactic openness they are meant to signal collides jarringly with the closing-off of the text's intended readership. Even as Book 4 sounds its own death toll with "This is the blast/the eternal close/the spiral/the final somersault/the end" (p. 238), the richness denoted by the various signifying vehicles of metaphor still suggests a fair degree of plurality. There is no indication of a personal voice, hence the addressee could very likely be anyone. In other words, although it ends strongly, the Book 4 ends with hermeneutic elasticity. In contrast, the ending of Book 5 merits a close reading to tease out its significant departure:

> The measure intervenes, to measure is all we know,
>
> A choice among the measures . .
>
> The measured dance

"Unless the scent of a rose

Startle us anew"

Equally laughable

Is to assume to know nothing, a

Chess game

Massively, "materially," compounded!

Yo ho! Ta ho!

We know nothing and can know nothing .

But

The dance, to dance to a measure

Contrapuntally,

Satyrically, the tragic foot.

(*P*, 278)

The meaning of "measure" is multi-fold here: it is the measuring of poetic meter, determining the formal aspect of poetry which Williams takes to be the quintessence of "American verse"; yet it is also a form of epistemology, for to measure is to know where one thing begins and another ends—in other words, the capacity to conceptualize difference, but at the same time, to acknowledge a certain common standard against which such measuring must take place and also a finite range of possibilities–"a choice among measures". It is no small accident that the line is followed by two scattered dots: in their resemblance of ellipsis, they signal unfinished possibilities of measures to choose from. Therefore, to be cognizant of difference and differentiation is to keep an intricate balance between extreme, atomized pluralism

and monolithic universalism, and to poetically "realize" place in accordance with such a balanced vision. It requires a governed flexibility that resounds of the originary principles of American pluralist politics so much under threaten in the actual political landscape in which Williams is offering these lines. In his essay "Importance of Place", Williams describes what passes for democracy in the US as "certainly antagonistic to this realization of place. It hates it, tears down fences that delineate, is jealous of differences".[78]

These fields of possibilities, these invisible measures need to be objectified and embodied in the ordered activity of dance. To dance to a measure means to bodily move in a pattern that is pre-set but needs to be embodied by the dancer in order to be visible. Dance, in this sense, is a perfect alignment between form and content, human and its artistic movement in space (To borrow W.B. Yeats, how can one separate the dancer from the dance? ("Among School Children"). Yet the form is far from complete or fixed, Williams suggests. New perceptions continue to prick the senses in the way the scent of a rose "startles us anew", demanding the consciousness to register and place it in a new pattern. The homology between dancing and the art of making tapestry—that is, measured stitching—comes into the fore here as Williams is making the connection between poetic measure as a kind of measured dancing and patterned stitching, thereby tying these seemingly scattered motifs together as if weaving a tapestry himself.

But, why is a chess game laughable? This line might be another, now post-Second World War, jibe at *The Waste Land*, pointing to the section under the title of "A Game of Chess" in which a wife lashes out at her passive-aggressive husband,

[78] William Carlos Williams, "Importance of Place," *Embodiment of Knowledge* (New York: New Direction Publishing, 1974), 134.

throwing a series of provocative questions at him to break his silence: "Do/ you know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember/ Nothing?" ("A Game of Chess", *The Waste Land*) However, a more important and relevant dimension of the chess game reference might be the fact that even before any move has been made on the chessboard, there is already a set of rules/pre-knowledge governing a finite number of moves possible in a single game: it is "massively compounded" indeed.

Yet the chess game is not the best objectification of human condition for Williams. As I have pointed out earlier, Williams is intensely preoccupied with the origin of knowledge and the basis of human action in place, and, Book 5's reliance on an elitist institution's display of arcane art notwithstanding, he is intent on grounding his poetry in the field of (communal) action. Therefore, "Ya ho! Ta ho!", embedded in the closing lines of the epic like a piece of "found poetry,"[79] indicating the joyful chants of folk dance, is a more satisfactory alternative to the high-brow intellectual game of chess. The two consecutive exclamation marks again emphasize the affective impact of such chants. Not only is folk dance region-specific (hence a place-based action that both carries and demonstrates regional customs), but it also mobilizes nearly all of our bodily faculties for its enactment. Further, it is a practice that binds individuals of a specific community together in a re-enactment of a lived communal tradition. Interestingly, it is the rhythmic chants that are used as the metonymy of the folk dance. Williams deliberately foregrounds the oral dimension with two bold exclamation marks and the use of onomatopoeia: a sense of self-referentiality, pointing to the metaphorical dance of the lines as it skitters and chants its way across the textual surface, tapping its "foot" (tragic or not) as it goes along.

[79] Found poetry uses already existing texts, including non-poetic texts such as scraps of newspaper, textbooks and magazines, and incorporates them into the poetic texts.

The penultimate tercet is an echo of the lines in Book 1, "since we know nothing, pure/ and simple, beyond/our own complexities" (*P*, 12). In the tercet in Book 5 Williams is offering a new answer ——and this is where things become problematic: "We know nothing and can know nothing/But/the dance". If Williams is equating (however belatedly) "our own complexities" with "the dance", then he is saying that the social-historical complexities of his contemporary America could be reduced to the meter-making art of measuring poetic foot. In this sense, Williams's answer to the quest for beauty and for a redeeming language will be tautological (finding the answer in the question). However it is more likely that, for Williams, this is an act of containment, a textual strategy to rein in what is in fact unanswerable to him. Between the two layers of meaning in "the dance"—the folk tradition and the poetic measure—it is the latter that has the final word: the Dionysian creatures (satyrs) dance and tap their feet in celebration of fertility and creative genius. One cannot but feel that it is a degenerated avatar of the poet. In her reading of the tercet Mester finds that, "with his cleft feet/goat legs, the satyr/poet suggests a defective, handicapped hero confronting a tragic world, one experiencing aftershock at the Holocaust and the ever-present threat of the atomic bomb."[80] Mester's reading attests to the fact that Williams sees poets as much more than a mere versifier. For all his modernist outlook, Williams retains a Romantic belief in the poet's supremacy and their prophetic clairvoyance; or perhaps these attributes are simply reinvigorated precisely in the US Cold War climate, an issue I pick up in my chapter on Marianne Moore In any case, these faculties render the poet as a tragic hero in a degenerating world where the poetic vocation becomes more and more irrelevant.

[80] Terri E. Mester. *Movement and Modernism: Yeats, Eliot, Lawrence, Williams, and Early Twentieth-century Dance* (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1997), 149.

There is another turn of meanings here though. The lines also specifically reference the Greek tragedy, a form of verse drama whose meter and form are pivotal and inseparable to its content, and its content itself is comprised of multiple material particulars re-crafted in language. In history of the human "field of action", the Greek tragedy stands at that precise point at which communal artistic expression transforms into an individually produced literary expression, and an owned poetic language. The lines, then, conclusively reinforce Williams's self-appointed task to reinvent language and place himself at the same juncture in which the communal experience becomes an individual's expression. If there are contradictions in *Paterson*, then they must lie in the pressure created by the dual vision in this task, a pressure that finds its manifestation in the tension between the open space of punctuation and the symptoms of its textual suppression: it is in here that *Paterson*'s failure—as well as its specific success—must be located.

3. Negotiating Territoriality: *O To Be a Dragon* and Marianne Moore's Cold War Orientalism

Nearly four decades after the publication of Edward Said's influential book *Orientalism* and the inauguration of the field that scrutinizes the Western world's representation of the cultures of the Middle East, North Africa and East Asia, such studies seem to have been exhausted. Decades of scholarship in both postcolonial criticism and cultural studies seem to have successfully and thoroughly excavated the unsavoury power relations that underlie the Orientalist project—European imperialism, cultural hegemony and the "othering" of Eastern cultures, among many others. At a time when there is a wide consensus on criticising Orientalist representations as "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient"[1], what is the point, then, to revisit a concept that has been amply scrutinized? Does Orientalism still have anything to offer to a literary critic at the present moment and, more importantly for my present project, how does it square with an examination of the role of place in poetry?

To answer these questions, we need to understand that Orientalism, as a Western cultural practice implicated in centuries of Western colonialism and expansionism, has an evolving relationship with the cultural politics of the Western world. According to Said, Orientalism has had always been central to the Europeans' understanding of themselves—it is through the construction of a cultural Other that European identities were defined in opposition. In the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, it was Britain and France that dominated the writing of Oriental discourse, mainly through trade, colonialism and foreign diplomacy in the Near East (India and

[1] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1978), 3.

the Bible lands especially).[2] However, since the beginning of the twentieth century, and especially during and after World War II, the US has been the primary actor in the renewal of discursive relation with the Orient, as the US rise on the global stage and its foray into the Pacific necessitated a different configurations of power with the Far East (mainly China and Japan). Christina Klein notes, for instance, that "[h]undreds of thousands of Americans flowed into Asia during the 1940s and 1950s as soldiers, diplomats, foreign aid workers, missionaries, technicians, professors, students, businesspeople, and tourists."[3]

As such, Orientalism does not stand as a monolithic practice, as both critics of Said and Said himself pointed out. Rather a scrutiny of Orientalist discourse needs a historically sensitive analysis to disentangle the power relations within the network of cultural and political actors and the specific modes and formulas in which Orientalism appears. The complexity of women's role in Orientalist practices is a case in point. On the one hand, in the traditional Orientalist discourse, the Orient is repeatedly gendered and feminized while the West is represented as the masculine master. On the other hand, it was precisely the class of white, middle-class women that increasingly become consumers and connoisseurs of Oriental culture throughout the twentieth century, giving them new imaginative space for embodiment and material products for self-expression.[4] Do women's Orientalist practices offer new perspectives that their male counterparts cannot? Is there a more complex field of tension between the celebration of women's cause and women's apperception of the Orient? Are female

[2] Said affirms that "Orientalism derives from a particular closeness experienced between Britain and France and the Orient, which until the early nineteenth century had really meant only India and the Bible lands." See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1978), 4.
[3] Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 5.
[4] Mari Yoshihara, *Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 6-7.

artists able to create ways of looking at Eastern cultures that do not simply replicate the othering gaze which "objectif[ies], exoticiz[ies], homogeniz[ies] and feminiz[ies] the Orient?" or they are oblivious to hegemonies of their own gaze[5] And what agency might an adoption of Oriental aesthetics and practices offer to the Western women artists?

In the present chapter, I consider the continued importance of examining Western women's role in representations of Eastern cultures—in my case, the American poet Marianne Moore's appropriation of the Chinese dragon in her 1959 poetry collection *O To Be a Dragon*—and its relevance in the examination of the imaginative construction of place in poetry. This collection of poetry, I argue, could be positioned at the nexus of an intricately-woven discursive network on China during the Cold War, a network that affectively produced the spatialised identities of the era. This chapter investigates how social and cultural actors including the U.S. government, mainstream newspapers, and American modernist poets constantly redrew, reframed and renegotiated the shifting boundaries of geopolitical entities like China, Russia and America during the Cold War, and relates it all to Moore's specific interest in the representation of place in her poetry. While affirming Said's statement that "the relationship between the Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony", I also recognize that particular actors in the discursive network function in a complicated relationship with the hegemonic bloc: while they might be utilizing its epistemological method and material sources, what they use them for is where the agency of individual actor often clashes with the dominant hegemony. Marianne Moore's poetic practice is an exemplary case.

[5] Ibid., 6.

Of central importance to my argument in this chapter is the inter-linking concept of territory and territoriality, which I borrow from human geographer Robert Sack who wrote a seminal book on the subject, *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History (*1986). Before I go into any detailed engagement with Sack's theory, let me venture a few words on the terminology. Territory is a bounded social space that is marked by the operation of power. The Oxford Dictionary lists four primary associations the word "territory" commonly summons: 1. an area of land under the jurisdiction of a ruler or state; 2. (zoology) an area defended by an animal or group of animals against others of the same sex or species; 3. an area defended by a team or player in a game or sport; 4. an area in which one has certain rights or for which one has responsibility with regard to a particular type of activity. We need to untangle these entries to uncover the cluster of meanings "territory" draws around itself: from the first entry we get the sense that territory is a geopolitical category under the control and influence of political institutions; territory, according to the second and third definition, needs constant defence through the use of violence exercised by its possessor; in the final analysis, territory is not just a spatial/geographical concept but also confers relational claims and regulate forms of sociality within its bounds.

If territory, in its conventional usage, has strong links with international politics and military actions, territoriality's conceptual contours encompass wider and more diverse terrains. It is, according to Sack, "the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographical area."[6] Freed from the arena of international politics, territoriality in its widest sense denotes a relational strategy of people

[6] Robert D. Sack, *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 19.

controlling people. It is readily applicable to varying degrees of manipulation of geographical boundaries. Not all lands are territories. They become territories only when the acts of asserting territoriality are carried out. In other words, territoriality is "a means of reifying power."[7] It makes what is only latently visible by giving it tangible forms—a fenced-off area with a sign "Keep off" and a watchful guard dog by the entrance, a legal document setting down terms and conditions of land use with an official seal, a classroom with benches anchored in their places and pupils sitting in their designated positions. Hence a territory is not mere space, but the arrangement of positions, objects and activities within its bounds and the hierarchy of access to the different positions that constitute territoriality, of which territory is only a container.

It is obvious from the preceding arguments that territoriality hovers between the physical and the intangible in designating ways to mould, contain and influence people and what they do. This fluid indeterminacy is most useful for my argument in this chapter, and I would like to link it with what Raymond Williams terms a "structure of feeling", a concept he developed and refined throughout his lifetime. Williams seeks to link individual or collective lived experience and the fixed forms and institutions in a given social-historical configuration through the idea of a socially generated and influenced affective structure. In Williams's mature conception, "structure of feeling" is "a kind of feeling and thinking which is indeed social and material, but each in an embryonic phase before it can become fully articulate and defined exchange."[8] In other words, structure of feeling describes the emergent aspects of lived human experience that have yet to find fixed forms or become concrete cultural products. It denotes the gap between communal experience and

[7] Ibid., 32.
[8] Raymond Williams, "Structures of Feeling," *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 128.

cultural articulation, the former inevitably reduced and diminished when mediated through the latter. Williams's conceptualisation is useful for my discussion in the chapter because the "structure of feeling" is also one of the channels through which hegemonic power diffuses its worldview throughout the fabric of society affectively, without the visible use of social institutions. For Williams, hegemony is "a realized complex of experiences, relationships, and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits."[9] To preserve its domination, "it has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified […] It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not all its own."[10] Hence, hegemony's inevitable openness to incorporation and adaptation (for self-preservation) contains potentials for its own undermining. For Williams, literary texts, then, always present themselves as ethnographical accounts of particular structures of feeling, laden with hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces. Literature is a potent sample of their strife because its innovators constantly have to negotiate between received linguistic forms and emergent experience. In this light, lyric poetry, which is conventionally read as the literary form most remote from political contention, is also a site of hegemonic power struggle, no less a socially symbolic act than the narrative genres scrutinized by Fredric Jameson.[11] It is thus not only possible, but fruitful to read in Marianne Moore's Cold War poems the political formation of subjecthood. In this chapter I shall argue that Moore constructs for herself a place-bound poetic identity that both writes and writes off hegemonic inscription.

[9] Ibid., 112.
[10] Ibid., 112.
[11] See, Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).

In doing so I wish to respond to critic Christopher Bush's claim that "modernist Orientalism either disavowed any recognition of contemporaneous or even a real East, or did such a poor job of it that one wished it might as well."[12] In my reading of *O To Be a Dragon* and its generative context, I argue that behind Moore's mythologizing of ancient China lies her problematic recognition of China's modern face, especially its rising prominence in Cold War geopolitics. In the meantime, Moore's Orientalism differs from early modernists' aesthetic-formalist adoption of the Chinese written characters in that Moore's is a strategy that enables her to create, through spatialized and place-related aesthetics, an alternative selfhood to sidestep and question the Cold War propaganda.

In the Cold War era, popular perception of contemporary China was largely shaped by geopolitical concerns of the West in the form of war propaganda. The clippings inside *The Tao of Painting*—Moore's source book for her collection of poetry *O To Be a Dragon*—testify to Moore's awareness of China's modern face: its civil factions, its rising power on the international stage and its exported cultural "soft power" in the form of its celebrity opera singer. Hence a final methodological framework this chapter adopts is the model of "discursive network", a model inspired by the Foucaultian notion of knowledge constitution and later made popular in the social science. Fundamentally, the category of discursive network denotes the cohort of socially and historically situated uses of language through which functionally differentiated social actors produce discourse on a given conceptual category at a given historical juncture. This model is useful in the sense that it helps to bring out the power politics operating behind the production of a common area of perceived

[12] Christopher Bush, "Modernism, Orientalism, and East Asia," *A Handbook of Modernism Studies*, ed. Jean-Michel Rabate (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 194.

knowledge, tease out the interconnection and mutual influence between different actors in the network and highlight the social practices and institutions that govern knowledge formation.

Hence, the theoretical approach in this chapter is to draw these three concepts together: first the chapter explores Moore's lifelong interest in representation of place/space and her long-standing contact with China and Chinese art, exposing how Moore's encounter with China operated within institutional and personal networks; then it places Moore's interest in the Chinese dragon within the context of the Cold War by looking at the clippings inside Moore's source book *The Tao of Painting*. Having done so, the chapter then delves into the socio-historical specificities of Cold War "structure of feeling", paying close attention to its relations with territory and territoriality. Finally, I demonstrate how Moore's discursive production of China as a place/site of poetry in *O To Be a Dragon* could be problematized in relation to Cold War selfhood.

3.1 "Imaginary gardens with real toads": Marianne Moore, Territory and Landscape

For a prolific poet such as Marianne Moore whose published poems amount to over 200, it is surprisingly difficult to gather together what is conventionally called poetry of place in her oeuvre. Many epithets have been affixed to Moore—poet of the armoured animals, practitioner of the syllabic verse, "the world's greatest living observer", and, in her later life under much limelight, America's "national mascot."[13] None of these seems to ostensibly associate her with place and space. However, if we

[13] The former epithet was supplied by Elizabeth Bishop while the latter by Taffy Martin. See Elizabeth Bishop, "As We Like It," special issue of *Quarterly Review of Literature* on Marianne Moore, v. 4, no. 2 (Summer 1948): 129. Also, Taffy Martin, *Marianne Moore: Subversive Modernist* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 3.

problematise what we conventionally think of as space and place, Moore's spatial consciousness and sense of place start to emerge—in the symbiosis of her armoured animals with their habitats, in the quirky characters of places of ethnic belongings and in the landscape of ekphrastic poems. Indeed, place in Moore's early poetry comes to the fore more in the form of landscape, often with an ironic twist that interrogates territory and territoriality. Landscape is only a segment of a nation's territory. However, it embodies a culture's particular sense of territoriality in its visible arrangements of spatial elements. Landscape painting in particular—a genre that flourished in the first half of the 19th century—has a Romantic overtone in its depiction of picturesque natural sceneries from a vantage point through the use of perspective. There is always an implied frame through which landscape is viewed; its spatial arrangement projects an often idealized (political) order: it is here that landscape's inherent territoriality comes to the fore.

It is exactly the idea of America as both the New Eden (hence a garden in need of human cultivation) and wilderness (which the Puritans' experience of the New World as series of spiritual tests) that Moore's poetry both engages with and reacts against. Laced with such place-embedded consciousness, Moore's poetry constantly seeks to register, with the eyes of a biologist, the curious flora and fauna of the New World and to recognize their struggle to subsist and resist an often hostile environment. In Moore's poetry, there is an increasing awareness of the fact that the physical environment constitutes part of our moral environment. Moore's Puritan heritage no doubt plays an important role in her basic moralistic outlook in an otherwise typically modernist poetics: Marianne Moore was born into a fatherless household and among her most immediate family members, her maternal grandfather John Riddle Warner, a Presbyterian minister, was the closet approximate to a male

authority in the household. Moore's mother clung fiercely to the family values of the Moore household, even taking great effort to collect and publish John Riddle Warner's sermons posthumously. The Moore family, moreover, wrote to each other religiously throughout their lives, with Mary Warner's maternal voice admonishing her children not to forget that the three of them are "a people set apart," sent into this world on a mission.[14] This heavy family spiritual heritage means that the Puritan's sense of sinfulness and the struggle against it frame almost every one of Moore's poems. To this point, Jeremy Meredith testifies that "what drives Moore's indubitably modern poetry of spirit and permeates its subjects, tropes, and forms is a literary-cum-spiritual ethos of struggle."[15]This mental acuity of spiritual warfare, combined with Moore's lifelong microscopic observation of nature and its creatures, manifests itself naturally as a heightened spatial awareness whereby emplaced subjects and objects engage with their lived environment in specific historicities. Hence while there is a persistent scrutiny of objects, there is also an augmented sense of locality that emplaces these objects in her later poems like "Hometown Piece for Messrs. Alston and Reese," an occasional piece for the Brooklyn Dodgers which brims with unabashed local pride; "Enough: Jamestown, 1607-1957," a candid and outspoken poem about America's first colonial settlement about the nation's origins in "marriage, tobacco, and slavery, /initiated liberty." (*CP*, 186)[16]; "In the Public Garden" from *O To Be a Dragon* (1959), another occasional piece about Boston Arts Festival, celebrating the institutions and sites that made Boston the cultural hub it was. "Old Amusement Park," "Carnegie Hall: Rescued" from *Tell Me, Tell Me* (1966) and "The

[14] Mary Warner's letter to Marianne Moore on 17th Oct 1907, qtd in Marianne Moore, *Selected Letters* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 27.
[15] Jeredith Merrin, "Sites of Struggle: Marianne Moore and American Calvinism", *The Calvinist Roots of the Modern Era*, ed. Aliki Barnstone, Michael Tomasek Manson and Carol J. Singley (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1997), 95.
[16] Marianne Moore, *The Complete Poems of Marianne Moore* (London: Faber & Faber, 1984). Henceforth abbreviated as *CP*. Subsequent quotes are all from this edition.

Camperdown Elm" from her uncollected poems also enact the poet's lively engagement with lived sites and places that give rise to a particular structure of feeling.

Coupled with the interest in the formative influence of particular sites, there is, in Moore's poetry, a persistent investigation of place's dynamic resistance against framing. Bonnie Costello has noted how in Moore's early poetry landscape is forever in-the-making.[17] In her early *ars poetica* poem "Poetry", she famously calls poetry "imaginary gardens with real toads in it" and claims that if one reads poetry with "a perfect contempt for it", then one can discover "a place of the genuine" in it (*CP*, 36). Poetry for Moore then is always laced with a place-embedded consciousness. In including "real toads" in her literary garden Moore responds to both the pastoral tradition that celebrates the dominion of mankind over nature and the picturesque tradition that promises discovery of landscape in its "natural" state. America is no toads-free prelapsarian garden—unlike Eliot's conception of an idyllic rose garden of immobility and permanence—and if a poet is to be "genuine," they would have to confront the imperial impulse, derivativeness and rapacity that characterize the American sense of place. In her early poems such as "The Steeple-jack," "A Grave," "England" and "New York", Moore debunks the idyllic myth by foregrounding the unnaturalness (or as Moore calls it, the "artifice") of the picture frame and emphasizes the dynamic and evolutionary quality of specific sites that constantly eludes facile generalization.

Unlike Eliot's rages against the metropolis, a site conterminous with contamination of commerce and consumerist campaigns, or Williams's persistent

[17] Bonnie Costello, "Moore's America", *Shifting Ground: Reinventing Landscape in Modern American Poetry* (Cambridge: Havard University Press, 2003), 86-116.

personification of a medium-size industrial city, Moore's long-standing interest in place lies in her relentless questioning of the fixed "frame" through which landscape is viewed—a perspective resonant with territoriality's possessiveness.[18] She is intent on tracing the dynamic tension between the artificial stability of "views," the fluid borders of territoriality and the fluent subjects and objects. Unsatisfied with the framed design and its implied imperialist perspective, Moore keeps seeking new models for the art of looking, both domestic and abroad. In her poems published after 1950s when she achieved the status of national celebrity as a poet, there was a tendency to rethink her earlier mode of communication (however obscure it might be) and move towards a more explicitly public poetry.[19] Disappointed with what the West proffered to the poet both in terms of poetics and of geography, she began to turn her gaze elsewhere. This is how the collection of poems entitled *O To Be a Dragon* came into being. The collection, published in 1959 first by Viking Press in New York, consists of 21 poems, some new, some re-printed from juvenilia and previous publication in various literary magazines. It gave the collection a miscellaneous air. However its organization, shape, title, thematics, and, more than anything else, the imaginary territory it delineates (even when ostensibly "local") all point to the strong influence of an (orientalist) aestheticized vision of China; but writing being a "socially symbolic act", I add, this imagination of place is also political.

3.2 "China is the magic place": Moore's encounter with China and Chinese Art

Marianne Moore's lifelong fascination with China and Chinese art cumulated in her October 1957 lecture "Tedium and Integrity", a tribute to *The Tao of Painting* (1956),

[18] For a discussion of frames and framing, and the distinct semantics it entails, see Paul Duro, ed. *The Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
[19] For Moore's public image in the 1950s, see Charles Molesworth, *Marianne Moore: A Literary Life* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990), 346-348.

a two-volume art-history book by the Chinese artist Mai-mai Sze. The first volume is Sze's essay on the compositional philosophy of Chinese painting while the second volume is her translation of *The Mustard Seed Garden*, a seventeenth century manual of Chinese painting. Judging by a surviving manuscript fragment, the lecture was the testimony to Moore's intense engagement with Chinese art throughout her entire poetic career, now spoken from the position of a mature artist. In the fragment, Moore highlights the relevance of "integrity", what she conceives as a quintessentially Chinese aesthetic value, to all forms of art. That Moore sees the Chinese paradigm as a remedy for Western art in mid-twentieth century America is a statement that needs problematizing: Why China? Which China? Why then?

According to both Cynthia Stamy's (1999) and Zhaoming Qian's (2003) comprehensive archival and biographical research, Moore's fascination with China and Chinese art was cultivated through university courses, museum exhibitions, art-history books and collection of Oriental curios in the first few decades of the twentieth century.[20] It was a time when American enthusiasm for Chinese art soared as a result of exposure to art treasures plundered from the hands of China's power elites as its last imperial dynasty, the Qing (1644-1911) was collapsing. Moore's own life bore witness to the seismic shifts China went through, from an imperial state in its last breaths through a short-lived republic, itself soon plunged into the depth of civil war, to, finally, the establishment of the People's Republic of China whose rise in the 1950s as a communist state America viewed with deep anxiety, if not fear. These large-scale social-historical transformations conditioned the West's access and

[20] See Cynthia Stamy, *Marianne Moore and China: Orientalism and a Writing of America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), especially the first two chapters. Also, Zhaoming Qian, *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 30-43.

approach to China both materially and imaginatively in the early-to-mid twentieth century.

The "imaginative geography" which Western world's engagement with the East engenders, Edward Said argues, is "less a fact of nature than it is a fact of human production."[21] Such was indeed the case of China in the "Western eyes" across the centuries. But I am particularly intrigued by the vitality of China's "imaginative geography" in modernism and the ways in which modernism interacted with, contributed to, or altered this orientalist vision. Moore's poetry is itself an interesting cultural repository of Anglophone modernist reception of China and Chinese art. It both participates in and embodies the rise of Anglophone Orientalism in the early twentieth century. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, in particular, Anglophone craze for Chinese art was on the upsurge. This enthusiasm was first kindled in museum space: with the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston leading the way, entrepreneurs such as Charles Lang Freer acquired large amount of Chinese bronzes, porcelains and ink paintings. Qian documents a large number of important Chinese art exhibitions in various venues such as the University of Pennsylvania's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Bourgeois Gallery in New York. Art scholars and sinologists such as Laurence Binyon and Arthur Waley were instrumental in introducing Far Eastern culture to the Anglophone scholarly and lay community. Working for the British Museum in London, Binyon played a central role in introducing Asian visual arts to the Imagist poets like Ezra Pound, H.D. and Richard Aldington. Binyon's *The Flight of the Dragon* (1911) most certainly influenced Moore's understanding of the oriental dragon symbolism, not to

[21] Edward W. Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered," *Literature, Politics and Theory: Paper from the Essex Conference, 1976-84*, eds. Francis Barker et al. (London: Methuen, 1986), 211.

mention the fact that Moore went to the 1911 exhibition of Chinese art curated by Binyon at the British Museum. Waley, who taught himself classical Chinese and Japanese under Binyon's tutelage, translated oriental classics such as *The Analects of Confucius* (1938) and *Journey to the West* (which appeared as *Monkey* in an abridged version in 1942). Moore kept the former in her personal library, heavy with notations. Indeed, in the first few decades of the twentieth century, there was a consistent output of publications about Chinese language, painting, calligraphy and literature in the Anglophone world readily available for both general readers and art connoisseurs.

Qian notes that Chinese art arrived in Britain and America at roughly the same time as international modernism was gathering force and modernist writers were on the lookout for exotic otherness to amalgamate into their works.[22] To cite but a few: *Cathay*, Pound's translation of classical Chinese poetry, appeared in 1915; Wallace Stevens's "Six Significant Landscapes," first published in *Others* in 1916, has "an old man" sitting "in the shadow of a pine tree/in China"; Eliot's "The Noh and the Image" was published in *The Egoist* in 1917; Fenollosa's "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry" was published posthumously in *Little Review* in 1919 in four instalments, two of which could be found in Moore's library holdings; and William Carlos Williams invokes the Tang courtesan Yang Kuei-fei ("Give me your face, Yang Kue Fei!") in his "Portrait of the Author," first published in *Contact* in 1921.

In the case of Marianne Moore, Chinese subjects and objects begin to make appearances in her poetry as early as the 1920s. Her poem "England" includes an epigrammatic eulogy of China ("The sublimated wisdom of China"); the 1921 poem "The Labour of Hercules" features the double negative "the Oriental is not immoral";

[22] Zhaoming Qian, *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 43.

and, in a review of Wallace Stevens's *Harmonium*, Moore warmly acknowledges Stevens's poetry as an American example of assuming "the mind and the method of China."[23] Besides these remarks of general summation, more concretely, Chinese artefacts also make frequent appearances in Moore's poetry: the Chinese cherry features in the 1920 poem "Picking and Choosing," the Chinese carved glass turns up in "People's Surroundings" (1922), the Chinese lacquer-carving materialises in "Bowls" (1923), and Ming-Qing Porcelain appears in "Nine Nectarines" (1934). In all these texts, China is represented by its decorative arts, its exotic-looking trinkets that adorn Western interiors.

These artefacts testify to the fact that Moore's early encounter with China occurred in the form of museum visits and curio-collections—that is to say, in the space of an aestheticised Orient. Moore is known to be an avid museum goer. Mary Norcross, a family friend (and according to Linda Leavell's new biography, the lover of Moore's mother for decades), had a sister Elizabeth in China who kept sending them pretty things through the Chinese Trading Company. However, from the 1950s onward, Moore's encounter with China became increasingly marked by personal contacts with Chinese scholars and artists: she would acknowledge the multi-lingual classicist Achilles Fang's scholarly help ("the word-wizard", she called him) in the composition of her 1965 poem "In Lieu of the Lyre," and in her 1959 letter to Mai-mai Sze, she affectionately calls the author of *The Tao of Painting* an "angel to me and friend of the dragon."[24] It is within this new context of personal affinities and artistic network that Moore's 1950s poems, and the collection *O To Be a Dragon* (1959) in particular, need to be examined for a deeper understanding of Moore's

[23] Marianne Moore, *The Complete Prose of Marianne Moore* (London: Faber & Faber, 1987), 92.
[24]Letter from Marianne Moore to Mai-Mai Sze, 18 April 1959, Series V, Box 64, Page 41, Marianne Moore Collection, Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia, USA.

poetic Orientalism. Adopting a materialistic perspective, now I will take a closer look at how institutions of cultural circulation such as newspapers, publishing houses and public foundations play a central role in the formation of Moore's Orientalism and evaluate Moore's claim of artistic "integrity" in this new context.

3.3 *The Tao of Painting*: Texts and Context

Marianne Moore acknowledges first noticing *The Tao of Painting* in the 20th January 1957 issue of *The New York Times*. In her "Tedium and Integrity" lecture delivered at Mills College, Oakland, California on October 16, 1957, she recounts what a revelatory experience it was to encounter *The Tao* in *The New York Times*: "I indeed felt that art is timeless when I saw in the Book Review section of *The New York Times* last spring, the reproduction of a plum branch by Tsou [Zou] Fu-lei, XIV century—a blossoming branch entitled *A Breath of Spring*."[25] Here Moore refers to the reproduced print that heads *The New York Times*' column "Among the Other Books of The Week", in which *The Tao* was grouped together with a book on contemporary American painting under the "Art" section. Moore was apparently captured by the print and curious about this Chinese art book associated with the Bollingen Foundation through which Moore herself was being sponsored. She got in touch with Bollingen's president John Barrett, asked for a copy, and subsequently received a set of *The Tao of Painting* sometime in January 1957, only a few months after its publication in 1956.

The Bollingen Foundation was an educational foundation set up by American philanthropist Paul Mellon and his wife Mary Mellon in 1940. Initially dedicated to

[25] Marianne Moore qtd in Zhaoming Qian, *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 168.

publishing and disseminating Carl Gustav Jung's works in America, it went on to promote scholarly works in areas such as aesthetics, cultural and art history, archaeology, philosophy, psychology, mysticism and religion. These appeared in a total of 258 volumes collected under the name of the Bollingen Series of books, of which *The Tao* was No. 49. Marianne Moore had a previous connection with the foundation: in 1949 she was awarded a fellowship of 100 dollars per month and in 1952 she won the prestigious Bollingen Poetry Prize. The personal interaction between Moore and Bollingen's president John Barrett continued into the late 1950s as Bollingen occasionally sent manuscripts and proposals for the series to Moore for review. Moore's complimentary set of *The Tao* then came perhaps as an acknowledgment of her continuing intellectual contribution to the foundation.

Moore's appreciation of *The Tao* was so profound that she wrote to Barrett in September 1957 again ordering five more sets of *The Tao* for her acquaintances and artist friends—"Now! I need some copies of the TAO [sic] and for two, enclose a check for fifty dollars and a memorandum of what I owe for conveyance will have to be made. I seem to make a salesman of you, but may I explain. I am going to California to give a talk to students and some readings, and in November I shall be able to pay for 3 other sets."[26] Moore is referring to the talk "Tedium and Integrity" which opens with an acknowledgment of indebtedness she owes to *The Tao*: "This whole theme—the thought of integrity—was suggested to me by THE TAO OF PAINTING, with a translation of THE MUSTARD SEED GARDEN MANUAL OF

[26] Ibid.

PANTING 1679-1701, by Miss Mme Mme [Mai-mai] Sze; published by the Bollingen Foundation, 1956."[27]

When the author and translator Mai-mai Sze sent Moore a letter, the two women immediately formed a friendship that was to continue for the next eleven or more years. Mai-mai Sze herself was an intriguing modernist figure: an artist, writer, aspiring scholar, model and even an actress. She was born in Tianjin, China, in 1909. Her father was Alfred Sao-ke Sze, a prominent Chinese politician and diplomat in the early twentieth century. In her youth Mai-mai Sze lived first in London until 1921 and then moved to Washington because Alfred Sze was appointed Chinese Ambassador to the United States. She received a very Western education, attending Wellesley College and studying subjects such as English literature, religion, philosophy, European history and art. After graduating, she worked mainly as a landscape painter but was also well-acquainted with New York's cultural scene. It was through her friend Natacha Rambova's connection with the Bollingen Foundation that Sze got a three-year fellowship from the foundation to translate *The Mustard Seed Garden Manual*. According to her own admission in the autobiography *Echo of a Cry* (1945), Sze emigrated to London at the tender age of 6 and spent her entire teenage life outside of China. As a result of the absence of proper native language learning both at home and at school, Sze only had a rudimentary understanding of modern standard Chinese (Putonghua) in its written form and was entirely self-taught in its classical form (Wenyanwen, or Literary Chinese), in which the original *Mustard Seed Garden Manual* was written. Sze's interest in Chinese spiritualism was part of her private effort to understand her own "cultural roots." Hence Sze's often misconceived and orientalising accounts of Chinese spirituality and art should not be understood as

[27] Ibid., 225.

merely a case of (inadvertent) self-exoticisation, but also as a search for and a construction /invention of a cultural "home."

Sze's translation project should also be understood in the larger context of the dual interests of Bollingen Foundation in the study of both the mystic and the aesthetic. It would be eventually published as a companion piece of Sze's own quasi-religious, quasi-mystic reflections on Tao as the unifying principle behind the compositional rituals of Chinese landscape painting.[28] The Bollingen Foundation had a long-standing practice of seeking out prospective publications in religion and spiritualism, and had a particular interest in the publications dealing with the Far and Near East; one of its best-sellers was the Cary Baynes's 1950 English rendition of Richard Wilhelm's German translation of *I Ching* or *The Book of Changes,* a book recording the ancient Chinese system of divination. Thanks to Carl Jung's studies of archetypes, symbolic psychology and religion, the study of the so-called occult literature and mysticism was beginning to be thought of as respectable in the US academia circles in mid-1950s, and the Bollingen Foundation's endeavour to disseminate such works played no small part in the institutional rise of this particular subject-matter. It is this climate that enabled the original Chinese manual of *The Tao* to traverse across national boundaries through trans-national artistic and institutional networks with their overlapping interests and concerns. Now, the question is: what was Moore on the receiving end able to glean from the book?

As her ample markings and annotations throughout suggests, Moore obviously went through the book many times.[29] In a letter to Sze six years after she first got hold

[28] For more information about Bollingen Foundation's publishing interests, see William McGuire, *Bollingen: An Adventure in Collecting the Past* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 121.
[29] See Zhaoming Qian, *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 172.

of *The Tao*, Moore re-affirms the work's impact: "[I]n *The Tao of Painting*—of which I never tire, [there are] permanent gifts, they have been, that I have for *all time*. Possessions that I carry with me in my mind—along with some incurable ignorances" [sic].[30] The clippings that have been found inside the copy of the book, ranging from the notice in *The New York Times* in January 1957 to an announcement of *The Tao*'s abbreviated paperback version in November 1959, evidence that Moore studied the book closely over a number of years and, more importantly, treated it as a scrapbook for poetic inspiration.

The notion of a scrapbook—a blank book in which various items (as newspaper clippings or pictures) are collected and preserved—is central to my discussion here. Moore's early habit of using scrapbooks to collect close-at-hand subjects and conserve poetic materials for later use is well-documented in Batholomew Brinkman's meticulous archival research.[31] According to Brinkman, Moore produced two major scrapbooks between the years 1909-1914, a period crucial for Moore's early development as a poet. The assorted materials collected in the scrapbooks include personal mementos, newspaper and magazine clippings, book reviews and other printed ephemera. Put together, they reflect Moore's personal life, social concerns and contemporary historical events. Moore carefully negotiates the original contexts of these materials and how they emerge in her poems, transposing the public, mass-cultural form into her private aesthetic style.

Although Moore stopped producing scrapbooks in her later years, she kept the habit of tucking clippings inside books she perused. Rescuing mass-cultural materials

[30] Ibid.
[31] Bartholomew Brinkman, "Scrapping Modernism: Marianne Moore and the Making of Modern Collage Poem", *Modernism/ modernity*, vol. 18, no. 1 (January 2011): 43-66.

by scrapbooking always involves a process of selection, which entails acts of inclusion and exclusion, and the subsequent cogitation on obtained juxtapositions. In this sense, I argue that Moore's copy of *The Tao of Painting*, with its 11 clippings, including book notices and reviews of *The Tao*, illustrations of Chinese landscape paintings and contemporary Chinese political news, also constitutes a poetic scrapbook, specifically related to Moore's collection of poems *O To Be a Dragon* (1959). Reading Moore's reading of China through her scrapbook then involves a two-step process, which the present chapter seeks to restore: not only do we need to measure Moore's China poems against the clippings that she collected for *O To Be a Dragon* (1959) to understand the materials' aesthetic metamorphoses, but we also need to embed these clippings back in their original publications to gain a clearer understanding of Moore's selective engagement with and representation of "China".

4 E THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JANUARY 20, 195

PEIPING TAKES PLACE AS MOSCOW'S POLICY-MAKING PARTNER

Chou Comes to Aid of Moscow at Critical Time, Thereby Assuring Aid for Communist China

By HARRY SCHWARTZ

There was more than merely formal significance in the elaborate fete and extravagant praise the leaders of the Soviet Union had for Chou En-lai, Chinese Communist Premier, in the Kremlin last Thursday night. The reality behind the outward show is the fact that a new stage has begun in Moscow-Peiping relations, one in which the relative power and influence of the two Communist partners has altered sharply.

The essence of the new relationship between Communist China and the Soviet Union is that the former has won for itself what amounts to a veto power over Soviet policy toward the Communist bloc and to a large extent even over Soviet foreign policy generally. This gain has resulted from the fact that the Soviet leaders now understand that they cannot preserve the shaky unity of the Communist bloc without having Peiping's backing, and to get that backing they must consult the Chinese Communists while they make their policy.

Premier Chou himself gave the most vivid demonstration of his country's new power last week when he visited Warsaw. Two weeks earlier Poland's Communists had concluded a pact with Yugoslavia and seemed to be on the way to forming a two-country bloc of "national Communists" that would form a counterweight to the Soviet bloc. So tenuous had Warsaw's relations with Moscow and the Eastern

Hamburger Anzeiger, Hamburg

"Russian Chinese friendship."

nomic factors above all else as determinants of social and political processes, this new situation in Chinese-Soviet relations is particularly ironic. This is true because if we turn to the economic aspect of these relations, Communist China is still an infant industrially compared with the Soviet behemoth.

tions in demanding and guaranteeing that these countries shall be equal with the Soviet Union and shall be secure from Soviet interference in their internal affairs. Against the background of last year's stormy events, it seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that Peiping has been the major winner and Moscow

The Chinese Communists came to Moscow's help only after the latter had given guarantees—in the Soviet statement of last Oct. 30 and presumably elsewhere—that the old order of Moscow's bossing Communist nations was ended.

(3) Finally, and not least important, Mr. Chou and his fellow

Soviet Union and Communist China, the Soviet need for Peiping's political support and Peiping's need for Soviet economic help should all serve to insure cooperation and a common front of the two countries against the free world.

In the longer run, however, the latest developments raise perhaps more serious questions about the future of Soviet-Chinese relations than could realistically have been asked before.

Soviet Attitude

Despite all the praise Mr. Khrushchev and Marshal Bulganin have showered on Mr. Chou and the Chinese Communists, they cannot be too happy about the concessions they have had to make to Peiping or about the enhanced status of the Chinese they have had to accept. As Russian nationalists, many Soviet Communists must be alarmed at the fact that China has now been permitted to play such an important role in determining the fate of Eastern Europe.

Finally, and perhaps most disturbing for the long run, these questions are posed before the Soviet leaders: If Communist China can become so important politically today, when it is relatively an economic and military pygmy, what will its role be a decade or two when China has become a great economic and military power? Is it really in the Soviet people's interests to help Communist China achieve great economic and military

Figure 1. "Peiping Takes Place as Moscow's Policy-making Partner", New York Times, 20 January, 1957

As briefly discussed, Moore's first encounter with *The Tao* is the book notice in *The New York Times*, which she recounts in her "Tedium and Integrity" lecture. However, the book notice of *The Tao of Painting* was not the only China-related coverage in that specific issue of *The New York Times* (20 January 1957). Taking up over half of the page in the very same issue was a report of the People's Republic of China's Premier Zhou Enlai's visit to Warsaw not long after the Poznań 1956 protests and the so-called Polish October.[32] At the time Poland was going through difficult period of de-Stalinization. The general sentiments to steer away from a hard-line

[32] Poznań 1956 protests are a series of massive protests in the industrial city of Poznań against the government of the People's Republic of Poland. The so-called Polish October marked a change in the politics of Poland in the second half of 1956 the placement of Wladyslaw Gomulka. It saw the placement of Wladyslaw Gomulka as the communist leader of Poland against the wishes of the Soviet Union.

Stalinist course and establish a more local/national variant of socialism independent of the Soviet model contributed to the appointment of Wladyslaw Gomulka, who had been ousted and imprisoned in 1951, as the First Secretary of Party. The Soviet Union viewed Gomulka's rise to power and the reformist and nationalist agenda of his government as a threat to the unity of the Eastern Bloc.

It was in this context that Zhou visited Poland to negotiate the settlement of issues and secure Polish reaffirmation of the unity of the Communist bloc. His visit would be used as evidence of the new Moscow-Beijing dynamic and of China's increased importance as a political power. This is exactly what the *New York Times* claims in the report: "As Russian nationalists, many Soviet Communists must be alarmed at the fact that China has now been permitted to play such an important role in determining the fate of Eastern Europe", writes the anonymous reporter and continues, "If Communist China can become so important politically today, when it is relatively an economic and military pygmy, what will its role be a decade or two when China has become a great economic and military power?"[33] In the same page, right below the report on Zhou's visit, is another news report on Polish politics ("Communist Split Confuses Polish Election"), noting the fractions at war within Poland's Communist leadership.

[33] "Peiping Takes Place as Moscow's Policy-making Partner," *New York Times*, 20 January 1957: 4.

Russia; the threat of the iron-fisted leaders of over 400 million Chinese Communists; the famous Bandung conference of Asian and African leaders—all these dramatize the challenge of Asia.

And what is America doing about this challenge?

It is doing plenty of the wrong things. It is trying to buy Asian friendship—as if the friendship of

Washington feared they would help Communist China?

If we are failing with these Asian students, isn't it possible that we are also failing with our own? If both our own and these Asian students are being mis-educated, no wonder we are losing Asia!

Is it now too late? Or is there still time to re-win the cooperation of this all-important two-thirds of the world? Is there something we can still do to end Asian and African hostility?

Ralph Borsodi, Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, believes that the turning of the Arab nations to Soviet Russia proves that time is running out . . . but he also believes that *there is still time to meet the Asian challenge* . . . and in his new book he reveals a dynamic plan for accomplishing the task.

THE CHALLENGE OF ASIA

- READ why Asian nationalism leaves Asian millions wide open to Communist infiltration!
- READ the dangers of an Asian world organized on an anti-white basis!
- READ this first-hand report of what Asian Leaders really want!
- READ how we can and should meet the Asian challenge!

READ what Chancellor Borsodi recommends after an eight-month trip around the world. In Asia, he studied its greatest universities, talked with distinguished educators, and met leaders of thought who gave him first-hand accounts of the ideas with which Asians are pre-occupied at this time of world ferment. In his book, he presents a dramatic analysis of these Asian ideas, a diagnosis of what is right and wrong with them, and a forthright criticism of the mistaken ideas which America and the rest of the western world are relying upon in our futile effort to meet the crisis created by the renaissance of Asia.

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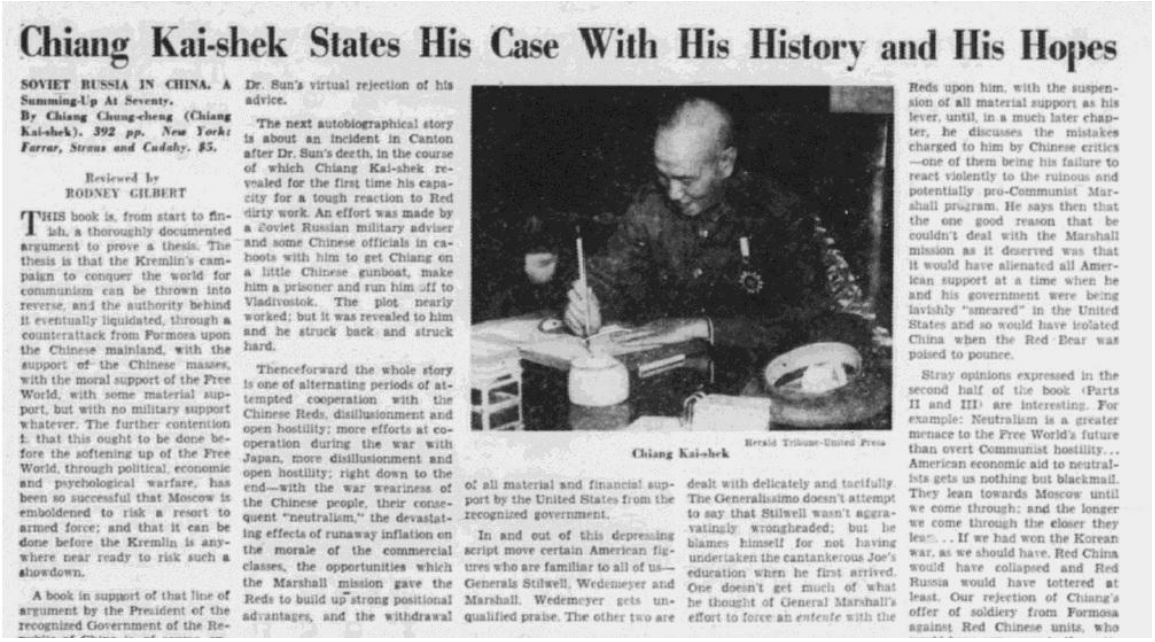
Figure 2. Book Review of *The Challenges of Asia: A study of Conflicting Ideas and Ideals*, *New York Times*, 20 January, 1957.

A further Asian connection in this issue of *The New York Times* comes in the form of a sensationally-worded book notice for *The Challenges of Asia: A Study of Conflicting Ideas and Ideals*. The latter is a general-interest book on the contemporary Asian political landscape written by Ralph Borsodi, at the time the Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Australia. The anonymous author of the book notice spares no effort in his/her warning, admonishing the readers to "READ why Asian

nationalism leaves Asian millions open to Communist infiltration! READ the dangers of an Asian world organised on an anti-white basis! READ this first-hand report of what Asian Leaders really want! READ how we can and should meet the Asian challenge!" [34] The alarmist Red-Scare diction is very much in line with the McCarthyist scaremongering of its time—an unsavoury context for Moore's interest in the Chinese culture.



Chiang Kai-shek States His Case With His History and His Hopes

SOVIET RUSSIA IN CHINA. A Summing-Up At Seventy.
By Chiang Chung-cheng (Chiang Kai-shek). *392 pp. New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy. $5.*

Reviewed by
RODNEY GILBERT

THIS book is, from start to finish, a thoroughly documented argument to prove a thesis. The thesis is that the Kremlin's campaign to conquer the world for communism can be thrown into reverse, and the authority behind it eventually liquidated, through a counterattack from Formosa upon the Chinese mainland, with the support of the Chinese masses, with the moral support of the Free World, with some material support, but with no military support whatever. The further contention is that this ought to be done before the softening up of the Free World, through political, economic and psychological warfare, has been so successful that Moscow is emboldened to risk a resort to armed force; and that it can be done before the Kremlin is anywhere near ready to risk such a showdown.

A book in support of that line of argument by the President of the recognized Government of the Re-

Dr. Sun's virtual rejection of his advice.

The next autobiographical story is about an incident in Canton after Dr. Sun's death, in the course of which Chiang Kai-shek revealed for the first time his capacity for a tough reaction to Red dirty work. An effort was made by a Soviet Russian military adviser and some Chinese officials in cahoots with him to get Chiang on a little Chinese gunboat, make him a prisoner and run him off to Vladivostok. The plot nearly worked; but it was revealed to him and he struck back and struck hard.

Thenceforward the whole story is one of alternating periods of attempted cooperation with the Chinese Reds, disillusionment and open hostility; more efforts at cooperation during the war with Japan, more disillusionment and open hostility; right down to the end—with the war weariness of the Chinese people, their consequent "neutralism," the devastating effects of runaway inflation on the morale of the commercial classes, the opportunities which the Marshall mission gave the Reds to build up strong positional advantages, and the withdrawal

Herald Tribune-United Press
Chiang Kai-shek

of all material and financial support by the United States from the recognized government.

In and out of this depressing script move certain American figures who are familiar to all of us—Generals Stilwell, Wedemeyer and Marshall. Wedemeyer gets unqualified praise. The other two are dealt with delicately and tactfully. The Generalissimo doesn't attempt to say that Stilwell wasn't aggravatingly wrongheaded; but he blames himself for not having undertaken the cantankerous Joe's education when he first arrived. One doesn't get much of what he thought of General Marshall's effort to force an *entente* with the Reds upon him, with the suspension of all material support as his lever, until, in a much later chapter, he discusses the mistakes charged to him by Chinese critics—one of them being his failure to react violently to the ruinous and potentially pro-Communist Marshall program. He says then that the one good reason that he couldn't deal with the Marshall mission as it deserved was that it would have alienated all American support at a time when he and his government were being lavishly "smeared" in the United States and so would have isolated China when the Red Bear was poised to pounce.

Stray opinions expressed in the second half of the book (Parts II and III) are interesting. For example: Neutralism is a greater menace to the Free World's future than overt Communist hostility... American economic aid to neutralists gets us nothing but blackmail. They lean towards Moscow until we come through; and the longer we come through the closer they lean... If we had won the Korean war, as we should have, Red China would have collapsed and Red Russia would have tottered at least. Our rejection of Chiang's offer of soldiery from Formosa against Red Chinese units, who

Figure 3. "Chiang Kai-shek States His Case With His History and His Hopes", *New York Herald Tribune*, 23 June, 1957.

It is a reasonable conjecture that these articles would catch the eyes of an intellectually omnivorous and socially conscious Moore, however briefly. Moore would have lingered upon these articles and considered the image of contemporary China alongside with its ancient representation in *The Tao of Painting*. A more specific evidence of Moore's knowledge of contemporary Chinese politics, however, is another clipping one can find inside her copy of *The Tao of Painting*: that of a

[34] Anonymous book notice of *The Challenges of Asia: A Study of Conflicting Ideas and Ideals*, *New York Times*, 20 January 1957: 8.

review article in *The New York Herald Tribune* entitled "Chiang Kai-shek States His Case with His History and His Hopes." It is a review of the quasi-autobiographical, quasi-polemical book *Soviet Russia in China: A Summing-Up at Seventy* by Chiang Kai-shek, then President of the Republic of China (Taiwan, or Formosa). According to the reviewer Rodney Gilbert, the book aims to prove a thesis that "the Kremlin's campaign to conquer the world for communism can be thrown into reverse, and the authority behind it eventually liquidated, through a counterattack from Formosa upon the Chinese mainland with the support of the Chinese masses, with the moral support of the Free World, with some material support, but with no military support whatever."[35] Gilbert is considerably reserved regarding the feasibility of Chiang's proposal of military counteract.

These articles present a cacophonic picture of Moore's contemporary China: a rather one-dimensional portrait of China as a great threat to the "Free World", a regime with dangerous totalitarian tendencies that sought to infiltrate America and undermine its liberty and freedom. Moore would have been wary of unreflective political allegiances, though, and would not have taken the propaganda from either ideological camp at face value. Her most likely response, just like that of her friend and colleague Williams Carlos Williams, was a recalibration of the value of art as such amid all the political tumult of her age. Small wonder, then, that, when Moore leafed through the pages of *The New York Times*—replete with its bellicose lingo against the Communist infiltration—and came upon the gently unfurling branches of the plum tree over the largely empty hand scroll, decorated by hundreds of vividly painted plum blossoms, she experienced a sense of suspension of time, as if art's

[35] Rodney Gilbert, "Chiang Kai-shek States His Case with His History and His Hopes," *New York Herald Tribune*, 23 June 1957: 3.

unparalleled capability to transcend temporal concerns was made manifest through the reproduced painting itself.[36]

The other group of clippings in her copy of *The Tao of Painting* indicate another of Moore's chief concerns—the realm of art and its role in the clamorous, conflict-ridden contemporary world. Moore kept a close eye on reviews of her poetry collection. Therefore, it is only natural that she tucked a *Listener* review of her last poetry collection *Like A Bulwark* (1956) into *The Tao* which would be the source of inspiration for her next book. The *Listener* review professed mixed opinions about *Like A Bulwark*. While applauding Moore for her "random preciseness" and her "undiminished relish for the visual particulars of life," what is missing, the anonymous reviewer claims, is "the astringent note" of Moore's poetry at its best. By the "astringent note" he/she means the various aspects of Moore's poetic genius—"purity, originality of visual imagery, a gift for idiosyncratic aphorism and a delayed irony"—which tended to come together in seamless fashion but now fail to fuse.[37] Moore's poetry continues to undermine its own integrity—"the completely satisfying poem"—exactly because she tries to amalgamate a mass of loosely-linked materials around a central motif, such as the racehorse Tom Fool in "Tom Fool in Jamaica," the reviewer suggests. These vagaries somehow fail to alchemize themselves, to combine into a satisfying whole. It is a reasonable conjecture that Moore must have felt that the commentary struck a fair point as she decided to tuck the clipping into *The Tao*, a book that celebrates the holistic notion of Tao as an integrating force and integrated unity.

[36] "I indeed felt that art is timeless", remarks Moore of her first encounter with *A Breath of Spring*. See Moore's Typescript for "Tedium and Integrity," qtd. in Zhaoming Qian, *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 225.
[37] Anonymous review of *Like A Bulwark*, "The Listener's Book Chronicle," *The Listener*, 12 September 1957: 1.

Moore might have felt the urgency to adopt Sze's model so much so that she was willing to overlook the questionable scholarly value of *The Tao of Painting*. Included in the cohort of the clippings was a largely negative review of The Tao in *Times Literary Supplement*. The anonymous reviewer emphasizes the physical qualities of the book—that it is "luxurious", "the most beautifully printed and produced publication on Chinese art". He/she also helpfully notes that the first volume of *The Tao* has "eleven exquisite collotypes of outstanding paintings and examples of calligraphy, an index of twenty pages, and a bibliography of almost ten pages."[38] However, other than these, the reviewer finds little to praise when it comes to the actual contents. Sze tells us nothing new about the subject of *The Tao*, the apparently well-informed reviewer notes regretfully. What is more, he or she adds, Sze seems to be heavily reliant upon Western scholarship for her exposition of Tao, especially the older commentaries rather than the latest scholarship. The introduction to the second volume, the reviewer continues, is the actual translation of *Mustard Seed Garden Manual*; however, Tao as a concept in this volume has entirely disappeared; Sze seems to have become aware that the concept of Tao has little to do with the actual manual. Hence Marianne Moore's salute to Tao in her "Tedium and Integrity" lecture must be read more as refraction of a sense of urgency to adopt a poetic model from elsewhere than a genuine understanding of the subtleties of Tao as a concept.

The last clipping I would like briefly to examine here, although published two years after the appearance of *O To Be a Dragon* (1959), uncannily offers itself as an exemplary analogy to Moore's conception of a bone-fide artist. It is a report in *Newsweek* about the death of Mei Lanfang, a Peking Opera singer well-known for his

[38] "The Way of Chinese Art," *Times Literary Supplement*, 31 October 1958: 8.

female lead roles (known as "Dan" in Mandarin Chinese).[39] The article recounts the vicissitudes of Mei's life, from his early rigorous training through becoming a "heroine" at the Peking Opera to his increasing fame on stage both domestic and international, to his defiant act to grow a beard in order not to perform for the invading Japanese in 1937 and finally to his death in 1961. The image of Mei the apprentice opera singer wearing bamboo stilts strapped to his ankles in order to practice stage steps in the darkest of winter must have appealed to Moore's stringent Puritan moralism. Mei's great stage success, which attracted China's successive political leaders (the Manchu Empress Dowage Tzu Hsi, Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek and later Mao Tse-tung), would have exemplified to Moore the perennial appeal of masterly art performance. Mei's open defiance against the Japanese would also have won Moore's endorsement of art's moral agency in times of military aggression. Moreover, Mei's ability to abandon rigid gender roles and perform the Dan role so convincingly would seem to be, in Moore's eyes, a perfect instance of artistic flexibility. When read against the titular poem of her 1959 collection, "O To Be a Dragon," this ability to metamorphose resembles, in spirit, the shape-changing dragon in the poem—"O to be a dragon,/a symbol of the power of Heaven/of silkworm/size or immense/at times invisible/ Felicitous phenomenon!"

3.4 Negotiating Territoriality: Moore's Cold War Poetics

Through examination of these newspaper clippings, it becomes clear that Moore's poems on China and China-related artefacts in *O To Be a Dragon*, despite the fact that they are not saliently about China's position in the Cold War, are nevertheless part and parcel of the Cold War structure of feeling, which, in Raymond Williams's

[39] "Last Curtain for the King of Actors," *Newsweek*, 21 August 1961: 7.

definition, is organized and patterned affects that are shared among subjects that are otherwise not directly connected—"a pattern of impulses, restrains, tones."[40] In order to unpick its particular affective qualities and its intricate response to Cold War territoriality, we need a historically-informed inquiry, that is, we need to evaluate Moore's discursive production of China not only as a cultural, but, more importantly, as a geopolitical category, which entails a diachronic understanding of Moore's evolving method of writing about war and a synchronic knowledge of war (including the Cold War) poetry in the US.

According to Cristanne Miller, condemnation of war and military aggression is a recurring theme in Moore's poetry[41]. What is especially noticeable is that, although Moore was deeply concerned about the devastating effects of war on humanity, as obvious in her letters to her brother John Warner as early as 1915, her earlier poems bear little mark of the war upon them. The only two poems that ostensibly address the question of warfare are "The Grass That Perisheth" (1914) and "To Military Progress" (1917). It was the outbreak of World War II that saw the outpour of 11 poems that responded to warfare in varying degrees. Moore's biographer Charles Molesworth points out that, at a time "when American intellectuals were engaged in a deep and divisive debate about the issue of non-participation […] Moore never entered the debate directly, but her ideas about war were obviously to be important for her overall view of human morality, which enters her poems more explicitly after World War II."[42]

[40] Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review* (London: Verso, 1979), 44.
[41] Cristanne Miller, "Distrusting: Marianne Moore on Feeling and War in the 1940s," *American Literature* (2008), v. 80, issue 2: 353-379.
[42] Charles Molesworth, *Marianne Moore: A Literary Life* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 111.

Moore's major source of war news came through news reports in the mainstream American media and through radio broadcasts in war times. For instance, one of Moore's earliest war poems "The Grass That Perisheth", which was completed in 1914 and submitted to the *Yale Review* but never published during Moore's lifetime, was a lightening response to the news report documenting Kaiser Wilhelm II's declaration of war ("'And now I commend you to God', said the/Kaiser from his balcony"). A much later poem, "Keeping Their World Large", cites as its epigraph a 1944 *The New York Times* article by Reverend James Gilkey commending the valiant Allied soldiers dying on the beach of Normandy—"All too literally, their flesh and their spirit are our shield." (*CP*, 145) Pointedly, Moore's most publically celebrated war poem "In Distrust of Merits" (1943) is a disquieting acknowledgement of Moore's inability to look at "the quiet form upon dust," the corpse of slain soldier in a newspaper.[43]

One particular problem Moore faced when writing about the war, therefore, was that her source was inevitably tainted with the mass-mediated form of wartime propaganda that reached the American poet through the radio-waves and the newspaper. At the same time, Moore might have shared the concern of French novelist and playwright Jean Giradoux that "the mass-mediated voice (through the radio and the newspaper) can do the expansionist work of belligerent nationalism by ensuring that its news penetrates and settles in the most distant geographical locations."[44] Those who visited Moore in her Brooklyn apartment gave the impression

[43] Laurence Stapleson, *Marianne Moore: The Poet's Advance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 134.

[44] Moore perused the transcript of Jean Giraudoux's radio broadcast in the Figaro in November 1939. In the transcript, Giraudoux talked about the susceptibility of the radio, cinema and press in the propaganda war. Giraudoux rejects both direct, unmediated encounter of real battles and the option of entering a discursive propaganda war with German. He instead recommends that his listeners should turn to the imagination. "For we are in an era when you need imagination to see reality." Moore quoted

that her immediate milieu, replete with William Blake prints, animal curios, "oriental" artefacts, was that of "a diving bell" let down through the crass atmosphere of the twentieth century.[45] This otherworldly ambience clashes, obviously, with the penetrating radio-waves and newspaper reports bringing the remote war reports to the "home front", for which we know that they have reached Moore. For a poet known for her close observation and verisimilitude, this geographical remove is debilitating if not confronted properly. By no means is war poetry made more "authentic" if it is written by those who have been engaged in "real" battles—authentic "totality" of war experience is inaccessible to any given individual anyway, and Moore was very much aware of this circumstance. However, seeing second-hand, especially through channels that appropriate a collective voice, did impose certain semantic and expressive boundaries, if not limitations, that a poet like Moore needed to heed if their poetics were to stay authentic to their individual vision.

Another interlocking problem is, of course, the fact that Moore was a civilian woman writing about war. Of course, being a civilian does not always guarantee escape from war cruelty—the many London citizens during the Blitz could testify to the extent of civilian casualty and war horror. Nor does being a woman necessarily mean exclusion from war experience—a great number of American women were indeed mobilized on the "home front" during the Second World War, first called upon to take active roles in assisting the nation's efforts in industry, agriculture, civil defence and community welfare, then conscripted into support forces, operating military equipment and establishments. Moore's particular personal circumstances

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Giraudoux's verdict of the radio as "instrument of truth" in her "Four Quartz Crystal Clocks". See Fiona Green, "Locating the Lyric: Marianne Moore, Elizabeth Bishop and the Second World War," *Locations of Literary Modernism: Region and Nation in British and American Modernist Poetry*, eds. Alex Davis and Lee M. Jenkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 205.

[45] Ibid.

were such that she was living in her Brooklyn apartment in New York throughout the Second World War, securely protected from a war that took place off the American continent; neither was she directly involved in war efforts on the home front. Moore's wartime experience is thus just one strand out of a very diverse literary response in America, both formally and thematically, to World War II: the image of warfare as perceived by African-American soldiers, for instance, was decidedly different from those of the middle class white bomber pilots or the infantryman, all of which were strikingly different from Moore's own experience.

In her sophisticated reading of "In Distrust of Merits", Susan Schweik situates the poem back to its genealogical milieu. Schweik points out that although War World I poetry tends to privilege the masculine "soldier poems" such as those written by Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, in World War II the "lonely masculine authority of experience" was quickly giving way to considerations of the conjunction between civilians and soldiers and between front and home front. Therefore, although later critics tend to unanimously dismiss "In Distrust of Merits" as "show[ing] too much pressure of news" and even Moore herself disparages the poem in the 1960s as "haphazard" in form and a product of overflowing emotion, in the 1940s the reception of "In Distrust of Merits" would have been much more mixed. Anthologists Richard Eberhart and Oscar Williams both praise Moore's effort at representing the civilian voice; curiously, they both confirm Moore's success in doffing a sentimental and sympathetic voice and breaking through the decorous surface of her earlier aestheticism. Interestingly, both comments encourage associations between the poem and a "feminine" poetics which Moore had avowedly abandoned in order to write "In Distrust of Merits". Oscar Williams's assessment is especially worthy of attention for its uncanny spatial-organicist metaphor: he compares feminine decorum to a kind of

surface/skin that the sincerity of feeling has to rise to, from the depth of the heart, in order to pierce it.[46] It is obvious that the credit given to Moore is based on her courageous affirmation of the inescapable ethical imperative that a total war places on each individual in lines such as "they are fighting that I/may yet recover from the disease, My/Self" (*CP*, 136) and "There never was a war that was/ not inward; I must/fight till I have conquered in myself what/causes war." (*CP*, 138)

On the other side of the debate, Randall Jarrell, an avid eulogizer of Moore's early poetry, turns acerbic in a review of Moore's "In Distrust of Merits". Published in the 1945 winter issue of *Partisan Review* as the end of World War II became increasingly perceived as imminent, Jarrell's reading of Moore's most celebrated war poem offers a sort of "stocktaking" of war poetry as a genre. Jarrell's criticism of "In Distrust of Merits" builds on his one-sided reading of Moore's early poems: he faults Moore's poem for what he sees as the "overt" emphasis on "fighting," both in the sense of real life combat and internal moral war against self-interest. "Most of the people in a war never fight for even a minute", Jarrell contends, "they do not fight, but only starve, only suffer, only die."[47] He then goes on to call it "the passive misery" in contrast with active combat and war heroism. Jarrell criticizes, first, Moore's construction of an alternative, although equally masculine, mode of peaceful, internalized combat and, second, Moore's allegorical method which overwrites the mundane suffering and human powerlessness with a narrative that glorifies internal warfare.

[46] Susan Schweik, "Writing War Poetry like a Woman," *Critical Inquiry* (Spring 1987), v. 13, no. 3: 532-556.
[47] Randall Jarrell, "Poetry in War and Peace," an omnibus review for *Partisan Review* (Winter 1945), rep. in Randall Jarrell, *Kipling, Auden & Co*. (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1980), 121.

Jarrell's review typifies American society's double standard in judging the gendered response to World War II—a bias that Moore would have felt sharply and seems to have internalized in her difficult juggling between moral self-confidence and sense of inadequacy as a civilian woman writing about war. As a civilian woman poet without a *bodily* presence in the battlefield, Moore hesitates over and ultimately decides against the use of a collective "we" when referring the American soldiers who are "fighting in deserts and caves, one by/one, in battalions and squadrons", "fighting, fighting the blind/man who thinks he sees." (*CP*, 136) She might be advocating internal warfare, but her affirmative voice is often beset by crippling doubt: "I must/fight till I have conquered in myself what/causes war, but I would not believe it./I inwardly did nothing./ O Iscariot-like crime!" (*CP*, 138) Moore's self-censure is severe, and her analogy is, naturally, religious—she compares her inability to believe in her cause to the betrayal of Jesus by Judas.

By taking into account these contemporary clamours regarding the writing of war poetry in the Anglophone world, we get a better understanding of the conditions that Moore has to negotiate or contend with, consciously or subconsciously, when she writes about the war. These conditions have to do largely with the sense of place or, rather, that of displacement. Not only does the displaced and disembodied voice over the radio-waves and in the newspaper have questionable value as an authentic, unmediated voice of war experience, but the tradition of war poetry, however much it may have evolved in between and through the two world wars, leaves very little room for a woman to conceptualize a place to write about war. To write "masculine soldier poems", such as those typical of World War I, is apparently not a feasible option for Moore; but even her attempt at adopting a civilian voice is overshadowed by an internalized masculine discourse of moral war against egotism and self-interest. It

seems to have been the only way for Moore to overcome her peripheral position, geographically and sexually. Finally, such complex negotiations mark Moore's Cold War poetry as well, but the absence of a clearly defined battlefield (or, rather, a proliferation of such, the experience and discourse of which effectively blurs the distinctions between combatants and civilians, men and women) made Moore's address to war more general, more widely applicable and, I would add, more poetically successful.

The Cold War was fought on the level of foreign policy, cultural diplomacy and soft power. It was launched, on the policy level, by National Security Council Report 68, the single most important policy statement from the U.S government released in 1950. The 58-page memorandum points to the "hostile design" of the Soviet Union as the most pressing threats confronting the United States and how a massive build-up of the U.S military could respond in kind. What is also emphasized in the memorandum is the belief of the supremacy of American values: "The vast majority of Americans are confident that the system of values which animates our society—the principles of freedom, tolerance, the importance of the individual, and the supremacy of reason over will—are valid and more vital than the ideology which is the fuel of Soviet dynamism."[48] For the American government, the core values that "the American way of life" can provide are individual liberty, democracy and free enterprise.

Hand-in-hand with the championing of freedom and democracy is, in Deborah Nelson's critical reading of Cold War America, a potent rhetoric of American government's "vigilant protection of private autonomy", often in an apocalyptic tone:

[48] NSC-68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security, April 14, 1950, qtd. in Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: U. S. Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 1.

"Either we preserved the integrity of private spaces and thus the free world, or we tolerated their penetration and took the first step towards totalitarian regime."[49] Indeed, penetration is a recurrent metaphor in Cold War rhetoric: the "free people" of America should be on guard against the Invisible Enemy, the communists who operate secretly, infiltrating American society at every possible opportunity. This "keep an eye on your neighbours and expose the Communists in our midst" rhetoric engenders fears of intrusion, of finding one's borders within and without already violated. Equally potent a rhetoric is that of containment of interior differences. Initially coined by U. S. diplomat George Kennan in 1946, it became the official doctrine during the Cold War years not only as a geopolitical strategy to stall the increasing influence of the USSR in places like Eastern Europe, China, Korea and Vietnam.[50] Containment strategy, in Nelson's reading, came to depend on containing the inner divisions of American social life. To ensure its success, it had to "render mute political dissent, non-procreative sexual energy, gender non-conformity, racial unrest, and artistic expressions within its own borders."[51]

Moore's careful perusal of Sze's essay on Chinese painting philosophy, as evidenced in her lecture "Tedium and Integrity", yields important insights into why she finds it enabling to talk about the Cold War experience through Chinese aesthetics. First of all, in Sze's reading, the Tao is the intuitive knowing of "life" that cannot be grasped full-heartedly as just a concept but is known nonetheless through actual living experience. Second, the Tao as an ideogram, meaning a way or a path, is portrayed as a foot (*ch'o*) taking a step and a head (*shou*), hence representing the entirety of the

[49] Deborah Nelson, *Pursuing Privacy in Cold War America* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2012), xiii.
[50] See Robert L. Scott. "Cold War and Rhetoric: Conceptually and Critically," *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy, Metaphor, and Ideology* (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 5-20.
[51] Deborah Nelson, *Pursuing Privacy in Cold War America* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2012), 165.

human body. This unfolding of images seems to have imposed on Moore the thought of integrity by its very "pictographic" quality. To move forward, that is, "step by step progress", requires deliberateness, "suggesting that meditation is basic to living, to all that we do, and that conduct is a thing of inner motivation," Moore proposes in "Tedium and Integrity".[52] Moore's interpretation of Chinese characters' pictographic quality shows the clear influence of Pound/Fenellosa's eulogy of the ideogram. However, the linking of The Tao with meditated/considered conduct in the lecture is Moore's own reading based on Sze's claim that the Tao demonstrates "the necessary balance between the development of one's inner resources and the evidence of this in every activity."[53] Third, in her "Tedium and Integrity" lecture, there are the frequent mentions of the self-discipline and "the Confucius virtue of "a sense of fitness", which is most certainly inspired by the Confucius model of Nei Sheng Wai Wang that Sze brings up in the introductory chapter "On the Concept of the Tao."[54] Nei Sheng Wai Wang refers to the inner virtuous sage and outer kingly ruler: "the ideal ruler was the virtuous, whole and perfectly balanced man, and kingliness the practice of these attributes."[55] Hand in hand with this ideal is another aphorism—Ke Ji Fu Li, or "subdue one's self and recover the ritual disposition."[56] Tellingly, what Moore ignores, intentionally or unintentionally, is that these imperatives are part and parcel of Confucius' designated attributes of ideal (male) rulership, a discourse that operates on the Foucaultian notion of governmentality that radiates from the inward to the outward and that trickles down from the king to his subjects. Moore's interpretation (largely based on Sze's reading) of this mythical principle of Tao thus vacillates

[52] Moore's Typescript for "Tedium and Integrity," qtd. in Zhaoming Qian, *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 225.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 226.
[55] Mai-mai Sze, *The Way of Chinese Painting* (New York: Random House, 1959), 11. This book is a reprint of the first volume of *The Tao of Painting*.
[56] Ibid., 14.

between embodied concreteness and abstract idealization. In the next instance Moore, however, goes to the other extreme of pure abstraction: "China's concept of The Tao as the centre of the circle, the creative principle, the golden mean, is one of the oldest in Chinese thought, shared by all schools."[57] Unfortunately, this is inaccurate and cannot qualify as a scholarly reading of Taoism.

In reading Moore's reading of these quasi-philosophical insights, I think it might be counter-productive to measure it against scholarly interpretation of Taoist principles because we are looking at Moore's poetry instead of examining her credentials as either an art historian or sinologist. Instead, it might be more useful to ask: how are these aspects of the Tao useful to Moore? There are a few possible answers, all interconnected and all informing Moore's work on the collection *O To Be a Dragon*. First, the aesthetic representation of the human body in the character of the Tao gives Moore the embodiment she found herself lacking when she was writing "In Distrust of Merits". At the same time, Moore's Puritan moralism is likely to have found a kindred spirit in the ethical imperatives of meditated/considered conducts that, Sze declares, bring a clear vision of the Tao. Furthermore, Moore's diagnosis of modern warfare—that it is a form of both inward and outward aggression—would find in these imperatives a likely cure for what Moore calls "egotism". Sze's ideal ruler model provides Moore a discourse of integrated selfhood, a harmony between inner motivations and outward behaviour. By de-sexualizing this decidedly patriarchal discourse, Moore is also able to carve out a discursive space to propose her antidote to modern warfare, in particular the specificities of the Cold War. These conceptualizations under belt, one further step that Moore needs to take is to gauge

[57] Moore's Typescript for "Tedium and Integrity," qtd. in Zhaoming Qian, *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 225.

the legitimacy of the artistic regime as a form of resistance—a task which, according to her, is no less important than the actual battles fought or warlike tensions felt. There is a felt need for Moore to find a valid and effective art form that is not co-opted (such as the wartime radio) by propaganda from both sides and that is not ostensibly occasional as "In Distrust of Merits" which, to quote Costello again, "shows too much pressure of the news."[58]

The final, and perhaps decisive, appeal of Sze's essay for Moore lies in the connection Sze makes between painting and living: "Painting," Sze claims, "is not a profession but an extension of the art of living."[59] Moore likes the quote and uses it in her "Tedium and Integrity" lecture. It is not hard to see its attraction as a defence of poetry's relevance to the totality of social life: if painting is, as Sze claims, a fusion of Heaven (the spirit) and Earth (the painter's insight and skill), and if, like Moore proclaims, being a painter means undergoing well-rounded intellectual discipline—"not a separate proficiency to be acquired,"[60] then surely being a poet also involves holistic approach to the whole of social life that modern theory of division of labour cannot explain away. Ancient Chinese philosophy of painting, at least in Sze's outline, gives Moore the legitimacy to stake her claim of the aesthetic sphere's continuing relevance. *O To Be a Dragon* takes up this mandate to offer the reader both direct and indirect accounts of its contemporary geopolitical reality. The means by which the collection performs this task is the construction, or imagining, of places and territories.

[58] Bonnie Costello, *Marianne Moore: Imaginary Possessions* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1986), 110.
[59] Mai-mai Sze, *The Way of Chinese Painting* (New York: Random House, 1959), 8.
[60] Moore's Typescript for "Tedium and Integrity," qtd. in Zhaoming Qian, *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 225.

3.5 "Culture Combat" and Combating for Culture

Stealthily tucked away in *O To Be a Dragon* is a reprinted poem that addresses the issue of the turf war between the arts and politics in the Cold War America, "Combat Cultural". The poem, first published in *The New Yorker* in June 1959, is Moore's belated report upon seeing the Russian Moiseyev Dance Company's tour-de-force US premiere at the old Metropolitan Opera House, New York, on April 19, 1958. The poem itself has been often discarded by the scholars as an example of Moore's minor exercises in stringing rhymes and rhythms, and one scholar tried to explain it in terms of Moore's overarching philosophical concerns with opposition and integration; there has been only one attempt at connecting it to the actual Cold War context and the event memorialized in it.[61] So what was this context? The Moiseyev Dance Company was then spearheaded by Igor Moiseyev, the artistic director and choreographer famed for cross-pollinating classical ballet techniques and myriad "ethnic" folk dances, whose function was to represent cultural diversity in the USSR. The ballet company was one of the USSR's first "cultural ambassadors" sent on a US tour as part of the 1958 Lacy-Zaroubin Agreement between the US and USSR in an inter-governmental endeavour to promote mutual understanding through cultural exchange. The much politicized—and short lived—programme had multiple covert objectives but the overt one was the mutual display of the two big and complex cultures and of the (politically approved) everyday experience of their denizens. Dwight D. Eisenhower, then President of the United States explains the necessity of such programme: "Living on either side of the iron curtain, we knew nothing about each other. Diplomats and

[61] See Pamela White Hadas, *Marianne Moore: Poet of Affection* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1977), 178-79; Elizabeth Gregory, "Combat Cultural: Marianne Moore and the Mixed Brow", *Critics and Poets on Marianne Moore: "A Right Good Salvo of Barks"* ed. Linda Leavell, Christanne Miller and Robin G. Schulze. (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2005), 208-221; and Catherine Gunther Kodat, *Don't Act, Just Dance: the Metapolitics of Cold War Culture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015), 1-10.

intelligence agents supplied their leaders with information, of course, but that was not enough to gain an understanding of the other side. We had to look into each other's eyes."[62] On that April evening, the American people did look and applaud, earnestly so, in an explosive 20-minute ovation for Moiseyev's folk dancers on the night of its premier. Marianne Moore herself was in that crowd, taking minute observations, as she was wont to do, of the different dances the troupe performed—the dramatic "Partisans", a technical tour-de-force that paid tribute to the Soviet guerrilla fighters, the humoresque "City Quadrille" that poked fun at the bourgeois affectations in the Czarist Russia, and "Two Boys in a Fight," a choreographic one-liner that allegedly replicated the wrestling style of the Nganasan people (a Siberian ethnic group whose name was transliterated as "Nan-ai-ans" or "Nanayan" in the programme notes and in Moore's poem). Moore was also a guest at a luncheon organised for Moiseyev in Saint Regis Hotel on 3 May 1958, the day of the troupe's last performance.[63]

An astute observer like Moore would not, of course, ignore the subtle political agenda that occasioned the Moiseyev Dance Company's performance. In her multiple drafts of "Combat Cultural," the line "People to People/ Person to Person" appears in the centre of Moore's handwritten notes—a word coined by Eisenhower in 1956 to designate a "citizens' diplomacy" programme; the latter aimed to "*stimulate private citizens in many fields* (the arts, education, athletics, law, medicine, business) to organize themselves to reach across the sea and national boundaries to their counterparts in other lands."[64] [Italics mine] Eisenhower hoped that the coming-into-contact of citizens from two ideologically opposed camps would enable them to see

[62] Eisenhower qtd in Sergei Khrushchev, "The Cold War Through the Looking Glass," *American Heritage* (October 1999), 37.
[63] Catherine Gunther Kodat, *Don't Act, Just Dance: the Metapolitics of Cold War Culture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015), 1.
[64] Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace, 1956-1961* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1965), 410.

each other as real human beings and through such mutual understanding reduce the likeliness of actual warfare. Indeed, American news reports surrounding the Moiseyev Company's US tour featured humorous and sympathetic accounts that enabled readers to see the dancers in a humane light—anecdotes such as where the Moiseyev dancers shopped, what they wore, the girls' fondness of stuffed toys and their obsession with Elvis Presley.[65]

Sitting in the audience that night, Moore was certainly one of the "stimulated citizens". She would have been enchanted by the technical prowess of the Moiseyev dancers—the "visual fugue" of the dancers dressed as Cossack soldiers with "feet stepping as though through/harp-strings in a scherzo" and, in another sequence, the urbane pretentions of pre-revolutionary young men and women engaging in a formal quadrille, holding handkerchiefs "snapped like the crack of a whip."(*CP*, 199) Significantly, there are two versions of Russia competing for upper hand in "Combat Cultural": the Old Russia of Moore's own personal construction, comprised of cultural tropes—"the visual fugue" made up of charging Cossack cavalries and dropped handkerchiefs of Russian youths (Moore herself unabashedly admits that this is "Old Russia for me"), immortalized as aesthetic reproductions of bygone eras and extinct manners. When Moore uses the phrase "Old Russia" (Old Russ), she might be implicitly referring to the Kievan Rus, the first united East Slavic state, founded in 882, and located around the city of Kiev—a kind of epitome of old cultured civilisation, but quite afar from the Siberia. A more likely reference, and one that is more relevant to our discussion here is the old, pre-1917, pre-revolutionary Russia—the Czarist Russia as opposed to the USSR. Just as Moore constructs her

[65] Victoria Hallinan, "The 1958 Tour of the Moiseyev Dance Company: A Window into American Perception," *Journal of History and Cultures*, vol. 1, (2012): 58-59.

version of an ancient China out of a handful of museum artefacts and art history books, Moore also imagines an "Old Russia" that suits her aesthetic penchants: Moore engages in dialogue with Russian literature in "Poetry" where she queries Tolstoy's despise of "business documents and school books" (*CP*, 36) as proper material for poetry; she also mistakenly attributes a quote from her poem "In This Age of Hard Trying Nonchalance Is Good" to Dostoevsky. Moore's literary acquaintance with Russia, however, would clash with the USSR's vision of itself as a multi-ethnic empire which celebrated its diversity with an overarching narrative of Soviet solidarity. However, this highly selective picture of diversity-in-unity is of course highly ideological. Kodat makes a point that the picture is entirely erroneous, as they have both misappropriated and misrepresented the tribal people in question, and have actually treated them the same way the US and Canada treated Alaskan Eskimos.[66] The state-sanctioned performance of Moiseyev Dance Company, therefore, established the ideological parameters of the USSR territory. However, as I shall discuss in the following section, although Moore is aware of and takes issue with the USSR's territorial representation of itself, in "Combat Cultural", Moore is more occupied with the territorial battle between America and the USSR, which the last dance sequence of the performance uncannily epitomizes.

What Moore spends the most creative energy in re-presenting is the last sequence of the dance that offered to Moore a neat analogy of the Eisenhowerian cultural diplomacy:

> Old Russia, I said? Cold Russia
>
> this time: the prize bunnyhug

[66] Catherine Gunther Kodat, *Don't Act, Just Dance: the Metapolitics of Cold War Culture* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015), 2-4.

platform-piece of experts in the

trip-and-slug of wrestlers in a rug.

"Sacked" and ready for bed apparently—

with a jab, a kick, pinned to the wall,

they work toward the edge and stick;

stagger off, and one is victim of a

flipflop—leg having circled leg as thick.

(*CP*, 199)

As the documentary footage records, in this particular dance, what appears to be two figures dressed in thick Arctic garment with fur-trimmed hood emerge onto the stage, locking each other in a tight clench as they proceed to the centre of the stage, each trying to out-manoeuver the other by a series of leg-kicking and flinging.[67] At one moment, one party forces the other onto the wall whilst the other wriggles fiercely to get out of the deadlock. At another moment the two figures veer dangerously onto the verge as one party tries to push the other off stage, legs dangling over the edge of the orchestra pit. The balance is regained between adversaries just seconds afterwards as the other party managed to secure a foothold and stood up again. This whole slapstick contest would undoubtedly seem to Moore an apt choreographic representation of "brinksmanship"—a foreign policy during the Cold War where a country would push a dangerous issue or event to the edge to persuade one's

[67] The Kultur International VHS recording of "Two Boys in A Fight" of Moiseyev Dance Company's 1994 performance is available to gain a glimpse of the performance.

opposition to retreat. It is a perfect example of contending for territorial control and staking sovereign claims.

> "Some art, because of high quality,
> is unlikely to command high sales";
> yes, yes; but here, oh no;
> not with the frozen North's Nan-ai-ans
> of the sack in their tight touch-and-go.
>
> These battlers, dressed identically—
> just one person—may, by seeming twins,
> point to a moral, should I confess;
> we must cement the parts of any
> objective symbolic of *sagesse*.

(*CP*, 199-200)

In these stanzas following the sketch of "Two Boys in a Fight", Moore herself performs a rhetoric dance of equivocation. The quotation comes without reference; in fact, it is likely that Moore is ventriloquising, staging an artificial debate with herself. Yes, for all high art's self-prized elitism and its desire for distinction, it is unlikely to "command high sales". The "yes, yes", then, seem to be affirming both high art's claim of innate virtue and its commercial unpopularity, but what is Moore negating in the second half of the line? Does this negation imply that Moiseyev dancers' performance is not high art (indeed it is more of a bravura spectacle intended for mass

appeal), or that it does sell well? Either interpretation seems plausible, and either could be informed by Moore's more than cursory knowledge of the ballet (she wrote an article on the ballet dancer Anna Pavlova in 1944). The equivocation continues into the next stanza when Moore hints at but slyly stops short of delineating outright just what the "moral" these battlers of "the frozen North's Nan-ai-ans" reveal.

Fortunately for the readers, Moore allays our hermeneutical difficulty by the pair of dashes—"just one person"—disclosing the battlers' secret in the last minute: the two figures were performed by one dancer. In this context, it is important to note that, rather than giving us the exact representation of the dance piece as such, Moore recreates in the poem the experience of watching "Two Boys in A Fight": the readers of the poem, just like the audience of the Moiseyev performance, only realize they have been deceived in the last instant. They may, like Moore, ponder what moral the visual illusion reveals to them. The double irony of the stanza is better elaborated by looking at the subtle manipulation of what is perceived as the Nan-ai-ans' ethnic dance. Victoria Hallinan has examined the shifts regarding representations of different nationalities within the Soviet Union in mid-1930s. According to her research, in the years leading up to and during World War II, Stalin increasingly feared that emphasis on different ethnic cultures within the Soviet Union would undermine their loyalty to the regime. Hence an overarching Russian identity and culture were beginning to gain discursive force, "cemented" (as Moore so aptly puts it) in Stalin's December 1935 speech about the Friendship of the Peoples. The Moiseyev Dance Company was formed under the order of the Soviet Union as part of the grand cultural-political scheme. It boasted of being representative of "authentic" folk dances while in fact various ethnic choreographic styles were often synthesized or distilled in a grand

vision of Soviet solidarity.[68] Meanwhile, the Nganasan (Nan-ai-ans) people, like most other indigenous tribes in the USSR, were suffering social state's neglect and forceful assimilation. We are not sure how much knowledge Moore had about the Moiseyev Dance Company's history and the Soviet Union's cultural policy at the time. Nevertheless, Moore's decision to scrutinize the very last dance belies her sensitivity about the stitched pastiche of the performance which was all too positive and affirming of the allegedly multiculturalism in Soviet Union.

In fact, as a trope, "Two Boys in A Fight" works to undermine its own message. The Moiseyev Dance Company was keen to showcase the wrestling style of the Nan-ai-ans people, thereby both awing the audience by the dancer's dexterity and demonstrating the cultural-unity-in-diversity of the Soviet people. Nevertheless, Moore's reading turns such intention on its head by appropriating the same trope and announcing, however subtly, that we can, if we are careful observers like Moore, see through this politically charged spectacle. The "objective symbolic of *sagesse*" that is worth "cementing" (the same way Moiseyev stitched together "representative" ethnic dances), then, is the fact that art and politics, although seemingly two distinct realms, actually crisscross in intricate ways in the Cold War. Cultural products exported in the Cold War were especially susceptible to political manipulation which undermined their authenticity and strength. As such, "we" (the American citizens and the Soviet people) never really "look[ed] into each other's eyes", however Eisenhower might have wished. However, this is not to say that art is entirely subjected to political manoeuvre. Politics can dictate the forms and channels through which art is to be made and disseminated, but very rarely is it able to control its reception and

[68] Victoria Hallinan, "The 1958 Tour of the Moiseyev Dance Company: A Window into American Perception," *Journal of History and Cultures*, Vol. 1, (2012): 54-55.

interpretation. Hence, when facing the ever increasing subdivision and combinations of territoriality, it is the poet's mandate to be constantly alert to the power politics of cultural diplomacy and to replace the political territorial combat with a metaphysical territorial combat whenever opportunity presents itself.[69] Moore's take on "Two Boys in A Fight" is a case in point: poetry contends with politics in a turf war for hermeneutic authority and wins, with fanfare.

3.6 On Dragons and Cold War Subjecthood

If "Combat Cultural" is a palpable response to the Cold War cultural diplomacy between the U.S government and the Soviet Union, other poems in *O To Be a Dragon* address the Cold War in more subtle ways as a response to the Cold War formation of selfhood. Moore had every reason to be careful when writing about the Cold War; a number of her close poetic allies, William Carlos Williams included, had already felt the pressures of the McCarthy era. The all-but-too-real fear of being persecuted was enough to deter her from direct representation; hence comes the equivocation in "Combat Cultural". For her other Cold War poems, she needed extra circumspection. This was when Sze's essay became immensely useful for Moore. First and foremost, Sze provided Moore with an image: the oriental dragon, Sze claims, is "the symbol of the idea of the Tao, giving it substance and vividly illustrating its main aspects." [70] It is the most fantastical Oriental animal, Sze continues, an ensemble of at least nine other creatures: "it carries on its forehead horns resembling the antlers of a stag. It has the head of a camel, the eyes of a hare, the ears of a bull, the neck of a snake, the belly

[69] Sack speaks of the fact that territories are prolific. In other words, "territory can help engender more territoriality." Hence the real-world conflict between world powers find its parallel in the struggle for authentic art. See Robert D. Sack, *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 34.
[70] Mai-mai Sze, *The Way of Chinese Painting* (New York: Random House, 1959), 96.

of a frog, scales like a fish, talons like an eagle, and paws like a tiger."[71] Although a mighty creature, the oriental dragon is a beneficent power that symbolizes the majesty of law and high morality. Moore's understanding of the dragon, apart from being influenced by Sze's pictorial delineation of its shape, also has echoes of what Laurence Binyon states in *The Flight of the Dragon* (a book Moore has perused with care)—"the soul identified itself with the wind which bloweth where it listeth, with the cloud and the mist that melt away in rain, and are drawn up again into the air; and this sovereign energy of the soul, fluid, penetrating, ever-changing, took form in the symbolic Dragon."[72] The dragon's versatility and power are obviously attractive traits for Moore, not the least because of its hybridity and defiance of established boundaries as it freely dwells wherever it pleases. This is why Moore uses it as the main image to the opening poem in *O To Be a Dragon*:

> If I, like Solomon, . . .
>
> could have my wish—
>
> my wish. . . O to be a dragon,
>
> a symbol of the power of Heaven—of silkworm
>
> size or immense; at times invisible.
>
> Felicitous phenomenon!
>
> (*CP*, 177)

[71] Ibid., 126.
[72] Laurence Binyon, *The Flight of the Dragon: An Essay on the Theory and Practice of Art in China and Japan Based on Original Sources* (London: John Murray, 1911), 33.

The lyric tone of this Cold War poem is distinctly different from the heroic-epic tone of "In Distrust of Merits." Contrary to the latter poem's trumpet sound for battle—"Hate-hardened heart, O heart of iron,/iron is iron till it is rust./There never was a war that was/not inward; I must fight till I have conquered in myself what/causes war," the lyric voice in "O To Be a Dragon" is wistful, whimsical, suggestive of a child's fantasy. The irregular punctuations, haphazard stanzaic arrangement and use of subjunctive mood all give the poem a sense of imbalance. It is a deliberate evocation of the staccato, discontinuous, a-logical and non-linear progression of thought typical of a child indulging in imaginative flight. The endnote to the poem indicates that Solomon's wish is to "have an understanding heart." Interestingly, Moore's own wish veers from the desire for empathy. Instead she asks to be like the oriental dragon—powerful and changeable. Fantasy operates on principle of compensation, making up of what we cannot have in the real world. When Moore was writing "In Distrust of Merits" more than a decade ago, she was the spokeswoman of the civilian voice, at times commended, at times condemned for her efforts, powerless at the hands of (largely male) critics under whose hands her poetry was rendered malleable. Because of its imaginative (hence a-logical) nature, the literary language of fantasy, however, offers the trappings of a (seemingly) single, private and authentic lyrical voice; it operates as the very opposite of the collective language of the newspaper/broadcast in which the buzzwords were "the communist regime", "USSR's Eastern bloc", "Free World", and "the American people." It is for this strategic reason that Moore takes up the symbol of the dragon and its associated landscape. Further, without direct reference to and representation of the Cold War, the poem manages to stay under the radar, that is, away from critical-political scrutiny.

The next question that begs a proper answer is: if the poem does indeed seem remote from direct representation of the Cold War, how does one justify a political reading of it? The problems of representing the Cold War is, of course, that it is a *cold* war, meaning there was no large-scale "total" war between America and Russia, despite several proxy wars (Vietnam War and the Korean War for instance) supported by the two sides. Instead, extensive propaganda campaigns were launched by both superpowers to expose the other side's alleged evils and to extol the superiority of their own ideologies. In other words, the Cold War was largely a war of words and discourses. And words and discourses are the bread of poets: they understand the power of utterance and the power of its omission, or equivocation.

The Cold War doctrines worked in tandem with each other and discursively framed (thus controlled) the American life in numerous venues and under sundry rubrics during the period. The aesthetic sphere too is innately rooted in the macro-and-micro operations of power manifested through discursive permeation. Both containment and intrusion play with the spatial metaphors that carry connotations of boundaries, borders and demarcation, all of which suggests a strong sense of territoriality. When a crisis was perceived in preserving an "integrated," autonomous, "free" and private selfhood, sovereign over itself, this "structure of feeling" also manifested itself in the arts. It fills the gap between political institutions and private subjectivity. More pertinently to our discussion here, the re-emergence of the lyrical, dreamy "I" in "O To Be a Dragon" as a single, inviolable voice is in line with Moore's new emphasis on the integrity of subjectivity. However, Moore's lyrical avatar is not a mere literary recapitulation of the Cold War selfhood. In fact, the poem disrupts such conceptualization through carefully negotiated spatial strategies. The dragon is "a symbol of the power of Heaven", as Moore puts it, or the incarnation of

the Tao as the integrating force; it is capable not only of changing shape ("at will it could change and be the size of a silkworm or swell so large"), but also of being in constant movement ("slumbering in the deep or winging across the Heaven."[73]) In other words, the dragon captures the precarious balance of an embodied abstraction. In eulogizing this oriental symbol's spatial elasticity, Moore defies the regulatory operations of national territory: the proliferation of territoriality from national boundaries to body territory is interrogated by Moore through the identification with the changing body of the dragon. With her specific negotiation of space/place, Moore opens a discursive space for a more powerful selfhood—one that does not depend on constant guard and tight control, on setting boundaries and protecting borders, or on keeping a black-or-white dualistic mentality. However, Moore is also watchful to keep it just within the realm of possibility: the subjunctive mood ("If I could have my wish") suggests that wish-fulfilment might not happen; the combined use of fantasy and mythology gives the poem an otherworldly outlook that keeps certain distance from realistic representation. It is in this sense that I insist "O To Be a Dragon" must be read as a calculated response to the Cold War selfhood.

Yet "O To Be a Dragon" is not the only poem in this collection that addresses the issue of subject formation. The first four poems in the collection ("O To Be a Dragon", "I May, I Might, I Must", "A Jelly-fish" and "To A Chameleon") are united in their concern with a subject-matter that, unlike "Combat Cultural", is not directly reflective of the Cold War events but resonates with Cold War's "structure of feeling". Moore's biographer Charles Molesworth reads the quadriad to denote "the persistence of

[73] Moore's Typescript for "Tedium and Integrity," qtd. in Zhaoming Qian, *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 228.

selfhood."[74] They are all short, single-stanza poem. In fact, "I May, I Might, I Must", "A Jelly-fish", and "To A Chameleon" are all reprints from Moore's juvenilia at least five decades before—the first from *Tipyn O'Bob*, the second appearing in the *Egoist* in May 1916 and the last composed at Bryn Mawr. Molesworth claims that "by printing these four poems together in the opening pages of the book, Moore is suggesting a complex understanding of the self, a cultural construct that is […] given to us only by our interplay with others."[75] I argue that while Molesworth is correct in linking the poems with Moore's "complex understanding of the self", his diagnosis needs to be further elucidated to reveal their relevance to Cold War territoriality.

I May, I Might, I Must

If you will tell me why the fen

appears impassable, I then

will tell you why I think that I

can get across it if I try.

(*CP*, 178)

Territory needs communication in order for it to be valid. One way of doing it is through verbal warning—"Don't go anywhere nearer or I'll have to shoot you!" "I May, I Might, I Must" continues from "O To Be a Dragon" in presenting a defiant voice that dares to defy pre-established boundaries—the fen might appears impassable to the interlocutor, or it might just be that the interlocutor is cowing the speaker to submission—"If you will tell me" is rich in implications. The poem starts in a dialogic mode, however only one side of the conversation is presented. What seems to

[74] Charles Molesworth, *Marianne Moore: A Literary Life* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 401.
[75] Ibid.

have been truncated is the admonition from the interlocutor ("Don't cross the fen! It's impassible!") Further, it is not some random places that the speaker is transgressing but the fen—a low, marshy area whose soft waterclogged ground poses great difficulty, if not danger, to those who want to go across it. Highlighted instead is Moore's (or the speaker's) defiant response to the cautionary note. Moore's dialogism asks for explanations and advocates transgressive endeavours. It counters the admonition by asking the interlocutor to explain themselves. The three modal auxiliary verbs—may, might, must—indicate first a wavering, then a re-affirmation of the determination of the speaker to transgress (literally, to step beyond) some pre-conceived borders—a defiant act which could potentially place the poet in actual danger during the Cold War, and that is perhaps why the dialogue appears so truncated.

If "I May, I Might, I Must" dramatizes the act of boundary crossing, then "A Jelly-fish" takes the feminized body of a jelly-fish for a second look at embodied porous boundaries:

A Jelly-fish

Visible, invisible,

a fluctuating charm

an amber-tinctured amethyst

inhabits it, your arm

approaches and it opens

and it closes; you had meant

to catch it and it quivers;

you abandon your intent.

(*CP*, 180)

"A Jelly-fish" continues with politics of body territory but works in a different direction. The feminized body of the jellyfish writes off demands of territoriality through its translucency and insubstantiality, its porous boundaries and its vulnerability. "The power of the visible is the invisible", claims Moore in an earlier poem "He 'Digesteth Harde Yron.'" In "A Jelly-fish" Moore therefore questions whether it would be more powerful to have high walls around one's ego, impregnable to external infiltration, or whether it wouldn't be a more potent gesture to be willing to accept the inter-permeable nature of selfhood and through this way frustrate intentional exploitations by forms of authority to catch it and contain it.

But "To A Chameleon" is, I think, Moore's most sophisticated answer to the Cold War territoriality. Moore has a penchant for reptiles and dragons which are reptile's mythical counterpart. Continuing from her earlier poem "The Plummet Basilisk", published in 1932 which engages with another member of the lizard family, "To A Chameleon" takes on again another clade of lizards—the chameleon, infamous for its ability to change its skin coloration:

To A Chameleon

Hid by the august foliage and fruit

of the grape-vine

twine

your anatomy

round the pruned and polished stem,

Chameleon.

Fire laid upon

an emerald as long as

the Dark King's massy

one,

could not snap the spectrum up for food

as you have done.

(*CP*, 179)

The chameleon is a self-referential poem which, while celebrating the natural cunningness of the lizard, also intimates Moore's mimetic desire to address sensitive political issues without exposing herself. It is no small coincidence that the first word of the poem is "hid", just as the message of this poem is concealed under seemingly innocent zoological observations. The chameleon's everyday resourcefulness would embody what Moore perceives to be the essence of the Tao—"the necessary balance between the development of one's inner resources and the evidence of this in every activity." [76] It typifies Moore's insistence of the ready-to-hand, individualized resistance and tenacity against a hostile environment. The chameleon shares the spirit of the dragon—another member of the lizard family—in its mutability: it is a master of camouflage, blending in seamlessly with its immediate environment ("at times invisible", as Moore says in "O To Be a Dragon"). The visual verisimilitude of the stanza to the shape of the chameleon is, I think, Moore's conscious attempt at re-enchanting the textual with the imagistic. The embodied perception is exactly what

[76] Moore's Typescript for "Tedium and Integrity,"qtd. in Zhaoming Qian, *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 225.

Cold War ideology is trying to wipe out: the arbitrarily imposed national boundaries deny the fact that nature knows no abstract ambit but must thrive where it finds inhabitable ground. Splintered into two contrapuntal halves around the word "Chameleon", the first half celebrates the natural symbiosis between the chameleon's body and the foliage and fruit of the grape-vine, the close intertwining of the chameleon and the stem. The intermingling of the chameleon's body territory and nature is strategically employed for its survival. The second half of the poem compares the chameleon to the gemstone that Pluto—"the Dark King"—holds in his hands and then finds the chameleon superior. True, in an emerald you find a "purer" form of greenness, but it loses the liveliness, verve and capacity for change that only a truly living organism embodies—its "inner resources" practiced in everyday activities. Bonnie Costello reads the poem as a "private praise of another artist" like Moore and the chameleon as incarnation of the poetic genius who "has no single, tangible form, but takes on its identity according to its context."[77] I suggest that we should take the reading further, aligning it with a counter structure of feeling that advocates an alternative mode of being-in-place, of authentic dwelling instead of political delineation of domicile subjects. To express this counter-feeling, Moore needed to (re)imagine China.

Through tracing the genealogy of *O To Be a Dragon*, I have endeavored to not only explore the subterranean poetics of the Cold War and its imagined territories, but also to suggest that we could afford a more comprehensive view on Orientalism, paying special attention to the two-way traffic in the cultural transmission. While Moore's reception of Chinese art found in *The Tao of Painting* was pre-determined by

[77] Bonnie Costello, *Marianne Moore: Imaginary Possessions* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1986), 136.

her affinity with modernist writers such as Pound, her Puritan heritage and her mythologizing of an essentially aesthetic East (hence at the risk of a self-reflexive gaze), she also managed to deploy this combination of dynamics to propose a (poetic) politics of relation that is the exact opposite of the Orientalising gaze. We need to also acknowledge that in the intersections between Orientalist writing, gender, territoriality and war, there is also always something enabling or creative: it is this force that Moore found necessary for the promotion of new forms of expression, power and poetic freedom.

Conclusion

What is that 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

—T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*[1]

Where better to provide a comparative picture of the new and the old modernist studies and their politics of place than a glimpse of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, a modernist masterpiece of canonical status that is cluttered with places and sites both ancient and modern, realistic and mythical? *The Waste Land* captures the mood of modernist degeneracy and ennui and at the same time offers a sense of hope, however dim it might be, of renewal and rejuvenation. Eliot is an expert in painting an apocalyptic vision: the sound of primordial lament, the nameless crowd swarming over the plain and the falling towers of great cities of past and present civilizations. This dark perception of the end of the world is accentuated by the way places represented in this short excerpt: they are fundamentally palimpsestic. Not only is the

[1] *PE*, 69.

city over the mountains strongly evocative of sacred religious sites and classical city states, the way they are juxtaposed with each other suggests continuity, and tradition from biblical and classical times to its modern efflorescence. The act of pronouncing them "unreal" also warrants our attention: are they unreal in the sense that, by the time Eliot was composing the poem, they were merely modern relics of distant pasts and vanished civilizations? Is Eliot placing London, the capital of the empire where he was naturalized as a citizen, on the downhill slope of cultural history? Finally, where is Eliot's speaker positioned when observing this dismal scene? Answers to these place-related questions present a conventional picture of what modernism is, a picture that this doctoral thesis has challenged and made nuanced.

In traditional modernist studies, the spatial parameters of investigation were often coterminous with the urban sites where the masterpieces were born—London, Berlin, Vienna, Chicago and New York. The invocations of Baudelaire and his Parisian metropolitan crowds and solitary flâneurs are frequently found in early scholarship; G. M. Hyde, for instance, comments that "it could be argued that Modernist literature was born in the city and with Baudelaire—especially with his discovery that crowds mean loneliness and that the terms 'multitude' and 'solitude' are interchangeable for a poet with an active and fertile imagination."[2] The New Modernist Studies, whose methodological impulses this doctoral thesis follows, interrogate and often challenge this "natural" and indissoluble association of modernist literature with the metropolis and of modernist writers with "the men of 1914". In many ways, modernism was intrinsically linked with, and/or sustained by, the geographical hierarchy of high capitalism. The difference between the old and the new modernist studies is that the

[2] G. M. Hyde, "The Poetry of the City," *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930*, eds. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (London: Penguin Books,1976), 337.

former takes the hierarchy for granted and studies only literatures from the "centre(s)" whereas the latter interrogates the basis of this assumption by concentrating its critical energy on debunking the myth. Drawing on new patterns of connections and intersections, the new modernist studies seek to constellate different scales and scopes of space and location, juxtapose literary productions from the "centre" with those from the "margin" and co-relate the literary with the cultural and the technological. The study of place representations in modernist poetry, which is my particular concern, finds concord with the new territoriality of modernist studies, too. This doctoral thesis absorbs the new methodology of crossing scales, sites, and types of spatial existence in its critical examination of the poetics and politics of place in the poetry of T. S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore. Its methodological commitment is to comparatively explore the representations of different spatial categories in their poetry—Eliot's London Underground, Williams's typographical surface and Moore's imagined territory of China.

The purpose of this project has therefore been to cast the productions of space in their works within a wider network of public policies, sociological discourses and international relations and evaluate the agency of literary works within this complex formation of power politics. By looking at the forms and manifestations of place in their poetry and investigating their engagements with contemporary social and political contexts, my project has also sought to uncover how representations of place in modernist poetry evolved from the interwar period to the Cold War era. Emphasizing this long trajectory, the thesis also articulates my belief in modernist continuities across a longer and more variable time-span, and inclusive of the Cold War period.

Conceived within these parameters, my project has confirmed that the dynamics of place representation in modernist poetry involve complicated interactions between the country and the city, between the textual and the social, and between the west and the oriental. The poems under discussion in this thesis—from T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, through William Carlos Williams's *Paterson*, to Marianne Moore's *O To be A Dragon*—all testify that modernism is a global phenomenon that takes root differently in various sites and places, and that the latter may be, but do not have to be the locations where the writer was born, where s/he lived, or even which s/he visited. The time-span of my project traverses two decades of large-scale transformation where place representation dialectically interacted with sociological change in that it both represents and challenges. The literary works selected in this project present this shift in distinct fashions: I have argued in my first chapter that T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* problematises the techniques of spatial enchantment that moulded subjects passing through the locale—a strategy that under Eliot's contemporary circumstances is losing its power. Proceeding from and contrasting with Eliot's internationalism, in the second chapter I have explored how William Carlos Williams's *Paterson* reaffirms the importance of a small-scale locality as a knowable, graspable totality that offers an alternative to the metropolitan system (a leviathan that leaves its residents reeling with nausea and confusion). In the final chapter, I have taken a transnational approach and investigated how Marianne Moore's *O To be A Dragon* constructs in imagination an phantastically projected enclave in order to re-imagine a non-possessive place politics and counter the prevalent Cold War ideology that demands an exclusive and xenophobic territoriality.

I have found it essential to adopt both phenomenological and social/materialist theories of place in the discussion of the three modernist poets. While my

investigation has been attuned to the sensory richness and experiential diversity of the poetry under discussion, I have also critically scrutinized the subtle ways in which the spatial imagination and their affective impact in the poetry are politically coded as poetic. I have brought these two approaches into dialogue and utilized a variety of concepts that the recent theories of place by proposed by Edward Casey, Yi-fu Tuan, Edward Soja, Michel de Certeau and many others have highlighted. Two features of place that these theories emphasize are of direct relevance to my project: a) how place is a fundamental cognitive and epistemological tool by which we know the world and ourselves, and b) how place is a social product whose construction can be deciphered to uncover its ideological functions. These two aspects have been the key questions/problems that guided my inquiry. Taking on a materialist perspective, I have been particularly cautious when delineating an author's sense of being-in-place. Raymond Williams's concept of "structure of feeling" has been instrumental in getting this sense of placedness without simplification and it informs all of the chapters in relating the affective with the political. With an added phenomenological perspective, I have highlighted how the authors' lived experience of a particular site is reflected in the way place is mapped in their work. I have demonstrated, for instance, that Eliot's actual living condition in the 1930s, as he frequently rode on the Tube and moved between the metropolitan centre and the rural countryside, moulded the particular chronotopes in *Four Quartets*.

Adopting the lens of social construction theory, I have analysed how the Cold War discourse of territoriality engendered a perception that place, especially sovereign territory, needs vigilant watch and proactive, even aggressive, defence. This pervasive affective cluster of possessiveness and guardedness further gave rise to a closed-minded subjectivity that advocated rigid boundaries—a state of affairs that

Marianne Moore opposed in her own displaced poetics. My investigation of the latter's poetry has shown that social discourses in different spheres are mutually contagious and that political propaganda in terms of international relations easily penetrates private discourses of individual subjectivity. Interweaving an emphasis on the textuality of space and place in this social-construction perspective, I have investigated Williams's use of the textual surface as a particular site of struggle. In this chapter I have illustrated how textual and social spaces and places are co-productive. Here I have found particularly useful Edward Soja's notion of Thirdspace. The theory of Thirdspace informs both the Eliot and the Williams chapters, demonstrating how place and place representations exist side by side with each other in Thirdspace. For instance, in the Eliot chapter, I have paid special attention to the way a site such as the English rose-garden becomes charged with personal and national memories—a site where by we become aware of our own past and the nation's history—and how such knowledge, when represented in literary work, is then used as a disciplinary force in the subject-formation of those who pass through the locale and who read the poem from the pages. In my discussion of Williams's poetics, I have specifically foregrounded the affinity between Williams's notion of the poem as a field of action and Soja's Thirdspace as the active space of hope and change and democratic action. The poem becomes the nexus where the personal and the collective, the real and the represented come together as an indivisible unity with mutually influential components.

Place representation and the foregrounding of issue of place are common leitmotifs among modernist writers, and a variety of modernists could have served an inquiry in the poetics and politics of place. The reason why I have chosen T. S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore as the focal points of this doctoral

thesis is that the triad they form enables a discussion of the matrix of interconnected place-centred issues, conditioned by the same (if internally diversified) cultural-discursive network. Not only did all the three poets have personal and literary relationships with each other, as briefly discussed in the introduction of the thesis, but their works, when taken collectively, also illuminate the fretted relationships, firstly, between the literary production and their socio-political contexts, and, secondly, among the literary works themselves as a network of affiliations as well as contentions. For instance, *Four Quartets* epitomizes Eliot's search for a new paradigm of place-bound collective identity in interwar Britain, a time of great demographical changes and spatial re-configurations that were reflected in the decline of traditional English locales, deterioration of agriculture and degeneration of suburbia. Eliot's answer to such seismic social transformations was a dialectical re-making of modern subjectivity, built largely upon a theological framework Eliot takes from his Anglican faith, but also upon a newly invigorated discourse of Englishness in the context of imperial decline. Further, in the second chapter, I have chosen Williams as a comparator because his *Paterson* subtly engages with Eliot's high-minded political agenda while presenting his own place poetics as a viable, localized and home-grown alternative. *Paterson* engages with its contemporary context in terms of the American myth of self-sufficient local governance—one that Paterson, New Jersey, as a medium-size industrial city epitomizes. I have pointed out in various places in the second chapter that Williams is a prime example of a self-contained place poetics that mimics the locale it is trying to present—as opposed to the more European-sourced poetics that Eliot adopts. Taking up the social-constructivist perspective, however, I have also discussed how the commodity culture's reification of everyday "things" had a tremendous impact on Williams's reactive positioning of a

small, concentrated locality as a graspable and knowable object, and how punctuation marks have accentuated the objecthood of the poetic text. Lastly, Marianne Moore's *O To be A Dragon* also echoes the anxiety of territorial control and ideological struggle in mid-century America. The source book Moore used as inspiration for the titular poem contains newspaper clippings of American mainstream media's representation of Cold War politics and her poetry collection itself contains poems that document the USSR and US campaigns of cultural diplomacy. These poetic texts, then, are themselves receptacles, emplacing and arranging the order of things and events that reverberate within their bounds.

Charting through the socio-political relevance of their works, it has become clear that the three poets I have studied in this project are actively engaged with their historicities. Their poetry, as I have consistently emphasized in this thesis, is not mere representation of reality (hence mimetic), but must be read as an actor within a specific discursive network. In fact, the three works I have analyzed in this thesis are constantly in dialogue not only with their contexts, which I have summarized in the preceding paragraph, but also with each other. I have particularly looked at both their affinities and their discrepancies: Eliot and Williams are often placed side by side as literary rivals, Eliot the cosmopolitan pitted against Williams the localist, whereas Moore has often been seen as the mediator between the two extremes. I have both affirmed and challenged this picture in my analysis. There are, of course, marked differences in their poetry, and these are often glossed overtly. For instance, in the Preface to *Paterson*, Williams himself makes thinly-veiled attacks on the American expatriate poets such as Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot who abandoned their American roots for a more cosmopolitan flair, and compares them to a pack of dogs which have run out after the rabbits, leaving only the lame one standing on three legs (Williams

himself) to dig a musty bone that is the American literary heritage.[3] Readers familiar with *The Waste Land* are likely to find that Williams might be parodying the Stetson episode in the poem: "Stetson!/You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!/That corpse you planted last year in your garden,/Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?/Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?/Oh keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,/Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!" Careful readers, however, may want to probe further into these surface and/or professed discrepancies in subject matter and in poetic sensibilities, especially in relation to the question of the place. Eliot's poetry is never really "rootless"—London looms large behind *The Waste Land*, and *Four Quartets* teems with places of personal and familial memories. Williams's purported localist quest, I have argued, is similar to late Eliot's search for the foundation of a post-war European community in that they both take the local as the originary site for a wider communal vision. I have also read Moore's poetry as an effort to construct a collective identity—a dissenting community that identifies with non-Western aesthetic traditions and alternative subjectivities. In the last reading, I have placed Moore in relation to both Eliot and Williams. I have noted the gender difference in terms of emplacement and contrasted Moore's discomfort with the possessive (male) gaze at the landscape in "A Grave" and the way Eliot's male speaker moves with ease in the rose garden episode of "Burnt Norton." Moore's quiet dissenting voice in *O To be A Dragon* is also placed side by side with Williams's more clamant proclamation of independence and self-sufficiency in *Paterson*.

It is vital to identify such variegations of mode and scale of (emplaced) poetic pronouncement. One must be attentive to similarly dynamic moves within each poetic text, though. While we look at literary works as things that has an inherent surface-

[3] See, T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909-1962* (London: Faber & Faber, 1963), 65.

depth structure and whose "hidden" messages, therefore, need careful excavation to be disclosed, the "surface" of these literary works also warrant our continuous attention because they are what we initially (and perhaps consistently) find enchanting, pleasing, provocative or repulsing—they are that which evokes the whole spectrum of our affective response. Guided by this imperative to look closely at the textual surface, I have first meticulously interweaved the socio-political context with close reading of the poetry and highlighted how the perceived "literary flair" of these poems are part and parcel of its place politics: in the Eliot chapter, for example, I have analyzed how the structure of the quartets, especially the first and the third movements, form counterpoint with each other which finds concord with the ascent and descent of Underground journeys; the Williams chapter is dedicated to the scrutiny of the peculiar typography—the way text organizes itself on the page—of Williams's epic poem. I have paid particular attention to the way the two punctuation marks, exclamation mark and dash, shape the poem's visual outlook and related it to Paterson's localist poetics. With regard to the textual space in Moore, I have aligned the short, truncated verse of many poems in *O To be A Dragon* with the elusive, fluid subjectivity that Moore, I argue, is advocating stealthily. I have also read poems like "To A Chameleon" as suggestive of Moore's poetics of embodiment, pointing to the potential of reality learning from the literary instead of the other way around.

In assessing these literary productions, I have been mindful to keep a certain critical distance—another spatial metaphor to trope the relation between literature and their critics—from the literary texts I study in this project. In retrospect, however, I realize I have been more sceptical of the works that have been enshrined as part of the literary canon and whose author was located in a more advantageous position in the power relations of literary network. Hence my discussion of T. S. Eliot's *Four*

Quartets was not without a healthy blend of cynicism and enthusiasm, which underlines the enchanting effect of the verse and its (sometimes markedly conservative and elitist) political connotations. I have treated the other two poets and the (fate of) their works with more critical sympathy while also being aware that such critical sympathy needs careful qualification. Those who try to voice a more egalitarian poetics often do not guarantee consistency in their efforts, although they merit our praise (with some reservations). In the Williams chapter, for instance, I have particularly noted how the fifth book deviates significantly from the political agenda in the previous books; in the Moore chapter, while paying tribute to Moore's courage to voice an alternative mode of subjectivity, I have also highlighted how Moore's poetics of anti-territoriality is based on her misconstrued reading of Taoism and that the material channels through which Moore became aware of Chinese aesthetics were fraught with processes of exoticising and self-exoticising of an imaginary, aesthetic East.

All the three works in this doctoral thesis have received critical acclaim since their publication and have continued to be read and re-read among new generations of readers and critics. Their continued popularity demands constant renewal of critical attention. This doctoral thesis has taken the place poetics of the three works as its central concern, using place theories to show both how place makes itself known to us as readers in these works of poetry, how we reveal and construct it imaginatively as recepients of the poetic message, and how the disclosing and imaginative reconfiguration process entails an engagement with the politics of poetics. It is my hope that this investigation will lead to an enriched understanding of the subtle and various ways in which T. S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore encode political messages in the way they represent place in their poetry. Finally, my

project has suggested that in the three decades in which these works were written, place perception and representation went through some dramatic changes, which were borne out by masterpieces in modernist poetry. It left me with one message: that it is crucial to be perceptive of our experience of place, its changeable nature and its underpinning politics, and to be aware of the effects that transformations of our place-imagination have on both our everyday life and our poetry. We are emplaced, but we also create places, transform them. It is the recognition of both the heights to which the latter activity can reach and the fact that we all share in that activity that draws us perpetually to poetic masterpieces of place.

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