

Modernist Eschatology: T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, H.D.'s
Trilogy, and The Second World War Apocalypse

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores the degree to which T.S. Eliot's (1888-1965) *Four Quartets* (1936-42) and H.D.'s (1886-1961) *Trilogy* (1944-46) engage in eschatological discourse. Both Eliot and H.D. treat the Second World War as apocalyptic, prompting each poet to rely on eschatological writing as a means of resisting wartime injustices. Paradoxically, a primary manner in which each poet deploys their eschatology is through a discussion of Incarnational theology. This study relies upon Christian theology as a methodology for understanding the various Christian allusions within each poem, providing a reading that seeks to reconfigure scholarly understandings of Eliot's and H.D.'s wartime epics.

Dedication

For Adriane

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Introduction

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

- T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding," *Four Quartets*.

this is the new Eve who comes

clearly to return, to retrieve
what she lost the race,

given over to sin, to death;
she brings the Book of Life, obviously.

- H.D., "Tribute to the Angels," *Trilogy*.

Over 40,000 civilians were killed by the Luftwaffe's aerial assault on England from 1940-41. From the autumn of 1940 through to the winter of 1941, London was repeatedly victim to Nazi Germany's "nightly" attacks (Smith 74). In Central and Eastern London, ninety percent of homes were destroyed or damaged (Smith 89). Germany's nighttime aerial attack on England, which came to be known as the Blitz (Parker 51), destroyed large portions of London, causing one BBC broadcaster to comment, "The flames are leaping up in the air now [...] The smoke is going very slowly now and [St. Paul's Cathedral is] just illuminated faintly. It's almost like the Day of Judgment as pictured in some of the old books" (Smith 80). Indeed, the dark skyline illuminated by destructive fire certainly did bear resemblance to the biblical apocalypse. Though the threat of Second World War apocalypse undoubtedly caused terror in many England residents, Prime Minister Winston Churchill persisted with messages that were "the combination of uplifting calls to duty with cloudy but encouraging visions of a better future" (Parker 44). A vision of a better future, I will argue, is precisely what T.S.

Eliot and H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) hope to convey in the modernist epics they wrote during the Second World War.

Eliot ascribed to a traditional, dogmatic Christianity characterised by his disdain for liberalism, rejection of secularism, and, eventually, totalitarianism. *Four Quartets* (1935-42) is Eliot's masterpiece, and it is within this poem that Eliot construes Europe, because of the Second World War, as in the midst of an apocalypse. Eliot's eschatological poem thus turns to the Incarnated Messiah, the "still point" (Eliot, *FQ* 119) in a chaotic world, as the answer to "Adam's curse" (Eliot, *FQ* 127). Reaching the eschaton, therefore, is predicated on accepting the Incarnation as a model for European unity and redemption. The result, insists Eliot, will be a return to Eden, thus undoing the effects of Original Sin: "And the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time" (Eliot, *FQ* 145).

Brought up as a Moravian protestant, H.D. had developed her own idiosyncratic, heterodox, religious syncretism by the time she wrote *Trilogy* (1944-46). Similar to *Four Quartets*, H.D.'s *Trilogy* likens England's wartime plight to the biblical apocalypse, something her frequent allusions to the Book of Revelation suggests: "*I make all things new. / I John saw. I testify*" (H.D., *Trilogy* 65). H.D. positions herself as a Johannine figure, a religious seer called to lead England to its eschatological redemption. Inherent to her eschatological anticipation is a recalibrated role for feminine spirituality, something made evident in her description of the Lady: "she bore / none of her usual attributes; / the Child was not with her" (H.D., *Trilogy* 97). H.D.'s Lady is not confined to simply bearing the Incarnated Child; instead, H.D. seeks to establish new possibilities for feminine spirituality by pointing to a new incarnation.

My thesis offers a theologically-informed analysis of Eliot's *Four Quartets* and H.D.'s *Trilogy*. Given the abundance of biblical allusions, *Four Quartets* and *Trilogy* demand an explication that considers each poet's religious beliefs and contexts. In *Fearful Symmetry*, Northrop Frye states, "It is [...] quite impossible to understand Blake without understanding how to read the Bible, and to do this properly one must read the Bible oneself with Blake's eyes" (Frye, *Fearful* 11). Frye's astute observation is a catalyst for my research since it is my aim to read the Bible through Eliot's and H.D.'s eyes, thereby enriching our understanding of their poetry. I hope to offer a critical framework and terminology for understanding the theological claims within Eliot's *Quartets* and H.D.'s *Trilogy*.

Methodology and Terms

Theology, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is "the study or science which treats of God, His nature and attributes, and His relations with man and the universe." According to Alister E. McGrath, a leading protestant theologian, Christian theology is "generally understood to mean the systematic study of the ideas of the Christian faith" (McGrath, *Christian* 101). The word *theology* stems from two Greek words: *theos*, meaning "God," and *logos*, which the Bible translates as "word." Theology can thus be understood as a "discourse about God" (McGrath, *Christian* 102). In McGrath's estimation, the term "theology" first came into use towards the latter-half of the second century as Christian thinkers attempted to differentiate their thought from paganism (McGrath, *Christian* 103). I will argue that both Eliot and H.D. engage in theological discourse through their Second World War epics. Though neither was formally trained, Eliot and H.D. reveal themselves to be highly sophisticated lay

theologians, an interesting development given England's rapidly secularising intelligentsia. Eliot promotes orthodox theology by clinging to a traditional Anglo-Catholicism; H.D., on the other hand, uses theology to introduce paganism into her Christianity. The result is two poems that engage in a significant dialogue with Christian theology in wartime England.

Theology, like any intellectual discipline, is multi-faceted. Christology, for instance, is the branch of theology that considers the personhood of Christ (Ford 114), and will thus be important to virtually any discussion of an individual's Christianity. Likewise, soteriology, the branch of theology that considers the salvific work of Christ (Ford 114), inevitably arises in poetry that seeks to put an end to the Second World War. My analysis of *Four Quartets* and *Trilogy*, however, will focus primarily on the Incarnational and eschatological components of each poem. I will argue that both *Four Quartets* and *Trilogy* discuss these two components of Christian theology extensively. In and through England's eschaton, each poem reveals hope for a new beginning by either looking to *the* Incarnation or to *another* incarnation.

Incarnational theology, though more often associated with Eliot, is something that H.D. discusses at various points in both her poetry and prose. Crucial to understanding Jesus' significance was His life as a human, something that McGrath believes causes considerable issues for the theologian: "The riddle that Christian theology is called to resolve is how [human and divine] elements can be held together" (McGrath, *Basic* 68). The Incarnation, and the hypostatic union that occurred therein, describes the simultaneous coming together of the human and divine natures in Jesus of Nazareth. Deriving from the Latin word for flesh, "Incarnation" refers to "the basic

Christian belief that Jesus is both divine and human,” a belief first acknowledged at the Council of Chalcedon (McGrath, *Basic* 70-71).

According to Dorothy L. Sayers (1893-1957), the entirety of Christianity hinges on a proper understanding of this dogma: “The central dogma of the Incarnation is that by which [Christianity’s] relevance stands or falls” (Sayers, *Chaos* 32). While this is a conventional understanding of the Incarnation, one that resembles Eliot’s in many ways, H.D. takes her understanding of the Incarnation in a very different direction. Though quite different from Eliot’s conception, H.D.’s reliance on the Incarnation is no less significant to her poetry. She affirms the spiritual insight and divinity of Christ, but she nevertheless clings to the hope for another incarnation, and in many instances gestures towards her belief that she is the inheritor of a spiritual “gift” as a result of her Moravian heritage.

Though seemingly at opposite ends of the theological spectrum, Eliot’s and H.D.’s poetry demonstrate that theological discussions of the Incarnation lead to a discussion of eschatology. Eschatology, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, stems from the Greek word *eschatos*, which means “last.” Fergusson indicates that one “of the hallmarks of twentieth-century theology has been its insistence that eschatology is a central Christian doctrine” (Fergusson 226). Many intellectuals, both religious and secular, hoped for a future “in which present imperfections and injustices can be overcome” (Fergusson 233). However, many Christian intellectuals shared a belief in the “general collapse in confidence in human civilisation as a means of bringing the kingdom of God to fulfillment” (McGrath, *Christian* 452). As a result, liberal interpretations of eschatology were challenged. In the absence of liberal theologies,

many new understandings of the eschaton circulated at the beginning of the twentieth century. Through the work of theologians such Johannes Weiss (1863-1914) and Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), Jesus was increasingly understood as “the proclaimer of the imminent coming of the eschatological kingdom of God” (McGrath, *Christian* 452). Charles H. Dodd (1884-1973), moreover, rejected futurist interpretations of the eschaton (Dodd 7; McGrath, *Christian* 453). Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976), one of the foremost twentieth century New Testament scholars, sought to “demythologize” the biblical discussions of the eschaton (Bultmann, “Mythology” 42). Modernist theology thus allowed for a wide array of eschatological interpretations, providing Eliot and H.D. with fertile ground to root their wartime epics.

Eschatology refers to both a theological focus and a specific genre of writing. In eschatological writing, there is a particular “emphasis [...] placed on the role of visions and dreams, through which the writers learned of the secret plans of God” (McGrath, *Christian* 445). In this form of writing, argues James C. VanderKam, the “seer conveys the message to his audience in discourse through which he exhorts the faithful to endurance in the present time of distress because the end of the tribulations and beginning of a new age will soon arrive” (VanderKam 306). VanderKam goes on to explain that most apocalyptic writers hide their “message in mythical, symbolic images” (VanderKam 306). While clearly influenced by a reading of John’s Revelation, VanderKam’s observations are worth keeping in mind when considering how Eliot and H.D. communicate their beliefs about the Second World War apocalypse.

Eschatological writing provides the Christian with a literary format to resist oppression and injustice. This is perhaps more obvious in *Trilogy*, particularly in “The

Walls Do Not Fall.” Nevertheless, Eliot’s *Quartets* resists totalitarianism at various points, not the least of which is when the speaker compares the Luftwaffe with the Holy Spirit (143-44), turning Nazism’s method of destruction into Anglo-Catholicism’s means of redemption. Such resistance is not without precedent in Christian theology, as made evident in John’s Revelation. Rudolf Bultmann, an expert in eschatology, was part of a 1933 group of theologians who resisted Nazi totalitarianism and anti-Semitism (Kay 83). Karl Barth (1886-1968), also an expert in eschatology, was part of this same group of theologians. Eschatological writing, it seems, provides a means by which the theologian, as well as the poet, can resist injustice because the genre provides hope for a redemptive future.

A significant component of Incarnational theology that has hitherto been left unexplored by most Eliot and H.D. scholars is the eschatological qualities inherent to the coming of Israel’s Messiah. It is through the Incarnation, I will argue, that we can understand significant components of Eliot’s and H.D.’s eschatology. Fergusson states that many first-century Jewish peoples understood the impending eschaton as “coming about through a sudden irruption of God into the flow of world history” (Fergusson 229). Bultmann explains in *Primitive Christianity* that for many first century Jews, life under Roman control led to increased hope for the coming of the Christ: “Men long for the end; and the greater the oppression, the more excited the expectations and the more certain the conviction that the end is at hand and the greater the eagerness for its dawning” (Bultmann 80). This savior would descend from the line of David, a leader capable of overthrowing the Roman Empire through supernatural force: “The Messiah would also be a warrior hero, who would destroy his enemies and restore Israel’s

sovereignty over the world – though by this time the war was hardly thought of as a real one, but as decided by supernatural power” (Bultmann 81). As a result of this anticipation there was an increase in Jewish apocalyptic writing which sought to address a nationalist hope for redemption through the arrival of a Messiah (Bultmann 82). It should not be surprising, then, that religiously-minded people enduring violent oppression often turn to eschatological writing to discuss redemption by means of a supernatural incarnation.

Allusion

I illuminate Eliot’s and H.D.’s theology by explicating the allusions through which it is articulated. I will rely on Gregory Machacek’s essay “Allusion” for critical terminology and an understanding of how this rhetorical device functions. Machacek explains that “some authors [...] write poems so densely allusive that one wants a term to capture the frequency – the ubiquity, even – of verbal echoes in their work” (Machacek 524). In order to capture this frequency, Machacek suggests that we understand works that are highly allusive, such as *Four Quartets* and *Trilogy*, as intertextual: “intertextuality seems to convey precisely this saturation of one text by phrases from the entire literary tradition” (Machacek 524). Intertextuality, then, is a general term applied to the work as a whole, a word that signifies the degree to which a poet saturates their work with allusions.

In Machacek’s understanding, the term *allusion* refers to a “brief, local phenomenon,” a specific instance when an author references a previous one (Machacek 524). In his essay, Machacek focuses on one type of allusion in particular: phraseological adaptations. Machacek aims to “develop a conceptual model and a

critical vocabulary that will allow [the critic to] more effectively [...] discuss the nature and workings of phraseological adaptations” (Machacek 523). It is this type of allusion which often goes unnoticed, for it is predicated on a shared body of knowledge between poet and reader. The first step in analysis is, of course, actually identifying an allusion. If, as Machacek points out, the reader is unaware that a “textual snippet” is “reminiscent of a phrase in an earlier author’s writing” (Machacek 525), then the reader will be unable to perform an analysis. In many instances throughout *Four Quartets* and *Trilogy*, the allusions are phraseological adaptations, requiring a learned reader to understand what is occurring in each poem.

An example of phraseological adaptation can be found in the second poem of *Trilogy*, “Tribute to the Angels.” In the eighth section, H.D. subtly alludes to Exodus 15:23 when she writes: “and in the bowl distill / a word most bitter, *marah*, / a word bitterer still, *mar*” (*Trilogy* 71). Exodus 15 is a triumphant chapter that cherishes Jewish freedom; Moses proudly sings about “The Lord” who is “a man of war” (v. 3), the one who has “dashed [the Egyptians] in pieces” (v. 6). After he finishes praising God for His violent overthrow of the Egyptians, Moses leads the Israelites away from the Red Sea into the wilderness. For three days the Jewish people are without water, until eventually coming to Marah: “And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah” (v. 23). As this verse indicates, H.D. was alluding to this passage of Scripture when she wrote this section of *Trilogy*. Unlike Moses, H.D. does not worship a God of violence and destruction; H.D. instead describes a divinity who seeks to “alter” the religious tradition to venerate feminine spirituality (*Trilogy* 71). The significance, therefore, rests not in

H.D.'s affirmation of Moses and Scripture but in how she departs from the original message.

One of Machacek's most informative ideas is his argument that allusion by no means demonstrates the poet's unoriginality but, instead, reveals "the writer's subtle craft and playful erudition" (Machacek 522). Understanding *Four Quartets* and *Trilogy* as intertextual emphasizes Eliot's and H.D.'s "creativity in adapting an echoed phrase to a new context" (Machacek 525). Inevitably, then, Eliot's and H.D.'s biblical allusions reveal a literary originality and theological ingenuity, for they pluck biblical passages out of their original contexts and adapt the meaning to an England at war. Indeed, the manner in which Eliot and H.D. deploy their individual biblical allusions reveals both their creativity and theological sophistication. A consideration of biblical allusions in *Four Quartets* and *Trilogy* reveals poets who have spent a considerable amount of time studying Christian literature and theology.

Part of what makes the intertextuality in Eliot's and H.D.'s work interesting is the texts they reference. Many of the scriptures they allude to are themselves allusions to earlier sections of the biblical canon. Such is the case in H.D.'s *Trilogy* when she echoes the opening of John's Gospel: "*in the beginning / was the Word*" (17). John 1:1 is itself a phraseological adaptation of Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." In instances such as these, I believe the poet is deliberately layering her intertextuality; H.D. was aware that her allusion was itself an allusion, effectively inviting her reader to not only open their Bible to John's Gospel but also to Genesis. The critic must understand these words in their original meaning – Genesis – before

understanding the text being directly alluded to – John – which will, in turn, lead to an understanding of the poetry under consideration – *Trilogy*.

By relying on literature that is itself highly allusive, Eliot and H.D. can bring many biblical scriptures into focus through a single allusion. In John's allusion to Genesis, he reinterprets the original meaning of the text to suggest that Jesus, the *Logos*, was the creative force behind Genesis. No longer is Yahweh alone responsible for the earth's creation, as the original readership would have believed; Jesus, alongside Yahweh, receives credit for the world's creation. By drawing on the opening verse of John's gospel, H.D. communicates a number of important beliefs. First, she reveals her belief in the pre-eminence of the "Word" over the "latter-born" "Sword" of an England at war (H.D. 17). Second, she casts herself as a religious writer who is similar to John in their shared ability to reinterpret canonical pieces of Scripture, something that she does with John's Revelation. Third, she recalls her Moravian heritage and the Zinzendorffian belief that Jesus is the creative force behind Genesis's opening lines. And fourth, she prepares the reader to understand that the Christ of John's Revelation will now use her words to "make all things new" (H.D. 65).

The New Testament Book of Revelation is important to both Eliot's *Quartets* and H.D.'s *Trilogy*. As each poet contemplates the eschaton in his/her poetry, he/she inevitably turn to the Bible's central eschatological text. Traditionally ascribed to the same author of the Gospel of John (McGinn 524), Revelation is the Bible's most highly intertextual book. The author of Revelation relies on the Old Testament prophets so extensively that I believe it is impossible to understand John's text unless first having spent considerable time reading Isaiah, Daniel, and most importantly, Ezekiel, among

others. Revelation's author communicates hope to persecuted, first-century Christians by pointing to Old Testament prophets as a reminder of God's continued faithfulness to His people. Revelation, then, is both allusive and prophetic, a curious paradox that may help with understanding Eliot and H.D. Allusion, by its very nature, uses words to look backwards toward a source text; prophecy, on the other hand, uses words to look forward toward a time of judgement and/or redemption. Herein lies a central paradox of Eliot's *Quartets* and H.D.'s *Trilogy*: each poem invites the reader to look backwards and forwards, to allusions from past literature in order to prophecy about the future. In light of this paradox, it is unsurprising that these poets frame their discussion of Second World War in Incarnational and eschatological terms, theological positions that are representative of a beginning and an end.

Critical Tradition: Comparison between Eliot and H.D.

My study will put the 'orthodox' Eliot alongside the 'heretical' H.D., resulting in a fruitful dialogue about Christian spirituality. Christianity, from its beginning, has gained much from intellectual debating: "The early struggle between orthodoxy and heresy (for all its shortcomings) does bear witness to the intellectual vitality of early Christianity" (Wiles 294). Eliot's and H.D.'s disagreement, I hope, will demonstrate an "intellectual vitality" that was still present in Christian debate during the Second World War. In many studies that consider either *Four Quartets* or *Trilogy*, the critic argues that each poem treats the Second World War as apocalyptic. Nevertheless, there are very few critical works that consider these works alongside one another, a curious detail given the intertextuality of both poems. *Four Quartets* and *Trilogy* are modernist epics that emerged at roughly the same time, focus on a similar topic, and rely on many shared

religious sources, thus inviting scholars to consider them together. I have come across three critical works that consider both: Cyrena Pondrom's 1987 essay "*Trilogy and Four Quartets: Contrapuntal Visions of Spiritual Quest*;" Madelyn Detloff's 2011 book *The Persistence of Modernism*; and Elizabeth Anderson's 2012 essay "Burnt and Blossoming: Material Mysticism in *Trilogy and Four Quartets*."

Pondrom's essay establishes many of the similarities between the poets under consideration. Among these similarities are their shared experience of the Second World War by an American expatriate living in London, the desire to create a modernist epic, and a reliance on Christian "texts, doctrine, and iconography" (Pondrom 156). Her discussion of intertextuality, as Julia Kristeva uses it, is also useful, for it provides a critical terminology to understand the manner in which *Four Quartets* and *Trilogy* engage with their contemporary culture and with the literary tradition. In Pondrom's estimation, the "first three quartets are an intertext for these first poems of *Trilogy*, and [...] for 'The Walls Do Not Fall' as a whole" (Pondrom 156). Crucial to this dialogue is their shared interest in the apocalypse, particularly in light of their shared hope for redemption (Pondrom 156-57).

Madelyn Detloff considers H.D.'s *Trilogy* in a chapter of her book *The Persistence of Modernism*. Detloff sharpens her discussion of *Trilogy* by comparing it to Eliot's *Four Quartets*. Central to her analysis is her argument that each poet uses "apocalyptic rhetoric [in order to] anesthetize the bloody casualties of the war" (Detloff 82). In Detloff's assessment, these poems deflect "our attention from unpleasant reality" (Detloff 82). Such declarations, I believe, are problematic. When Detloff argues that the redemption *Four Quartets* offers is "less than comforting" (Detloff 84), that a hope for

redemption after death may result in desiring the “ends of others” (Detloff 85), or that H.D.’s “apocalyptic rhetoric” effectively “overwrites the story of suffering” (Detloff 87), she fails to grapple with the complexity of Eliot’s and H.D.’s theology. As I hope to show throughout my study, both Eliot and H.D. were keenly aware of the horrors of the Second World War, and in no way seek to disregard the realities of wartime England.

Like Pondrom, Anderson begins by discussing some of the similarities between the two poets. Both H.D. and Eliot attended a 1943 gala poetry reading in London in order to “promote the arts during wartime” (Anderson 121). While H.D. read a poem “proclaiming the endurance of Ancient Wisdom,” Eliot instead chose to read the section of *The Waste Land* that ends with the line, “London Bridge is falling down” (Anderson 121-22). As this opening story indicates, H.D. and Eliot, in spite of their many similarities, had a radically different outlook on London’s plight.

Anderson emphasizes H.D.’s focus on materiality (Anderson 125). In combination with a fruitful discussion of alchemy, Hermeticism, and syncretism more generally, the focus on materiality in *Trilogy* provides Anderson with an insightful interpretation of the redemption that H.D. discusses in her epic, and which may be understood as a response to Detloff’s chapter (Anderson 124; 129). The discussion of *Four Quartets* emphasizes Eliot’s attempt to articulate a “negative theology,” indicating that Eliot relies on St. John of the Cross to discuss salvation, an approach that many critics have taken (Anderson 132-33). In response to Detloff, Anderson also argues that Eliot’s transcendence is counterbalanced by an insistence on immanence (Anderson 134). While it may be argued that Eliot treats the material world as merely a “route” to

transcendence, Anderson goes on to discuss the poet's fascination with redeeming the physical world (Anderson 135).

Of course, an overarching concern that I have with all three works is their neglect of Christian theology, specifically when considering the Incarnation and eschatology. I feel that a sustained focus on each poets' theology will yield original understandings of the significance of each poem. The manner in which Eliot and H.D. discuss the Incarnation and the eschaton provides the basis by which they are able to avoid merely ignoring wartime suffering in favour of transcendence. Each poet hopes for an Incarnated Saviour to bring Europe to its eschaton, thereby realizing a New Creation that brings together the material and immaterial, temporal and eternal.

Chapter 1

The Tick-Tock of Modernist Eschatology

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. – Revelation 1:3

In 1967, literary scholar Frank Kermode published *The Sense of an Ending*, a book that examines the abandonment of orthodox Christianity in modernist prose. This abandonment reveals itself in the modern novel's "ironic, tragic, or meaningless endings," a reflection of Western culture's general rejection of a belief in history that has a "Beginning, a Providential shape and an ending marked by God's final triumph" (Jansen 71). As a result of rejecting a providential timeline, modernist writers often grapple with a "paradigm of crisis, of a way of thinking about the present as being what theologians call totally end-directed" (Kermode 16). In effect, the present moment is always eschatological; inherent to every instant in time is the possibility of time's end, an element of uncertainty (Kermode 25). Even though humanity has never reached time's end, the apocalypse "can never be *permanently* falsified" given that the continuation of time allows for revision (Kermode 17). Among Kermode's musings is a focus on the nature of time, an essential component to eschatological discourse, causing him to refer to the ticking of a clock: "We ask what [the clock] *says*: and we agree that it says *tick-tock*" (Kermode 44). In Kermode's analysis, the *tick* refers to the beginning of time, while the *tock* represents the ending. In the interval between the *tick* and the *tock* is significance, for therein lies the plot of a story, "an organization that humanizes time by giving it form" (Kermode 45). The plot in a novel, which is akin to the present moment in real life, derives its meaning from the expectation that the *tock* will bring about significance for the story's entirety, that "an end will bestow upon the whole duration

and meaning” (Kermode 46). What happens, then, when humanity abandons the traditional conception of the *tick* and the *tock*?

For many centuries, the *tick* was associated with Genesis, the Bible’s opening book, while the *tock* had been associated with John’s Revelation, the Bible’s concluding book (Kermode 47). Kermode believes that literature takes inspiration from the Book of Revelation (Kermode 54). Within John’s text are the ““things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter”” (Kermode 58). In other words, Revelation depicts a beginning, middle, and an end. Given the general rejection of orthodoxy, modern novelists re-enact the model present in the Bible’s final book, but with a ‘secular twist.’ By “modifying the past,” modernist authors could view the future as a mere extension of the present, a moment that will, in Prufrock’s words, never reach its ““crisis”” (Kermode 59). Ultimately, Kermode concludes that “we no longer live in a world with a historical *tick* which will certainly be consummated by a definitive *tock*” (Kermode 64).

For perhaps the majority of the twentieth century, historians, for the most part, accepted the secularization thesis, the belief that the nineteenth century’s emphasis on science and reason undermined widespread belief in the Christian God, thereby leading to a ‘secular age.’ While this belief has been problematized, there remains a void in understanding how modernist literature reacted to secular explorations. Gauri Viswanathan explains that the secularisation thesis has spawned numerous studies in history, sociology, philosophy, and other disciplines, and yet “the field of literary studies has not witnessed a corresponding breadth of scholarship” (Viswanathan 466). Literary studies, as Viswanathan explains, ought not to be disregarded. Other disciplines can

merely offer methodologies for explaining secularism; literature, on the other hand, “chronicles the transition” (Viswanathan 467). For this reason, it is my aim to show that the modern era, at least in regards to poetry, was not a time of secularization, as Kermode seems to believe, but a time of heterodoxy.

In the fifth chapter of Luke’s Gospel, Jesus says, “And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved” (5:37-8). It will be the aim of this chapter to put forward what I will refer to as the ‘heterodox thesis.’ Secular Victorian intellectuals did not implement widespread secularism at the turn of the century; instead, their thought became a means by which many poets fashioned new wine to pour into the new wineskin that is modernist poetry. Strauss, Feurbach, Renan, Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche, Frazer, among many others, made it intellectually viable for those at the beginning of the twentieth century to not only embrace a secular worldview but also to arrive at a highly unorthodox religious worldviews.

A consideration of modernist poetry reveals not a rejection of Christianity, God, and religion but, instead, a radical re-imagination of the Bible’s claims. W.B. Yeats, D.H. Lawrence, and Wallace Stevens, to name a few, discuss eschatological themes and images in their poetry, often putting forth highly heterodox ideas that would have been difficult to assert in a different era. Eliot’s *Four Quartets* and H.D.’s *Trilogy*, two of the foremost modernist poems, make sophisticated, eschatological claims that are a response to the Victorian Era, modernist literature, and the Second World War. It is the aim of this chapter to contextualize Eliot’s and H.D.’s work, thus offering a fuller understanding of

the significance of their poetics. My thesis for this chapter will be that the nineteenth century largely undermined the *tick*, Genesis's account of the beginning of the universe, thus leading to a revised understanding of the *tock*, a new eschatology articulated within a new poetic form, reaching its highest point in Eliot's *Four Quartets* and H.D.'s *Trilogy*.

The Victorian Era: Intellectual Exploration, Secular Utopias, and the End of the Tick

Though many scholars discuss the rise of secularism by studying the Enlightenment and/or French Revolution (Viswanatan 467; Surette 280), I will start at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Informing my discussion of the nineteenth century will be the work of historians Owen Chadwick and Hugh McLeod, literary scholar Pericles Lewis, philosopher Charles Taylor, and theologian Alister McGrath. Hugh McLeod, like most historians, believes that the nineteenth century represented a "crucial phase of secularisation" (McLeod 7). Nonetheless, it would be misguided to conclude that an assault on orthodox Christianity means the downfall of religion altogether: "the mistake is to homogenize religion and understate the degree to which [religion] comprises competing beliefs, [...] To conceptualize religion in opposition to reason, therefore, misses the role of oppositional, so-called heretical discourses" (Viswanathan 469). In *A Secular Age*, Charles Taylor states that the Victorian Era was a time that saw a "great rise in unbelief" because this was a time where there emerged a myriad of "exclusive humanist alternative[s] to faith," thus making "this is a period in which the gamut of alternatives of this range becomes richer and wider" (Taylor 322). Not only did secularism make room for atheism, but so too did it make room for heterodoxies to emerge, further invalidating orthodoxy.

Matthew Arnold, writing in 1880, declares that poetry could replace religion (Lewis, *Religious* 1). In many ways, though, the beginning of the century reinforced orthodox religious beliefs. In 1802, William Paley, the archdeacon of Carlisle, published *Natural Theology*, a work that had a considerable readership among the English population, and was even read by Charles Darwin (McGrath, *History* 242). In *Darwinism and the Divine*, McGrath indicates that Paley's text was in print for over one hundred years and had more than fifty editions in Britain alone (McGrath, *Darwinism* 86). Paley relies on face-value, common sense claims to prove God's existence while attempting to disprove evolution, something made evident from the beginning of the book. On the first page, Paley tells a story about stumbling upon a watch on the ground, and how it would only be logical to conclude there was a designer who made the watch and placed it there (Paley 1-18). Anyone who denies the necessity of a designer would be foolish, given that such a complex item cannot arise spontaneously, a line of thought that Paley identifies with atheism (Paley 18-9). Drawing on ideas from Newton's discovery of the regularity of nature, Paley insists that God contrived organisms and fit them together. In Alister McGrath's estimation, Paley's *Natural Theology* represents the "traditional Christian [understanding] of the notion of 'creation'" (McGrath, *History* 243).

Commenting on the nineteenth century, Simon Marsden indicates that "the doctrine of creation is a hermeneutic key to the world's meaning" (Marsden 33). Because there was a literal, six-day creation roughly six thousand years ago, argued many nineteenth century Christians, there must also be an imminent ending that is characterised by divine redemption (Taylor 324). Though scholars disagree on the

degree to which early nineteenth century thinkers abandoned traditional readings of Genesis, Paley's work demonstrates that for a significant portion of the intelligentsia, "the fundamental harmony of the natural sciences and the Christian faith" remained intact (McGrath, *History* 245). Nevertheless, by mid-century, those who subscribed to Paley's worldview became scarcer. McGrath admits that in the decade before the *Origin of Species*, evolutionary thinking became "common currency" for "intellectual circles" (McGrath, *Darwinism* 133).

Published in 1859, Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* quickly became the preeminent text for understanding secular naturalism. Taylor acknowledges that numerous intellectuals questioned the traditional reading of Genesis before Darwin, but it was the publication of the *Origin of Species* in 1859 that was the "final terminus" (Taylor 327). Consequently, many in England set Darwin against Paley, creating a divide between science and religion, an epistemological crisis (McGrath, *Darwinism* 99). Though some Christians struggled to reconcile Darwin's discoveries aboard the *Beagle* with the Bible, such as Charles Kingsley in his 1871 lecture "On the Natural Theology of the Future," many relied on evolution to disprove Christianity's understanding of creation (McGrath, *History* 243). Taylor insists that the nineteenth century was a time when "Biblical cosmology was replaced by the march of science" (Taylor 325).

Many critics believe that in the nineteenth century Christian theology and science came into conflict: science insisted on a purely natural understanding of the universe while Christianity stubbornly fought the impositions of reason and science. John William Draper's 1874 *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* was

just one publication that helped to entrench this sort of thinking. Draper's book was published in French, German, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Russian, Portuguese, and Serbian, demonstrating its influence as well as people's willingness to entertain this notion of 'religion versus science' (Chadwick 161). Taylor describes this as the understanding that science and religion became "incompatible," that they were rival epistemologies, a notion held by many intellectuals both then and now (Taylor 363).

Hugh McLeod, in *Secularisation in Western Europe, 1814-1914*, states that many past historians believe that "Science replaces theology as the principal source of authoritative knowledge" (McLeod 3). In many ways, this is accurate. Nevertheless, the nineteenth century was also a time of agreement between theology and science, not simply because some 'progressive' Christians adopted evolution but, rather, because many prominent theologians and philosophers became heterodox. In many ways, both science and theology worked against orthodoxy, thereby unifying many of the preeminent voices from both disciplines.

Robert Browning's poem "Caliban Upon Setebos" highlights the debate between Paley's and Darwin's thought (McGrath, *Darwinism* 130-3). The subtitle to the poem, "Or, Natural Theology in the Island," evokes both Paley's *Natural Theology* and Darwin's research in the Galapagos Islands. In Browning's poem, Caliban attempts to understand his god by observing the natural world, something Paley does in *Natural Theology*. Throughout the meditation, Browning's Caliban clearly alludes to the opening chapters of Genesis: he credits god with creating every "creeping thing" (Browning 45) and later discusses a "four legged serpent" (Browning 158-60). Browning uses textual snippets from Genesis to show the reader Christianity's God, not Caliban's. Caliban

concludes that there is weakness in nature because that is what god intends: “so spoil His sport!” (Browning 177). Caliban’s critique extends into his discussion of the god who disapproves of happiness:

Meanwhile, the best way to escape His ire
Is, not to seem too happy. ‘Sees, himself,
Yonder two flies with purple films and pink,
Bask on the pompion-bell above: kills both (Browning 256-9).

Being unable to discern God’s goodness from observations of the natural world is a critical blow to Paley’s worldview. That being said, this poem does not simply illuminate the scientific debate between Paley and Darwin. Browning shows that he has been influenced by the theological output. Throughout the poem, Caliban places his own characteristics onto god (Browning 43; 97; 108; 126; 169; 199; 240), an indication of Ludwig Feurbach’s influence.

While the scientific discoveries of the era certainly did much to contribute to modernism’s heterodoxy, so too did much of the theological output. In Lewis’s estimation, it was the biblical scholars who struck “the most significant blow against Biblical literalism,” not the scientists (Lewis, *Religious* 32). Alister McGrath indicates that theologians emerging during the German enlightenment developed the thesis that “the Bible was the work of many hands, at times demonstrating internal contradictions, and that it was open to [...] textual analysis and interpretation as any other piece of literature” (McGrath, *History* 221). Furthermore, Taylor states that just as scientific theories did much to undermine the Bible, biblical criticism unsettled orthodoxy by calling “into question the sources of the Bible” (Taylor 362).

Theologians David Friedrich Strauss, Ludwig Feuerbach, and Ernest Renan, among others, did much to extend heterodoxy. Strauss is an interesting case given that *The Life of Jesus*, which was translated into English by George Eliot in 1846, was published in 1835. In the introduction of the 1902 edition, Otto Pfleiderer states that Strauss's work articulates "the spirit of [its] age" (Pfleiderer v). Before Strauss, "no one had the courage" to approach the New Testament in a secular, critical manner (Pfleiderer x). Strauss attempts to show the contradictions internal to the Bible (Strauss 121-2; 317; 336) while also subjecting Jesus' ministry to various hypothetical explanations that contradict supernatural explanations (Strauss 133; 436-7; 546). Pericles Lewis believes that the influence of Strauss, Feuerbach, and Renan caused many intellectuals to abandon their faith (Lewis, "Modernism" 184). All of these scholars approach the Bible with skepticism, leading to a highly unorthodox interpretation of this formerly infallible text. Feuerbach, for instance, in his most influential work, *Essence of Christianity* (1841), insists that God is a mere conjecture of the human mind.

Esteemed orthodox theologians Richard Niebuhr and Karl Barth provide the foreward and introductory essay to the 1956 Harper Torchbacks edition of *Essence of Christianity*, an indication of Feuerbach's lasting impact in the twentieth century. McLeod estimates that Feuerbach's work had a considerable influence on the intellectual avant-garde and political radicals, while also trickling down to some educated middle class peoples (McLeod 25). If Darwin's work shows that there is no God, Feuerbach's shows how God came to be. Feuerbach claims that God is a human invention, something he illustrates through an analogy of a bird: "If God were an object

to the bird, he would be a winged being: the bird knows nothing higher, nothing more blissful, than the winged condition” (Feuerbach 17). In the same way that Browning’s Caliban projects himself onto god, so too does humanity project itself onto the Christian God. Feuerbach concludes that the most “irrefragable proof” that humanity invents God is through the doctrine of the Incarnation, one of the central components of T.S. Eliot’s Anglo-Catholicism. That God would lower himself to humanity is demonstrative of humanity’s belief in its self-importance: “Hence in God I learn to estimate my own nature; I have value in the sight of God” (Feuerbach 57).

Feuerbach goes on to questions the nature of the Word of God (Feuerbach 79), Christianity’s negative influence on culture and philosophical thought (Feuerbach 132-3), how internal contradictions undermine Christianity’s validity (Feuerbach 235), and that the decline of religion, particularly Christianity, will lead to “the welfare, the salvation, the ultimate felicity of man” (Feuerbach 185). If Feuerbach can be trusted, then salvation can shift from Christianity towards secularism, a notion that obviously influenced Marx (Chadwick 54). In Feuerbach’s writing, it is apparent that he is attempting to fashion a secular eschatology, a vision of a future that exists without Christianity. George Eliot would go on to translate *Essence of Christianity* into English, which is an interesting detail given the pre-eminence of George Eliot’s work in T.S. Eliot’s household growing up (Spurr 9).

Of no little significance was Ernest Renan’s *The Life of Jesus* (1861), an account of Christ’s life that, though respectful, attempts to convey Him as merely a human figure. While Feuerbach is openly antagonistic towards Christianity, Renan’s book offers a more charitable approach in that it aims to highlight the laudable components of

Christianity's leader while still undermining claims of His divinity. Renan shows the historical unreliability of the Bible, arguing that John's Gospel, for example, is demonstrative of the "syncretical philosophy" and Gnosticism of Asia Minor in the time of composition (Renan 13). Renan's biographical account continually conveys Jesus as an eschatological figure, one deeply aware of the Book of Daniel and Enoch, who wants to usher in the Kingdom of God to the physical world (Renan 44; 62; 78; 83; 105; 146; 149; 154). Like Feuerbach, Renan works to disprove the Incarnation (Renan 132), but he also concludes by declaring that "all the ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born who is greater than Jesus" (Renan 227).

Though not as well-known as Feuerbach and Renan, the contributors to an edited collection titled *Essays and Reviews* (1860) did much to destabilize biblical inerrancy. In this collection, seven liberal Anglican theologians take aim at orthodox interpretations of the Bible. The most controversial essay, Benjamin Jowett's "On the Interpretation of Scripture," insists Christians ought to study the Bible as any other form of literature (McGrath, *History* 245). Jowett's essay was highly controversial, as this one quotation demonstrates:

Where there is not critical interpretation of Scripture, there will be a mystical or rhetorical one. If words have more than one meaning, they may have any meaning. Instead of being a rule of life or faith, Scripture becomes the expression of the ever-changing aspect of religious opinions. The unchangeable Word of God, in the name of which we repose, is changed by each age and each generation in accordance with its passing fancy. The book in which we believe

all religious truth to be contained, is the most uncertain of all books, because interpreted by arbitrary and uncertain methods (Jowett 501).

Jowett's understanding of God's Word is highly unorthodox and controversial. This is particularly pertinent given its publication date, roughly one year after Darwin's *Origin of Species* and one year before Renan's *Life of Jesus*. Jowett's thesis is that the Bible is not the inerrant Word of God but, instead, a fallible text that is prone to errors, contradictions, and misunderstandings. He attempts to show this by highlighting discrepancies between different sections of the Bible that discuss the same event (Jowett 484-6). Jowett's writing also reflects some of the scientific discoveries of the age, for he indicates that "geology speaks to us," thus "the moment any scientific truth is distinctly ascertained," the Christian ought to be willing to revise the traditional, biblical interpretation (Jowett 487). In this way, Jowett's essay demonstrates the shifting epistemology of many Christian intellectuals: science, in the minds of many, is capable of overturning biblical truth.

Many of Jowett's observations about the Christian community's reaction to these 'new' scientific discoveries are useful tidbits for historical analysis. A mere year after the release of the *Origin of Species*, Jowett remarks that English "interpretation of Scripture" has taken a noticeably "apologetic character" to combat the "supposed inroad of science and criticism" (Jowett 483). Shortly thereafter, Jowett lauds German scholarship for its advances in biblical interpretation, an indicator of how science and theology, among many elites, spoke in unison. One of the most noticeable results of these advances is that the "explanations of the first chapter of Genesis have slowly changed" (Jowett 483). Victorian intellectuals increasingly regarded Scripture as a

subjective entity, something that is open to criticism and reinterpretation in light of competing epistemologies, effectively opening new possibilities for the *tick/tock* of the modern world.

Theological heterodoxy did not go unnoticed by the literary community. Emily Dickinson, for instance, commonly gestures towards her skepticism of orthodox Christianity in her poetry. For Dickinson's speaker, "The Bible is an antique Volume - / Written by faded Men" (Dickinson, "1577" 1-2). Such a declaration about Scripture reflects the work of Strauss, Feuerbach, Renan, and Jowett in that it seeks to dismantle the idea of the Bible's inerrancy. Matthew Arnold, moreover, gestures more generally towards the status of Christianity in his most famous poem, "Dover Beach." Because of Victorian doubts and intellectual explorations, Arnold explains that the "The Sea of Faith" is now in the process of a "long, withdrawing roar" (21-25). In the Preface to *God and the Bible*, Arnold goes on to acknowledge the influence of German biblical criticism, though he rejects many of their conclusions. Nevertheless, Arnold's views on Christianity reflect the upsurge of heterodoxy. While claiming that Christianity is a necessity, Arnold explains that if Christianity continues to depend on "the Incarnation and of the Real Presence," then the faith will ultimately "dissolve" (Arnold, *God* xliii), a belief that stands in stark contrast to Eliot's. Arnold attributes his differing conception of Christianity to greater intellectual explorations (Arnold, *God* xvii), allowing him to reject a traditional understanding of the Garden of Eden (*God* xviii), the Virgin Birth (*God* xxi), the resurrection (xxii), and the inerrancy of Scripture (xxx). Quite evidently, many people's attitude towards Christianity was changing, but this often did not include an outright rejection of the faith.

In his book on Emily Brontë's religious beliefs, Simon Marsden argues that she "interprets and appropriates the texts, symbols and theological traditions of Christianity" (Marsden 20). Brontë was someone who considered herself to be a Christian, operating within the religious framework, yet not treating the Bible as "a static body of received truth but, rather, as a text always open to new readings" (Marsden 25). Because of this, Marsden concludes that English literature's persistent "reinterpretation" of Christianity is something that is "integral" to both religion and to literature (Marsden 20). Brontë's interest in eschatology is evident in her essay "The Butterfly," a text that culminates in an "apocalyptic recreation" (Marsden 22). Similarly, in "A Day Dream," Brontë speaks of death not merely as finality but also as a means of renewal, an end with hope:

To thee the world is like a tomb,
A desert's naked shore;
To us, an unimagined bloom,
It brightens more and more! (Brontë 61-64).

In "A Day Dream," death is merely a means to "endless rest, / And everlasting day" (Brontë 59-60). As such, Brontë regards the eschaton as a hopeful event, one where positive change occurs. Brontë is thus a Christian, woman poet who engages in eschatological discourse through a heterodox lens, making her a forerunner to H.D.

With the output from both scientific and theological intellectuals, it is unsurprising that Taylor pinpoints the nineteenth century as the time when secularism came to maturity: "In the nineteenth century, one might say, unbelief comes of age. It develops a solidity, and a depth, but also and perhaps above all, a variety, a complex of internal differences" (Taylor 374). The Christians most troubled by scientific

discoveries and theological heterodoxy were, as Simon Marsden shows, the ones whose “theological epistemology” rested on the belief that God “reveals himself only in the Bible” (Marsden 6). Marsden is, for the most part, right, but his statement precludes biblically informed science. So long as the natural sciences complemented the biblical understanding of creation, such as Paley’s, there is no epistemological crisis. If, however, the natural sciences opposed biblical understandings of the world, orthodoxy insists that the natural sciences must be refuted.

As the century came to an end, Lewis indicates that a “small, elite, and articulate minority” experienced and furthered secularisation (Lewis, *Religious* 25).¹ As Kermode argues, the year 1900 was tremendously significant time for secular intellectuals: “In 1900 Nietzsche died; Freud published *The Interpretation of Dreams*; 1900 was the date of Husserl’s *Logic*, and of Russell’s *Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*” (Kermode 97). Frazer also released another edition of *The Golden Bough* in 1900. A mere two years later, William James published *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. As I hope to show, though, these intellectuals did not signal the demise of Christianity. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Nietzsche declared that God was dead. Nonetheless, if one were to accept this statement, they would have to also declare that God, to borrow Pericles Lewis’s phrasing, enjoyed quite the resurrection and afterlife during the twentieth century (Lewis, “Modernism” 180).

Modernism: The Heterodox Thesis and Reimagining the *Tock*

According to theologian Alister McGrath, the term *modernist* was first used to describe a group of nineteenth-century Catholic theologians who proposed unorthodox

¹ Taylor demonstrates that it is only within the 1960s that England had a widespread shift towards secularism (424).

understandings of the life and identity of Jesus Christ. McGrath concludes that modernism, at least from a theological perspective, can be understood as “an attempt by writers within the Catholic church to come to terms with the outlook of the Enlightenment” (McGrath, *History* 252). In this way, McGrath states that modernism became an era characterised by ““pernicious [...] adversaries of the Church” (McGrath, *History* 253). Lewis echoes this sentiment, declaring that theological modernism preceded any application to literature (Lewis, *Religious* 41) Modernism, then, is a term that must be associated with heterodoxy and skepticism, this being an interesting notion in light of Eliot’s traditional interpretations of Catholicism and H.D.’s religious syncretism.

Inherent to this skepticism is a belief that orthodox Christianity, as a guardian of the status quo, is anti-reason and anti-intellectual. McLeod draws attention to a 1904 series from the *Daily Telegraph* in London where the editors asked for letters responding to the question, “do we believe?” Over the course of several months, thousands of letters were sent in, prompting the editor to conclude, ““Dogmatic Christianity’ had decayed, but ‘the form of Christianity which is most common in our own day does not repose upon dogmas at all [...] A hard, definite, logical and systematic religious faith is almost an impossibility in the England we know”” (McLeod 168). English culture, as the *Daily Telegraph* suggests, increasingly saw itself as too intellectually advanced for traditional, dogmatic Christianity.

The First World War, of course, did nothing to mitigate modernism’s eschatological concerns. Sharyn Fiske is just one scholar who insists that the Great War undid ideas of progress, further destabilizing formerly important cultural values,

orthodox Christianity among them (Fiske 175). Shortly after the First World War, George Frazer released another edition of *The Golden Bough* (Fiske 176). In James B. Vickery's estimation, *The Golden Bough* perfectly captures "Victorian doubt" and "modern scepticism or relativism" (Vickery 23-4). Book II, commonly thought to be the most influential on modernist thought, emphasizes "cyclicity as crucial to humanity's understanding of the natural world and its relation to it provides the master narrative into which these seeds of Christian doubt are sown" (Fiske 177).

Frazer systematically undermines Christ's originality by arguing that His conception and resurrection are mere copycats of pagan sources (Vickery 54; Surette 57). By negating the originality of these central events, Frazer can thus present Christianity as another fallible religion: "*The Golden Bough* proffers a fluid account of religious history that allows for the sustenance of faith beyond the limitations of past belief systems" (Fiske 179). Perhaps Frazer's most significant contribution to modernist, artistic output was his assertion that art could re-enchant the world: "Frazer makes a compelling case that the restoration of the sacred depends not on the reaffirmation of revealed faith but on the creative capacity of the human imagination" (Fiske 178). Art's ability to create new sacred truths, a notion that echoes Matthew Arnold's 1880 claim, thus became a central impetus of much modernist writing.

Many intellectuals no longer felt the need to attack traditional readings of Genesis. This is something that becomes apparent in the intellectual explorations of Bertrand Russell, atheist extraordinaire and forerunner to the current New Atheist movement. In "Why I am Not a Christian" (1927), Russell treats the so-called falsity of Genesis as a foregone conclusion, one that needs no further explanation (Russell 6).

Russell explains that his main concerns with Christianity are eschatological. Two of his main criticisms of Christianity are that Jesus was wrong in his prediction of his second coming and that the notion of hell fire compromises Jesus' morality (Russell 11-14). Unlike its Victorian predecessor, what troubles the modernist mind is eschatological in nature. As the twentieth century moved forward, there emerged a body of literature that focused on revising orthodox eschatology. Authors such as James Pryse, John Oman, Frederick Carter, Arthur Weigall and, most importantly, D.H. Lawrence offer revised understandings of the Christian apocalypse. In Lawrence's *Apocalypse*, one of the authors that he turns to frequently is James Pryse and the 1910 publication *The Apocalypse Unsealed*.

The title alone, *The Apocalypse Unsealed: Being an Esoteric Interpretation of The Initiation of Iôannês*, reveals much about the author's intentions. Pryse was a friend to Helena Blavatsky and introduced W.B. Yeats to magic and initiation rites (Kalnins 5). Pryse thus shows himself to be pertinent and accessible to literary modernists. Never lacking in confidence, Pryse declares in the second sentence of the preface that "In the following pages the reader will find the complete solution of the Apocalyptic enigma, with ample proof of the correctness of that solution" (Pryse vii). To accomplish this task, Pryse provides both a commentary of Revelation as well as general remarks on the work as a whole. Orthodox interpreters do not succeed in deciphering John's cryptic text because the constraints of orthodoxy prohibit understanding. John, apparently, sought this outcome: "secrecy has always been maintained regarding the sacred science, so as to guard it from those who are morally unworthy to receive it" (Pryse 3). Pryse explains that it was John's intent to preserve the real meaning of Revelation "until the proper

time” (Pryse 4). As Pryse explains, the implications of uncovering the truths of Revelation are of monumental significance: “[John witnessed] the esoteric doctrine which underlies not only Christianity but also all the religions of antiquity” (Pryse 4). Implicit in this quotation is the notion that Christianity lacks uniqueness since it is akin to all other ancient religions, a clear carryover from Frazer’s thought. Pryse, like many modernists, did not reject Christianity altogether but only Christianity’s traditional, exclusivist conceptions.

In order to understand this ‘occult’ book, Pryse turns to esoteric, religious syncretism. The Book of Revelation represents John’s “occult treatise,” thus requiring a “mystic” who can properly interpret the “occult doctrines” (Pryse 79-81). Behind John’s apparently Christian message are elements of the cabala (Pryse 69; 99; 109), Greek mythology (Pryse 99; 107; 121-2; 137; 158), and the signs of the zodiac (Pryse 19-20; 65; 115; 124). Leon Surette indicates that a key purpose of occultism is to determine the presence of pagan sources within Christianity: “The occult scholar is typically engaged in an effort to recover an ancient wisdom” (Surette 50). Surette’s observation is a fitting assessment of Pryse’s ambition. Pryse concludes his book by asserting that esotericists throughout history have recognised the real nature of John’s Revelation but remained silent while orthodox theologians “have tortured this magnificent epic into a theological nightmare” (Pryse 207). Though I am unsure if he had a firsthand impact on Eliot and H.D., Pryse’s work contributed to a culture which sought to re-imagine the *tock*, the orthodox understandings of the Book of Revelation.

Also important to the modern era’s reworking of eschatology are John Oman’s *Book of Revelation* (1923) and Frederick Carter’s *The Dragon of the Alchemists* (1926).

Though neither author expresses opinions as extreme as Pryse's, they nevertheless provide interesting background knowledge pertaining to the discussion of the *tock*. Oman's discussion is the most orthodox of the three, since he continually looks to the Old Testament to find the meaning of John's Revelation, a practice that Pryse explicitly rejects. One such example occurs when Oman declares: "there is no certain evidence of dependence on any writings except the prophets and possibly Colossians and Luke" (Oman 29). The Book of Daniel, in particular, is seen as a source text (Oman 29; 35; 108; 120; 132). Oman also declares that the signs of the Zodiac, despite Pryse's best effort, cannot be the ultimate meaning behind John's numerology (Oman 144).

Carter, on the other hand, seems to find the middle ground between the extremes of Pryse and Oman. One distinct component of Carter's work is that, like Oman, he takes Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation as discussing similar apocalyptic events, while, like Pryse, he also connects these biblical texts to alchemy, the zodiac, and Greek mythology (Carter 12). Carter's explanation of alchemy, in particular, is useful in pursuing an understanding of apocalyptic writing. The alchemist, according to Carter, attempts to put "man's mind" back to "its fount and origin," for the alchemist believes in the "potential perfectability of the soul of man" (Carter 32). Inherent to Carter's conception of alchemy is an eschatological, redemptive end, something that can be seen when the alchemist turns a base metal into a valuable piece of gold. As the title suggests, the Dragon is a focus throughout, a symbol that Carter connects with astrology, the cabala, Greek mythology, and the Zodiac (Carter 37-53). What is significant about Carter's text is the manner in which he syncretises various religious traditions in his

discussion of John's Revelation. Along with Pryse, Carter contributes to a body of literature that views Revelation as susceptible to outside influences.

One text that did have a definitive impact on H.D. is Arthur Weigall's *The Paganism in Our Christianity*, a book that appears in H.D.'s library and in her written work, such as the opening to *Pilate's Wife*. Weigall, though a Christian, discusses how it is time for modern peoples to revise their understanding Christianity. In the chapter "Need for a Restatement," Weigall remarks that "[t]he advanced intellectual Christian of the twentieth century" must revise what it means to be Christian. Otherwise, "the layman's allegiance to the Churches, and Christianity, as such, is doomed" (Weigall 19). As part of this modern day reform, Christians would do well to acknowledge the pagan elements of their faith (Weigall 63; 101; 106; 118-20; 174; 204; etc). Satan, for instance, is but a mere pagan belief that "attached itself to Christianity" (Weigall 249).

Weigall's final chapter is a rallying cry, a call for those who ascribe to the Christian faith to facilitate change. Weigall states: "There must be a wholehearted movement back to the real Jesus and his teachings [...] It must be candidly recognized that the old interpretation of Christianity is faulty [...] we must be prepared to abandon other dogmas unworthy of this age" (Weigall 243). Christians need to admit that science disproves a traditional reading of Genesis (Weigall 151-2). Another adjustment that needs to be made is in regards to orthodoxy's eschatology. According to Weigall, Christianity, as revealed by Jesus, does not emphasize God's wrath and punishment but love and forgiveness:

[...] there is no room in our Lord's eschatology for the idea of eternal torture as the punishment of evil-doing, nor it is possible for the modern mind to conceive

of an almighty and loving God as being at the same time a fiendish monster deaf to the piteous shrieks of the damned (Weigall 249).

On the last page, Weigall reiterates that his aim is for “the establishment on earth of the Kingdom of God” (Weigall 253). It is of no little significance that Weigall ends his book in the manner that he does. Like Russell, Weigall’s chief concerns are eschatological. The final chapter is emotionally-driven, for it equates orthodoxy’s God with sadistic cruelty. Of course, Weigall offers his version of the Christian faith as an alternative. By presenting all of the supposed pagan influences that undergird contemporary Christian practice, Weigall demonstrates orthodoxy’s subjectivity, effectively opening the possibility for reinterpretation. By accomplishing this goal by the final chapter, Weigall can offer his ‘call to arms’ for the modern Christian. With this in mind, it is unsurprising that H.D.’s *Trilogy* has a distinctly eschatological focus.

While there emerged a body of literature which sought to address the eschatological concerns of the modern world, the connection with modernist authors is, in many ways, bridged by the aforementioned D.H. Lawrence. Much has been written about Lawrence, yet there seems to be relatively little focus on *The Man Who Died* and *Apocalypse*. Moreover, the connection between Lawrence and H.D. provides useful analysis, particularly given that the priestess of Isis in *The Man Who Died* is fashioned after H.D. Though *Apocalypse* is the more pertinent publication, given the subject and placement within Lawrence’s oeuvre, *The Man Who Died* is a significant work that serves as a crucial building block for Lawrence’s unorthodox understanding of the Christian faith.

One of the most interesting ways that Lawrence subverts orthodoxy is through intertextuality. Lawrence not only evokes certain passages of Scripture, but playfully undermines Jesus' former message by creating dialogue that contradicts the Gospel records. The opening section begins with an unnamed man, assumed to be Jesus, awaking from a "long sleep in which he was tied up" (Lawrence, *Man* 165). This Jesus is not the triumphant saviour who conquers death, he is a reluctant individual still feeling the effects of his crucifixion and isolation, as made evident by his apparent loneliness (Lawrence, *Man* 166). After emerging from the tomb and finding a married couple, Jesus says: "'Do not be afraid' he said to them gently. 'Let me stay a little while with you. I shall not stay long. And then I will go away forever. But do not be afraid. No harm will come to you through me'" (Lawrence, *Man* 169). Jesus' dialogue with the peasants is reminiscent of numerous passages in the New Testament where Christ tells His disciples not to be afraid (Matthew 14:27; 28:10; Mark 5:36; John 14). What is different about this interaction is Jesus' insistence that no harm will come to the peasants, a direct contradiction of Jesus' instructions to His disciples at various points in the Gospels. Perhaps the most famous example these instructions is in John 16 where Jesus instructs His disciples that they will die for their faith. Lawrence's Jesus makes no such claims; the 'death' and crucifixion profoundly impact Jesus' message, stripping him of former Messianic zeal.

On almost every page, Lawrence references famous passages and images from Scripture. The fig trees (Lawrence, *Man* 170) recalls Jesus' curse on the fig tree (Mark 11:12-25), the discussion of the "doom of death [that] was a shadow" (Lawrence, *Man* 172) echoes Psalm 23, and the mention of the "stream that will run till no more rain fills

it” alongside the “woe and vanity” (Lawrence, *Man* 174-75) of life are obvious references to Solomon’s Ecclesiastes. After recovering from his wounds, Jesus remarks that it is only at this point that he has “inherit[ed] the earth” (Lawrence, *Man* 181), another phraseological adaptation that recalls perhaps Jesus’ most famous teachings, the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus also articulates sympathy for both Judas and Eve (Lawrence, *Man* 174-75), a notable detail given that these two figures receive very little sympathy in the biblical canon and in the orthodox tradition.

The second section of *The Man Who Died* centers on the H.D. figure, the priestess of Isis, and her interactions with the now travelling Jesus. The priestess lives, for the most part, in isolation, worshipping her goddess while awaiting a “re-born” man who can be her stand-in for Osiris (Lawrence, *Man* 189). Jesus finds his way to Egypt and comes across the priestess (Lawrence, *Man* 194-95). It is of no little significance that Jesus flees to Egypt to escape Jewish persecution. Egypt has been a place of salvation for God’s people in the past, as made evident when Joseph flees there in Genesis as well as when Mary and Joseph flee to Egypt after Jesus’ birth. Nevertheless, Lawrence subverts the conventional means of salvation, since now Jesus turns to Isis for protection, remarking, “Great is Isis! [...] All men praise thee, Isis, thou greater than the mother unto man” (Lawrence, *Man* 195). Lawrence launches an assault on the perceived sexism of Christianity through a Jesus who submits to the authority of a female god. This is made evident once again when the priestess explains that her mother gives her authority (Lawrence, *Man* 200-1), something that directly contrasts with Jesus’ limited power that is derived from the Father (Matthew 24:36).

Jesus' relationship with the priestess takes on a sexual nature shortly thereafter. Distinct details surrounding these sequences is Jesus' nudity before Isis (Lawrence, *Man* 203) and his enthusiastic exclamation, "I am risen!" when first getting an erection (Lawrence, *Man* 207). After having sex with the priestess, Jesus' main question is, "Father! [...] why did you hide this from me?" (Lawrence, *Man* 207). In this way, Lawrence repackages Christ's question on the cross ("Father, why have you forsaken me?") to instead critique Christianity's commandments on sexuality. As Richard Aldington indicates, one of Lawrence's chief concerns was revising sexual standards in the modern world (Aldington xv). No longer does Jesus concern himself with his Father's betrayal but, instead, the sexual deprivation he endured as a result of his Father's commands.

Shortly thereafter, Lawrence hearkens back to Genesis by having the narrator state: "So he knew her, and was one with her" (Lawrence, *Man* 207). Lawrence consciously works to undo the conventions that stem from the opening chapters of Genesis, just one more way of revising the *tick*. Lawrence does this by emphasizing the sexual interactions between Jesus and the priestess. After going back to the cave, Jesus waits for the woman who will "come" later: "Then when night came the woman came, and came gladly, for her great yearning too was upon her [...] So the days came, and the nights came, and days came again, and the contact was perfected and fulfilled" (Lawrence, *Man* 208). The back and forth between night and day mimics the days of creation from Genesis 1 while the repetition of the word "come/came" demonstrates Lawrence's apparent emphasis on female sexual pleasure. Jesus refuses to learn the woman's name, something that Adam proudly bestows on the woman, dismantling any

notion of male ownership. By undermining Genesis, a central text for upholding patriarchy, Lawrence is able to rewrite the Christian narrative in a highly unorthodox fashion. Preeminent in Lawrence's revision is a refashioning of the Genesis and Passion stories to account for female spirituality and sexuality.

In *Apocalypse*, Lawrence goes a step further with his heterodoxy, for he explicitly articulates his disagreement with orthodox Christianity. In the introduction to the 1932 publication, Richard Aldington indicates that Lawrence's writing comprises a "vast imaginative spiritual autobiography" (Aldington xviii). Moreover, Aldington concludes that Lawrence sought to impart a new way of "thinking" (Aldington xxii), both in terms of religion and sexuality. In her 1980 edition of *Apocalypse*, Mara Kalnins provides a very useful introduction. One of Lawrence's chief goals, according to Kalnins, was to restore "the balance between the spiritual and sensual planes of existence that Greece, Rome and Christianity [...] had destroyed" (Kalnins 7). Kalnins draws attention to how *Apocalypse* is the last book written by Lawrence, and it is the work which most plainly demonstrates his belief that humans have the ability within themselves to create a "new heaven and a new earth" (Kalnins 22).

At the heart of *Apocalypse*, then, is not redemption as found in John's Revelation but, instead, a secular eschatology. For this reason, Kalnins determines that *Apocalypse* is a "vigorously iconoclastic work" (Kalnins 22). One of the few reviews of *Apocalypse* was released in February, 1932 by E.S. Bates in the *Saturday Review of Literature*. In Bates's estimation, one of the distinctive components of Lawrence's work is the realization that the twentieth century had largely turned away from Christianity: "Christianity [...] is in practice – a hatred of excellence, an enthronement of

mediocrity” (Kilnins 35). Thus, in Lawrence’s work there is an attempt to develop a secular eschatology needed for the improvement of modern culture.

One of the least attractive qualities of orthodox readings of Revelation was the belief that God would exact revenge on those who did wrong by Christians. In Lawrence’s mind, this is the most “hideous” component of Christianity: “Self-righteousness, self-conceit, self-importance, and secret *envy* underlie it all” (Lawrence, *Apocalypse* 144). At the heart of Lawrence’s concern with the Revelation is the belief that it is an unsophisticated text, one that appeals almost exclusively to “uneducated people” (Lawrence, *Apocalypse* 62). In Lawrence’s estimation, Revelation has more impact on people than any of the Gospels or Epistles, a detail that he does not back up with any evidence. Regardless of whether or not Lawrence’s assertion can be trusted, it is obvious that Revelation is a text that had a profound impact on the modern world because there are many who liken Babylon with contemporary judgements on “London, New York, or Paris” (Lawrence, *Apocalypse* 62). Quite simply, Lawrence reacts to an anti-intellectual, simplistic notion of Christianity that is “distinct from thoughtful religion” (Lawrence, *Apocalypse* 63). In Lawrence’s estimation, and, I suspect, in the minds of many other intellectuals, believing in orthodox Christianity and all its trappings is akin to forfeiting intellectual prowess. In effect, orthodoxy becomes synonymous with simplicity, particularly given Lawrence’s assertion that the damnation which Revelation describes is one that appeals only to “toothless old men” (Lawrence, *Apocalypse* 105).

Revelation’s apparent simplicity is something that Lawrence returns to consistently throughout *Apocalypse*. At one point, Lawrence states that John is

obviously a “second-rate mind” which is why his Revelation appeals to the modern world’s “second-rate minds” (Lawrence, *Apocalypse* 66). Christianity was increasingly being seen as an ideology that contrasted with intellectual acumen. Lawrence condemns both the Jew and the Christian for demanding literature that explains the apocalypse, for “Never before had men wanted to know the end of creation” (Lawrence, *Apocalypse* 80). The Jew had an eye for the Book of Daniel and Enoch while the Christian turned to Revelation, an unprecedented type of literature which demonstrates the desire to know the “end as well as the beginning” (Lawrence, *Apocalypse* 80), phrasing that is reminiscent of Eliot’s *Four Quartets*. Though John of Patmos may have been a Christian, he almost certainly had a profound knowledge of pagan mythology, insists Lawrence, and thus infuses Revelation with this knowledge (Lawrence, *Apocalypse* 81-2). Lawrence, like Pryse, Carter, and Weigall, undermines John’s text by attempting to link Christian imagery and symbolism with the pagan world: “The Bible is so splendidly full of paganisms and therein lies its greater interest. But once admit it, and Christianity must come out of her shell” (Lawrence, *Apocalypse* 85). Once it can be shown the Christianity draws on pagan influences, argues Lawrence, then Christianity must “come out her shell,” an unveiling that reveals this faith’s unoriginality and dependence on rival religions.

Lawrence concludes that many people throughout history have contributed towards covering up the “pagan traces” in Revelation to make this “plainly unchristian work passably Christian” (Lawrence, *Apocalypse* 86). One such pagan trace is the emphasis on resurrection, something that has connections with various pagan sources (Lawrence, *Apocalypse* 99), a detail that Lawrence obviously thought about extensively,

as *The Man Who Died* demonstrates. Later, Lawrence asserts that he boils Revelation down to its “pagan bed-rock” by uncovering pagan stories that tell of the “birth of a new sun-god from a great sun-goddess” (Lawrence, *Apocalypse* 119). As such, Lawrence feels capable of rewriting a text that seeks to postpone “reward,” something that he describes as central to “eschatological” writings (Lawrence, *Apocalypse* 96). At the book’s conclusion, Lawrence states that what humanity really wants is a connection with the cosmos, the sun, and the earth, along with nation, humanity, and earth: “Start with the sun, and the rest will slowly, slowly happen” (Lawrence, *Apocalypse* 149). Lawrence’s final prose works reveal his desire to rework the central tenants of Christianity to make room for what he envisions to be a more intellectually adept conception of the Bible, Jesus Christ, and Christianity’s vision of the end.

Modernist Poetics: A New Wineskin for the New Wine

Len Diepeveen’s *The Difficulties of Modernism* demonstrates that a fundamental component to modernist poetics was complexity (Diepeveen 109). Eliot famously declares, “Poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*” (Diepeveen 1). Difficulty, then, “is a mirror of modern culture” (Diepeveen 126). Central to modernist complexity and difficulty are the numerous religious allusions and references. Many twentieth century writers thought they could recalibrate spirituality to make it tenable in a modern world. It is fitting that an artistic movement that blatantly lauds its intellectualism and difficulty takes on the challenge of repackaging spirituality. As literary modernism began to take shape in the 1910s and especially the 1920s, modernist poetry intertwined itself with heterodoxy.

For the most part, modernists felt as though their culture was changing (Surette 42). A fundamental component to this change was re-envisioning spirituality in the modern world. Viswanathan, in “Secularism in the Framework of Heterodoxy,” connects the rise of secularism/disenchantment with more vocal heterodoxy (Viswanathan 469-71). An important component of Lewis’s analysis is his observations about the emergence of heterodoxy: “The Modernists were not the devout secularists that many critics portray; instead, they were seeking through their formal experiments to offer new accounts of the sacred for an age of continued religious crisis” (Lewis, “Modernism” 181). Elsewhere, Lewis states that modernists felt the need to create a “secular sacred,” which refers to a “transcendent or ultimate meaning” independent of the supernatural (Lewis, *Religious* 21). Of course, the turn to obscure religious practices, and subsequent diluting of orthodox Christianity, suggests that literary modernists felt that Christianity, independent of heterodoxy, was no longer an option.

One of the foremost poets emerging at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century is W.B. Yeats. Yeats was a deeply religious person, one who blended poetry with the supernatural: “I am very religious [...] I had made a new religion, almost an infallible Church of poetic tradition” (Pryor 13). With words that evoke Freud’s diagnosis of H.D., Yeats conjoins poetry and religious experience. Moreover, by yoking poetry with religious significance, Yeats gestures toward Arnold’s prophetic claim in 1880. According to Sean Pryor, Yeats’s belief in the connection between poetry and spirituality impacted his regular life, something which reached a climactic moment in a 1888 séance when Yeats recited lines from *Paradise Lost* to save himself from “violent, involuntary convulsions” (Pryor 13).

Perhaps Yeats's best known poem that explicitly deals with eschatology is "The Second Coming" (1919). Commenting on "The Second Coming," Kermode believes that "Yeats is certainly an apocalyptic poet, but he does not take it literally" (Kermode 98). Dwight H. Purdy argues that most critics are quick to dismiss any notion of a Christian message in "The Second Coming" (Purdy 74-5). Surette argues that Yeats was a poet who thought Christianity was coming to an end and that this poem speaks to that belief (Surette 69; 171-4). In her reading of "The Second Coming," Edna Longley argues that the original drafts suggest Yeats is referring to the Russian Revolution, something he considers as potentially apocalyptic for the entire world (Longley 123). Yeats imbued contemporary events with eschatological meaning by understanding these events with imagery and diction from John's Revelation. Whether or not Yeats actually believed in the apocalypse from Revelation, it is of no little significance that the Bible's concluding book provides the means by which Yeats discusses his concerns about potentially apocalyptic ideologies and movements.

Yeats begins his poem by describing a falcon circling in the air: "Turning and turning in the widening gyre / The falcon cannot hear the falconer; / Things fall apart; the center cannot hold" (Yeats 1-3). The image of the gyre frequently arises in Yeats's poetry.² Kermode believes that the "dialectic of Yeats's gyres is simple enough" given that they are "a figure for the co-existence of the past and future at the time of

² "The Two Trees" mentions the "flaming circle of our days, / Gyring" (Yeats 14-5), "Demon and Beast" talks of a white gull "gyring" through the air, while "Sailing to Byzantium" mentions God's "holy fire" and the "gyre" in line 19 before alluding to John's Revelation: "Of what is past, passing, or to come" (Yeats 32). "Blood and the Moon," another title that obviously alludes to an apocalypse, describes a "gyring [...] treadmill of a stair" (Yeats 17), and "The Gyres" from *Last Poems* opens with "The gyres! The gyres" (Yeats 1) before ending with the lines, "The workman, noble and saint, and all things run / On that unfashionable gyre again" (Yeats 24).

transition” (Kermode 100). The gyre of “The Second Coming” comes in the form of a falcon circling through the air, unable to hear the commands of the falconer. Yeats’s gyre provides a useful point of contrast to the finality of Eliot’s pyre in “Little Gidding” of *Four Quartets*. The gyre is representative of the cyclical nature of time because it suggests neither a beginning nor an end, necessary components to orthodox eschatology.

According to Longley, Yeats is discussing modern poets when he mentions the “best [who] lack all conviction,” (Yeats 7). In Purdy’s reading, the repetition of “turning” evokes memories of prophetic calls to people to turn from their sins (Purdy 78). When taken together, Purdy’s and Longley’s observations may indicate that Yeats is offering a call for modern poets to repent. It is the poet, then, who must thwart the eschatological ends of revolution and war. As the poem continues, the speaker places himself alongside John, for “Surely some revelation is at hand / Surely the Second Coming is at hand” (Yeats 9-10). Using symprole³ heightens the feeling of awe, a notable effect when considering the speaker’s later declaration that the “revelation troubles my sight” (Yeats 13). “The Second Coming” ends by drawing attention to the “twenty centuries of stony sleep” that are “vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle” found in “Bethlehem” (Yeats 19-22). Yeats thus turns to the Incarnation, the beginning of Christ’s life on earth, as the image that communicates earth’s end.

Another poet who discusses Christianity in an unorthodox manner is Wallace Stevens. Eleanor Cook states: “Stevens is a writer against closure in the sense of opposing traditional eschatologies” (Cook 99). Cook later acknowledges that Stevens’s “doctrines of last things” is a fruitful topic for study (Cook 111). Cook’s assessment is

³ A rhetorical device that combines anaphora and epistrophe (Dupriez and Halsall 444).

particularly interesting in light of her insistence that Stevens's poetry represents an "ongoing battle with Eliot" (Cook xiii). Perhaps Stevens's best known work, "Sunday Morning," an "antiheaven" poem (Cook 100), outlines a woman's musings about a seemingly infertile faith: "What is divinity if it can come / Only in silent shadows and in dreams" (Stevens 17-18). In the woman's mind, there is no longer "any haunt of prophecy," (Stevens 51) perhaps because the modern world has undermined the credibility of orthodox eschatology. By the poem's conclusion, Stevens's speaker undermines the resurrection, a central event in Christianity, for Jesus' body still resides in the Palestinian tomb (Stevens 107-09).

In "It Must be Abstract," a title that draws on Eliot's declaration that poetry must be difficult, Stevens declares that poetry has the ability to reinvigorate the belief in an "immaculate beginning" and an "immaculate end" (Stevens 45-47). Arnold's prophecy, once again, comes to mind. Poetry thus serves as a substitute for traditional conceptions of religious time. Like Yeats, and, as we shall see, like Eliot and H.D., Stevens imbues poetry with a supernatural ability. Where Stevens differs, however, is in his insistence on a secular understanding of poetry; for Stevens, poetry does not modify or heighten religious practice, but replaces it. Viswanathan, just after discussing Arnold's belief that literature can replace Christianity, declares that "secularism is conceived to be the inaugural moment of literature's formation, a defining aspect of its identity" (Viswanathan 466). In "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven," the poet makes mention of the Alpha and the Omega, a common saying from the Book of Revelation: "But that's the difference: in the end and the way / To the end. Alpha continues to begin. / Omega is refreshed as every end" (Stevens 34-36). For Stevens, it is the Omega which ought to be

“refreshed,” not the Alpha. When taken together, then, the Victorian and modernist eras are complementary; the nineteenth century undid the Alpha while the twentieth revises the Omega. The cultural climate in which Stevens emerged played a critical role in his ability to focus on “New Haven” (Stevens 45) instead of the New Heaven and the “lion of Juda” as an “emblem of the power and menace of poetry” (Bloom 318).

Consequently, Stevens bears witness to New Haven and the lion of Juda, images that the poet strips of their theological significance in order to assert the “majesty of poetry” (Bloom 319).

Such heterodoxy did not go unnoticed by orthodox intellectuals. Given this reality, the question must inevitably be asked: how did orthodoxy respond? According to Matthew Mutter, W.H. Auden was unimpressed by the modernist affinity for “magic” (Mutter 60). Auden believed literary modernists turned to unorthodox religious practices -- “occultism, spiritualism, animism, alchemy, enchantment [and/]or neo-paganism” -- as a means of curtailing the effects of secularism (Mutter 59). Like Eliot, Auden was an orthodox Christian who came to his faith through an intellectual process (Reeves 189), a fitting detail given modernist emphasis on intellectualism and skepticism. In his 1944 poem *The Sea and the Mirror*, Auden’s Prospero declares: “Now, Ariel, I am that I am, your late and lonely master, / Who knows what magic is: -- the power to enchant / That comes from disillusion” (Auden 313). Magic, then, stems directly from a feeling of disillusionment, thus making it “symptomatic” rather than “constructive” (Mutter 65). In “The Fall of Rome” (1940), Auden conflates the Roman Empire with the British, commenting on the secularism and heterodoxy present in both. Perhaps the most interesting lines of the poem are in the third stanza when the speaker discusses “Private

rites of magic” and “the literati” who all “keep / An imaginary friend” (Auden 9-12). Auden’s poetry applies to the likes of Pound, Lawrence, and H.D., modernists who invoke occultism to inform and stimulate their poetic and intellectual explorations.

Of course, whenever someone discusses orthodoxy and modernism, G.K. Chesterton inevitably comes to mind. In *Orthodoxy* (1908), Chesterton defends traditional conceptions of Christianity against the criticisms of the modern world. Keenly aware of the heterodoxy of Renan and the secularism of Nietzsche (Chesterton 48-9), Chesterton sets out to show the plausibility of Christian dogma (Chesterton 84) and the “thrilling romance of Orthodoxy:” “People have fallen into a habit of speaking of orthodoxy as something heavy, humdrum, and safe. There never was anything so perilous or so exciting as orthodoxy” (Chesterton 107). Like his contemporaries, Chesterton acknowledges the necessity of progress, the belief that the modern world ought to be moving towards the “New Jerusalem” (Chesterton 112). Like Eliot, Chesterton affirms the doctrine of Original Sin and the Incarnation while simultaneously insisting that he can provide “intellectual justifications for my intuitions” (Chesterton 148-9). Given the age in which Chesterton wrote, it is unsurprising that he believes Christianity to be quite rational given the “evidence” (Chesterton 150). In direct response to the belief in scientific progress common in intellectual thinking, Chesterton remarks, “When scientific evolution was announced, some feared it would encourage mere animality. It did worse: it encouraged mere spirituality” (Chesterton 160). Once again, Chesterton shows himself to be a forerunner to Eliot (and Auden, for that matter), given that both Chesterton and Eliot decry what they perceive to be the shallow religious beliefs common among modernists.

As the examples of Auden and Chesterton demonstrate, there were significant publications from the literary community in response to the upsurge of heterodoxy. In *Four Quartets*, Eliot addresses many of the eschatological concerns leading up to and during The Second World War. Of course, *Four Quartets* does not exist independently from his other works. It seems fitting, then, that “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” a poem so different from *Four Quartets*, discusses time, a theme that arises consistently in Eliot’s poetry.

Chapter 2

Fixing Civilization as it Exists at Present: Eliot's Eschatological Poetry

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. – Revelation 1:8

And he said unto me, It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. – Revelation 21:6

In his essay “The Metaphysical Poets,” T.S. Eliot offers the now famous statement about poetry in the modern world: “poets, in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be difficult” (Eliot, “Metaphysical” 65). This line has informed numerous studies. Leonard Diepeveen, for instance, uses Eliot’s observation as a prompt for *The Difficulties of Modernism*. Diepeveen, along with many others, have made a convincing case that Eliot’s statement points to a defining characteristic of modernist poetry. Michael Spencer, not altogether unlike Diepeveen, points to this line as proof that Eliot fulfills the “difficulty requirement” (Spencer 67). My concern, on the other hand, rests not in the apparent difficulty of modernism but in the manner in which Eliot comes to use his poetic output as a means of altering his civilization “as it exists at present.”

In my research, I do not believe I have come across any scholar who takes their prompt from Eliot’s qualifying observation. I would argue that anyone familiar with *The Waste Land* can see that the poet is not content with civilization “as it exists at present.” Post-conversion Eliot is even more adamant in his insistence that English civilization, “as it exists at present,” must change. In *After Strange Gods* (1934), Eliot criticizes the England “worm-eaten with Liberalism” (Eliot, *Strange* 13). By the time Eliot wrote *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939), he was intertwining concerns about secularism and totalitarianism with ideas about Christian revival (Eliot, *Idea* 59). In *Four Quartets*

(1935-42), Eliot envisions his faith as a means of resisting, and ultimately defeating, the secularism and totalitarianism that threaten civilization “as it exists at present.” As he will demonstrate throughout his oeuvre, Eliot believes that the foundation of Christianity rests in the assertion of “a Gospel message, a dogma, a belief about God and the world and man” (Eliot, *Idea* 87-8). It is this message, an orthodox interpretation of Christianity, to which Eliot devotes himself. “The maintenance of orthodoxy,” insists Eliot, “is a matter which calls for all our conscious intelligence” (Eliot, *Strange* 29).

I will argue that Eliot, commonly characterised as predominantly a poet, playwright, and social critic, must also be understood as a highly sophisticated lay theologian, one well aware of cultural and theological debate. In general, Eliot scholars do not rely on theology as a sustained methodology, a notable detail given the poet’s emphasis on this discipline. I contend that, in light of this poet’s desire to be theologically educated, a theologically-minded consideration of Eliot’s poetry can lead to insightful, original readings. My aim, therefore, is to demonstrate some of the currently neglected implications of Eliot’s Christian faith, the foremost of which being the eschatological component inherent to his belief in the Incarnation.

Charles Williams indicates that at the end of the nineteenth century, the majority of intellectuals shifted away from Christendom, effectively minimizing Christianity’s “[s]ocial importance” (Williams 222). One of Eliot’s ambitions was to change this reality. In *The Idea of a Christian Society*, Eliot is critical of those “intellectuals” who regard theology as merely a “special study, like numismatics or heraldry,” while also critiquing the “theologians” who “observe the same indifference to literature and art” (Eliot, *Idea* 40). Intellectuals like Eliot must combine knowledge of literature and

theology, thereby actualising the possibility of forming a “pan-European Catholic Christendom” (Harding, *Criterion* 81). I will show that Eliot’s Christianity intertwines itself with his views on secularism, totalitarianism, and the Second World War, heavily influencing his *Quartets*. *Four Quartets*, consequently, is the result of Eliot’s intellectually-stimulated Christianity and it is his definitive, eschatological response to the devastation of the Second World War.

Eliot’s Early Work and Christian Undertones

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born into a prominent New England family, a family that Earl K. Holt III deems the “single most important family in the history of American Unitarianism” (10). The descendant of Puritan settlers who left Somerset in the 1650s (Cooper, *Cambridge* 2), William Greenleaf Eliot, Eliot’s grandfather, became an influential Unitarian minister. A primary ambition for Reverend Eliot was to “increase [...] the moral and spiritual capital of [his] community” (Holt III 10), something his grandson would later adopt through his Anglo-Catholicism. The foremost difference between Unitarianism and Eliot’s later Anglo-Catholicism is the differing conceptions of humanity’s sinfulness: Anglo-Catholics hold strongly to the dogma of Original Sin whereas Unitarianism asserts that “human nature [is] essentially good and could be perfected” (Sigg 19). Given this Puritan heritage, Eliot’s move to England and his eventual turn to Catholicism is quite ironic. Puritans, in many cases, left for America due to the desire to find a “promised land,” a theocratic utopia. Unitarianism, the faith in which Eliot was raised, is an offshoot of this original Puritanism (Sharpe 14). Unlike his ancestors who left Europe for America, Eliot’s spiritual pilgrimage begins by leaving

America and traveling to England, eventually becoming one of the chief figures seeking to implement a new Christendom in Europe.

Eliot arrived in England in 1914, and it was not long after his arrival that Ezra Pound, fellow expatriate and outspoken proponent of modernist literature, began to champion Eliot's work. Through Pound's help, Eliot published "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" in the June 1915 edition of *Poetry* (Sharpe 45). Eliot thus began a process of becoming entrenched in English society, something that both his literary career and marriage to Vivien Haigh Wood on June 26, 1915 helped facilitate (Sharpe 46). In 1916, Eliot put forward his last "academic gesture" towards Harvard before eventually giving up on academia and the United States (Kenner 66). In 1917, Eliot published *Prufrock and Other Observations*, the poetic sequence that contains "Portrait of a Lady," "Rhapsody on a Windy Night," and "Preludes." The most significant achievement, of course, is "Prufrock," a poem that not only tells about a man's interpersonal foibles but also introduces themes and images that sustain Eliot's poetic output for years to come.

The name, Prufrock, was taken from a St. Louis furniture store with the name "Prufrock-Littau" appearing on it (Holt III 14). Among Prufrock's many concerns are the nature of time, urban landscapes, and the futility of his sexual endeavours. There is a direct correlation between Prufrock's insecurities and his thoughts about time: "There will be time, there will be time / To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet" (Eliot, "Prufrock" 26-27). Prufrock's consideration of time simply adds to his feelings of doubt when interacting with the "women [who] come and go/ Talking of Michelangelo" (Eliot, "Prufrock" 35-36). "Prufrock" is a foundational poem for Eliot, serving as a

springboard for many of the images, themes, and ideas that reoccur in his work. The emphasis on time, in particular, is prominent in Eliot's oeuvre, made evident in the presence of church clocks in *The Waste Land* and the philosophical musings in *Four Quartets*. As my opening chapter indicates, a focus on time is an integral component to any eschatological discussion.

Though he achieved some success and recognition with his early publications, Eliot's personal life quickly fell into disarray; his marriage with Vivien quickly became loveless, there were significant financial concerns, and Eliot battled physical and mental health problems (Cooper, *Cambridge* 8). In spite of this, these initial years gave rise to many of Eliot's best works, such as the aforementioned "Prufrock," "Gerontion" (1919), and *The Sacred Wood* (1920). In October of 1922, after negotiations with patron Lady Rothermere, Eliot launched his critical journal, *The Criterion*, and published *The Waste Land* in the opening edition (Cooper, *Cambridge* 11).

The Waste Land has garnered considerable critical attention, and for good reason, given that many critics consider this to be the definitive modernist poem. Tony Sharpe insists that the defining component of Eliot's 1922 poem is its "incoherent coherence" – that is, that the poem intentionally defies coherent readings and explanations (Sharpe 93). Sharpe also concludes that *The Waste Land* is in no way "a Christian poem" but that it contains "the conditions out of which Eliot's Christianity would grow" even though it offers no "redeeming higher meaning" (Sharpe 94). In John Xiros Cooper's assessment, *The Waste Land* is a work that explores "abjection, inner horror, and disgust" in a way that was appealing to "a generation mutilated by war" (Cooper, *Cambridge* 51). Cooper concludes that the "immediate postwar situation in

Britain and Europe,” alongside Eliot’s personal struggles, culminated in a poem that reflected both a cultural and personal despair (Cooper, *Cambridge* 63). Cleanth Brooks, in a 1955 lecture on theology in literature, indicates that *The Waste Land* has been wrongly “regarded as a distinctly un-Christian and even anti-Christian document” (Brooks 68). Brooks goes on to claim that Eliot’s poetry centers on the “necessary indirection of poetry” (Brooks 71) alongside a concerted effort to defamiliarize the symbols used to communicate truth (Brooks 72-73).

The Waste Land reveals Eliot’s consideration of and progression towards Christianity. Eliot, writing in 1917, already believed that “the Catholic Church was ‘the only Church which can even pretend to maintain a philosophy of its own’” (Spurr, *Anglo-Catholic* 19). Though obviously insufficient to declare Eliot had already converted, it seems that his sympathy for Catholicism had begun before the end of the First World War. Eliot’s spiritual quest was, admittedly, complicated; he examined a myriad of religions, apparently looking for the one that put forth “a system of belief in which the juxtaposition of the temporal and the eternal was concentrated in their connection, and ultimately resolved” (Spurr, *Anglo-Catholic* 21). By 1927, Eliot had found this system in Anglo-Catholicism with its emphasis on the Incarnation. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot references Christianity in many instances, perhaps suggesting that the poet was already engaged in the process of considering this faith.

Andrea Zengulys points out that at the time *The Waste Land* was released, “old churches [...] were then being revalued as heritage sites, then being promoted as markers of a past precisely located and physically part of the present. Eliot himself advocated their architectural preservation” (Zengulys 127). When some Anglican officials sought

to sell church buildings to the City of London due to lack of attendance, the pre-conversion Eliot was outraged, apparently accusing the church of succumbing to materialism (Zemgulys 129). Eliot held church buildings in high regard because they were of value to the London Eliot wanted to improve. Zemgulys argues that churches in *The Waste Land* are “astonishing” because they are “aesthetically striking, refuge giving, restorative in spite of the city, inexplicably present in this world” (Zemgulys 135). Eliot’s view on Anglican churches provide an interesting contrast to many of the images of death and despair in *The Waste Land*.

The title of the opening section, “The Burial of the Dead,” gestures towards the widespread deaths that resulted from the First World War before opening with the famous lines that reference Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* and Jessie L. Weston’s *From Ritual to Romance*:

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain. (Eliot, *TWL* 1-4)

Eliot’s opening lines are intriguing, blending syntactical unity with a surprising statement about springtime. Unlike traditional understandings of springtime renewal, Eliot’s spring is a time of cruelty. Though the “breeding,” “mixing,” and “stirring,” three verbs that denote the earth’s “copulating” (McIntire, *Desire* 41), create new life, the speaker despairs because this all occurs in the “dead land.” The line enjambment in the opening three lines bring us to what is traditionally the source of both life and hope, the “spring rain” that resuscitates the “dull roots.” By using line enjambment, Eliot

emphasizes the startling pronouncement about the new life in spring. Eliot's speaker continues discussing the "shower[s] of rain" (Eliot, *TWL* 9) while also indicating that "In the mountains, there you feel free" (Eliot, *TWL* 16), providing images that emerge at the poem's conclusion where the speaker will once again discuss rain and the dry land.

Eliot steepens the second verse paragraph in biblical allusions, the majority of which receive no mention in the endnotes. The growth among "stony rubbish" (Eliot, *TWL* 20) evokes memories of Jesus' Parable of the Sower from Matthew 13. Jesus describes himself as the "Son of man" (Eliot, *TWL* 20) throughout the Gospels. Shortly thereafter, the speaker mentions that "the dry stone" knows "no sound of water" (Eliot, *TWL* 24), alluding to Exodus 17:6 where Moses strikes a stone with his rod, resulting in God sending water out of the rock for the Israelites to drink. When commenting on this passage in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul indicates that the rock from which the Israelites drank from was, in fact, Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4). In Eliot's *Waste Land*, there is no water in the rock, and therefore no Jesus.

Of not little significance to the discussion of spirituality and *The Waste Land*, particularly in light of my consideration of H.D.'s religious beliefs, is the section on Madame Sosostris. This "famous clairvoyante" is the subject of subtle mockery, made evident in the tone surrounding the descriptions of her "wicked" tarot cards and her status as the "wisest woman in Europe" (Eliot, *TWL* 38). Madame Sostoris warns the speaker of "death by water," (Eliot, *TWL* 38); by the poem's end, water is, in fact, the means of salvation. In the autumn of 1920, Eliot attended a séance led by P.D. Ouspensky, a venture that Lady Rothermere paid for, apparently contributing towards helping Eliot write *The Waste Land* (Sharpe 83). By the time Eliot writes "The Dry

Salvages” of *Four Quartets*, he definitively critiques occultism and its tenets, stating that communication with the dead is an interaction that ought to abide exclusively with Christians.

To conclude “The Burial of the Dead,” Eliot enters into some of the most famous lines from *The Waste Land*:

Unreal city,
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine (Eliot, *TWL* 60-68).

Hopelessness continues to dominate Eliot’s lines while the twofold allusion in line sixty-three brings together two influential figures for his poetry: Dante and Pound. The line “I had not thought death had undone so many” is directly taken from Dante’s *Inferno*; the image also evokes memories of Pound’s “In a Station of the Metro” (1913). While Londoners mindlessly flow through these urban streets, the reader recalls the apparition of similar faces from Pound’s imagist poem, a work that configures an underground metro as similar to hell and/or Hades. Once the clock from Saint Mary Woolnoth’s church hits nine o’clock, the crowd disappears, apparently to the drudgery of work in the modern life (Zemgulys 132). Formerly a keeper of life, vitality, and

culture, the sound of the church clock in the modern world merely signals the plight of the masses.

The three sections that comprise the middle of the poem, “A Game of Chess,” “The Fire Sermon,” and “Death by Water,” continue to reveal an apparent focus on infertility as well as illegitimate forms of reproduction. Lil’s resistance, for example, to sexual relations with Albert is met with criticism from the speaker, “What you get married for if you don’t want children?” (Eliot, *TWL* 164). The opening lines of “The Fire Sermon” open with a discussion of “brown land” (Eliot, *TWL* 175), “The rattle of bones” (Eliot, *TWL* 186), and the death of the Fisher King’s brother and father (Eliot, *TWL* 191-2). Shortly thereafter, Tiresias offers a story of the typist who has indifferent sex with the “young man carbuncular” (Eliot, *TWL* 231). Tiresias makes it plain that the young man’s sexual advances are devoid of meaning, for he “makes a welcome of indifference” before ending his endeavour with a “patronising kiss” (Eliot, *TWL* 242-7). Immediately after Tiresias’s section there is a description of Magnus Martyr, a London church. Eliot’s speaker indicates that this church, positioned “Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street” (Eliot, *TWL* 260), is home to “Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold” (Eliot, *TWL* 265). Eliot follows an unsettling sequence in the poem, the typist and the young man’s sexual encounter, with an emphatic statement about the beauty held within a Christian church. In a poem that seemingly has “unrelieved negativity,” Eliot turns to St. Magnus Martyr, a leading shrine in Anglo-Catholicism, as a symbol of beauty (Spurr, *Anglo-Catholic* 38). Immediately after this description of the church, Eliot turns to “The river [that] sweats / Oil and tar” (Eliot, *TWL* 266). Within a few lines, Eliot moves us from an indifferent and loveless sexual encounter, through to

inexplicable beauty in a Christian setting, to the destruction of natural beauty as a result of humankind.

The last section, “What the Thunder Said,” positions London, the “Unreal city,” among past fallen capitals, “Jerusalem Athens Alexandria / Vienna London” (Eliot, *TWL* 375-76), in order to further communicate England’s apparent demise (Blanton 41; Grimble 50). At the end of the first verse paragraph, the speaker indicates that “He who was living is now dead / We who were living are now dying” (Eliot, *TWL* 328-29).

Immediately thereafter, the speaker states:

Here is no water but only rock

Rock and no water and the sandy road

The road winding above among the mountains

Which are mountains of rock without water

If there were water we should stop and drink

Amongst the rock one cannot stop and think

Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand

If there were only water amongst the rock

Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit

Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit (Eliot, *TWL* 331-40).

In these ten lines, there are six references to a lack of water or moisture, seven to either rock or mountain, two to dry sand, and twice the speaker’s offers the hypothetical “If there were.” There is an inability to “stop and think,” which has a direct correlation with the extreme dehydration. As if this were not enough, the “mountain mouth” does not even have enough moisture to “spit.” Due to the complete lack of water, “Here one can

neither stand nor lie nor sit,” demonstrating a complete inability to do anything at all. Eliot’s speaker then brings attention to the “dry sterile thunder” that does not bring rain but only disrupts the silence (Eliot, *TWL* 341-2). Eliot desires to convey a message of hopelessness; the solution, quite obviously, is found in water. Shortly thereafter, Eliot presents the speaker with hope amid a church chapel:

In this decayed hole among the mountains
In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing
Over tumbled graves, about the chapel
There is the empty chapel, only the wind’s home.
It has no windows, and the door swings,
Dry bones can harm no one.
Only a cock stood on the roof-tree
Co co rico co co rico.
In a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust
Bringing rain. (Eliot, *TWL* 386-95).

The entirety of “What the Thunder Said,” it seems, centers on the suffering from the lack of water. Here, in an abandoned chapel in the mountain, there is rain, an interesting detail given that earlier in the poem Eliot associates feelings of hope with a Christian church.

The chapel suffers from neglect, given that it has “no windows” and the door swings back and forth with the movement of the wind, demonstrating that the drought is accompanied by a spiritual dryness. In the modern world, one advancing in secularism, the chapel is “only the wind’s home.” With the “cock” that stands on the “roof-tree”

calling “co co rico,” Eliot alludes to Peter’s denial of Christ, perhaps gesturing towards England’s denial of the religion that undergirds society. Though England has apparently abandoned Christianity, there remains hope that the “damp gust” that “[brings] rain” will usher in redemption for the modern world. The chapel and the rainwater are significant for our understanding of *The Waste Land* because the hope found in a chapel gives way to the speaker’s proclamation of the Shantih (Eliot, *TWL* 434), the peace that surpasses understanding, in and amid a London that is “falling down” (Eliot, *TWL* 427). In *Four Quartets*, Eliot will return to a chapel, thus redeeming this image from associations with rivalling religious beliefs, marking the poet’s definitive turn to Christian redemption.

Anglo-Catholic in Religion

It was in *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1927) that Eliot announced he converted to Anglo-Catholicism, causing no little impact among literary circles. As Spurr demonstrates, Eliot’s beliefs reflect the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, but he chose to affiliate himself with Anglo-Catholicism. The reason for this, of course, rests in Eliot’s desire to integrate into English culture. Eliot’s Christian faith, by all accounts, was genuine, something he solemnly believed and practiced. His *denominational* choice, on the other hand, may not be altogether representative of his faith. Were it not for his desire to integrate into English culture, it seems likely that he would have adopted Roman-Catholicism, the faith that has deeper roots in European culture (Spurr, “Religion” 313). Eliot apparently regretted Britain’s break from Roman Catholicism, and believed that it was inevitable that Rome would, once again, be the center for English Catholics (Spurr, *Anglo-Catholic* 104). Nevertheless, Spurr is right to conclude

that Anglo-Catholicism is “the essential context in which [Eliot’s] life and work must be set and interpreted” (Spurr, “Religion” 306).

Because Spurr provides an extensive overview of Anglo-Catholic theology, it seems unnecessary for me to do the same. Instead, I would like to discuss the most pertinent doctrinal position to which Eliot subscribed: the Incarnation, a doctrine that has eschatological qualities. I will emphasize Eliot’s intellectual approach to his faith, an approach that is among the most important towards understanding his Christianity. Holding to dogma and to the need for an intellectually-stimulated Christianity are not mutually exclusive beliefs, as critics suggest. Instead, Eliot, like Williams, believes that holding to central Christian dogma, such the Incarnation, allows “the single mind to enter the Communion of Saints” (Williams 39). Dogma, then, is a critical component of an intellectually-viable faith, for it stands on an authoritative tradition refined by the faith’s brightest minds.

One of Eliot’s most fascinating poems is “Journey of the Magi” (1927). Spurr indicates that it is “striking” that a poet renowned for his innovative modernist techniques begins his career as a Christian poet with a virtually direct quotation from Lancelot Andrewes’s 1622 Christmas sermon on the Incarnation (Spurr, *Anglo-Catholic* 213). The opening five lines, “A cold coming we had of it / [...] The very dead of winter” (Eliot, “Magi” lines 1-5), hearken back to Andrewes’s words about the Incarnation, the doctrine that settles Eliot’s concerns about the temporal and eternal worlds. It is fitting, given the discussion of water and the chapel in *The Waste Land*, that upon approaching the Christ child, the Magi come across a “temperate valley” where there is a “running stream and a water-mill” (Eliot, “Magi” 21-3). Hugh Kenner, in *The*

Invisible Poet, also sees *The Waste Land* in Eliot's "Magi," declaring that this 1927 poem "sanctifies" the final section of *The Waste Land* (Kenner 215). The discussion of water precedes the mention of the "empty wine-skins" (Eliot, "Magi" 28), gesturing towards Jesus' discussion of wineskins in Luke 5, an analogy that Jesus uses to discuss the beginning of the New Covenant. By simply mentioning the wineskins, Eliot alerts his reader to the discussion to the Magi's disillusionment with the "old dispensation," (Eliot, "Magi" 41) and subsequent desire for the New Covenant.

A distinct component of the closing stanza is the Magi's interpretation of the birth of Christ. Herein lies the paradox of the poem, and a central paradox of Christianity: what did the Magi witness on that first Christmas morning, a "Birth or Death?" (Eliot, "Magi" 36). In Jewish thought, the arrival of Israel's Messiah is an eschatological event because it signals the overthrow of the occupying Roman government and God's establishment of Israel's kingdom once again. As the Magi's reaction demonstrates, Jesus' arrival, and the hypostatic union that occurs, defies expectation: He is not the military leader that King David was. Instead, this Messiah ushers in a new dispensation without the sword, a New Covenant for a new people of God that extends beyond Israel's borders to "alien people" (Eliot, "Magi" 42).

Christopher Rowland explains that this poem "offers a reflection on the First Coming and expectation/desire of the Second" (Rowland 358). Quite simply, in this profoundly important beginning, there is an equally important end; the beginning of the Messiah's life marks the end of the old religious order.

Incarnational theology reveals Eliot's fascination with beginnings and endings, serving as the doctrine that perfectly captures both moments in time, the aforementioned

tick and the *tock*. This discussion extends into “A Song for Simeon.” The second chapter of Luke’s Gospel tells the story of Simeon, a man “waiting for the consolation of Israel” (v. 25). According to Luke, God promised Simeon that he would not die before he saw the Messiah. Upon seeing Jesus, Simeon takes the child and immediately thanks God for allowing him to see God’s salvation plan for both the Gentiles and the Israelites (v. 29-32).

In Eliot’s poetic retelling, Simeon acknowledges the Roman occupation in the opening line before stating that he is “waiting for the death wind” (Eliot, “Simeon” 4). Shortly thereafter, Simeon mentions the “Dust in the sunlight” before commenting on the “wind that chills towards the dead land” (Eliot, “Simeon” 6-7). The dust and sunlight prefigure famous images in *Four Quartets* whereas the mention of the wind and the dead land is reminiscent of *The Waste Land*. Simeon’s understanding of the Incarnation is clear: the birth of the Christ signals Israel’s, and the wider world’s, salvation. In this way, the Incarnation is understood to be the fundamental soteriological moment in human history: “Let the Infant, the still unspeaking and unspoken Word, / Grant Israel’s consolation / To one who has eighty years and no to-morrow” (Eliot, “Simeon” 22-24). Israel’s consolation, of course, carries eschatological connotations. Though now dying, Simeon asks for God’s peace, the *shantih*, because he has “seen [God’s] salvation” and can now die. For both the Magi and for Simeon, Christ’s new life signals death, the death of the self and the death of the old “dispensation.” For Eliot, Christ’s existence, both at His birth and in the present moment, inextricably intertwines the past and the future, the *tick* and the *tock*, birth and death.

Ash-Wednesday and the Beginning of Christian Cultural Criticism

Though Eliot's "Ariel Poems" appeared before *Ash-Wednesday*, it was the latter that marked Eliot's definitive move into Christian poetics. Eliot's move into orthodox Christianity may have satisfied the poet's personal needs, but "from the perspective of a secular age, [*Ash-Wednesday* seemed] quixotic and irrelevant" (Cooper, *Ideology* 139). Ironically, it is the poem's simplicity, as a conversion poem, that unsettled the original readership, the same readership Eliot trained to cherish difficulty (Cooper, *Ideology* 2). Eliot begins to show that he is more interested in fixing civilization "as it exists at present" than in maintaining difficulty in his poetry. The problem for the poet becomes how to communicate these Christian ideals in a manner that is not only true to his personal beliefs but also in a manner that is pertinent and appealing to the readership. *Ash-Wednesday*, Cooper argues, reveals an "idiom and tone of voice that will carry [Eliot] toward his final masterpiece, *Four Quartets*" (*Ideology* 27).

Though not perfected in *Ash-Wednesday*, the topics which the newly converted Eliot discusses are ones that influence the remainder of his artistic output. Like "Prufrock" and *The Waste Land*, *Ash-Wednesday* preoccupies itself with the nature of time, dryness and death, and the Word. The most important doctrine in Eliot's theology, the Incarnation, is ever-present within this 1930 poem; within the hypostatic union, the eternal enters into, and therefore redeems, the temporal. At the conclusion of the poem, Eliot's speaker implores the Virgin Mary for "peace in His will / And even among these rocks" (Eliot, *Ash* 67). By situating the speaker among "these rocks," the poem recalls the ending sections of *The Waste Land*, a section that ends with Eliot's invocation of the "peace which surpasses understanding."

Not only does *Ash-Wednesday* solidify the importance of the Incarnation, but it also insists that there must be a return to the Word:

If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent

If the unheard, unspoken

Word is unspoken, unheard;

Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard,

The Word without a word, the Word within

The world and for the world;

And the light shone in the darkness and

Against the Word the unstilled world still whirled

About the centre of the silent Word. (Eliot, *Ash* 65).

The opening chapter of John's Gospel saturates Eliot's lines. In 1930 England, Eliot is attempting to communicate with a readership largely indifferent, or openly hostile, to Christianity. Eliot positions himself alongside John in order to maintain the importance of the Logos, both the living Christ and the Word of God, for an England that the poet believes needs to return to orthodoxy.

In London, the Word is "unheard" because it is "unspoken." Consequently, Eliot, the preeminent modernist poet, announces his self-appointed role as a Pauline figure: "How then will [non-Christians] call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never *heard*? And how are they to hear without someone *preaching*? [emphasis mine]" (Romans 10:14). Like Paul, Eliot implores his readership to evangelize. Though Eliot repeatedly insists he is not interested in proselytizing, his work reveals a very different impulse. Beginning in *Ash-*

Wednesday, Eliot articulates his vision for a renewed Europe, his eschatological vision that reaches its highest point in *Four Quartets*. In Gardner's estimation, *Ash-Wednesday* "is penetrated with the hope" that there is a Christ returning who will be "the fulfillment of the promise 'Behold, I make all things new'" (Gardner, *Art* 126). Eliot thus prepares us for understanding Christ as the "still point" in *Four Quartets*, the only hope for a Europe 'whirling' from secularism and totalitarianism, and the potentially apocalyptic end confronting England.

The Moot: People Worth Disagreeing With

In critical discourse during the 1930s, Jason Harding indicates that there was a widespread "apocalyptic 'myth of catastrophe'" that influenced intellectual thought (Harding, *Criterion* 6). As Eliot's career progressed, he became increasingly aware of the need for resistance to secularism and totalitarianism, for societal renewal, and for a Christian revival. In Michael Levenson's estimation, Eliot believed that there were only two options for the modern world, Christianity or totalitarianism, something that was a direct result of the "failure of liberalism" (Levenson 68). In Eliot's mind, Christianity, as Levenson points out, "cannot separate itself from the worldly crisis; it must engage in the struggle for political and social renewal" (Levenson 68). The modern world must acknowledge its impending eschatological end; the only choice available being whether or not it will be a Christian, redemptive end, or one characterised by secularism and Second World War destruction. In Eliot's words from *Four Quartets*, "[t]he only hope or else despair / Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre -- / To be redeemed from fire by fire" (Eliot, *FQ* 144). Europe is reaching a breaking point; the only decision, it seems, is

whether or not Europe will return to Catholicism's sanctifying fire or succumb to totalitarianism's destructive fire.

Eliot's development as a Christian intellectual in the 1930s was influenced by the Moot, a group of Christian intellectuals who met from 1938-1947. Despite the abundance of scholarship discussing the Second World War and literature, there remains very little that handles Eliot's involvement with this group. Though scholars, including Roger Kojecky and Barry Spurr, make claims about Eliot's views on the Moot, they do not sufficiently address how Eliot was intellectually stimulated by various Moot members, perhaps the foremost of whom was Christopher Dawson. Kojecky's discussion is lacking nuance, given that Eliot did not regard the Moot as favorably as this scholar argues. Spurr, on the other hand, is wrong to dismiss the significance of the Moot because of Eliot's later frustration with the group. For the purposes of this study, Eliot's position on the Moot by the end of the war is of little significance since the publication of *Four Quartets* (1935-42) precedes Eliot's feelings of frustration towards the Moot. Moreover, even if Eliot harbored these feelings prior to the dates Spurr suggests, there can be little doubt that Christopher Dawson, a member of the Moot, was tremendously influential for Eliot.

Eliot was among the most consistent attendees (twelve total meetings). *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939) and *Four Quartets* (1934-1942) emerged while he was still attending these meetings. *Notes Towards a Definition of Culture* (1948) bears clear similarities with the Moot's discussions (Clements 12; 15). As Jonas Kurlberg claims (518), Eliot's pronouncement that his ideal "Community of Christians" would comprise "both laity and clergy or superior intellectual and/or spiritual gifts" (Eliot, *Idea* 37) bears

a striking resemblance to the Moot. Eliot served on the editorial committee of Oldham's *The Christian News-Letter*, a weekly publication that had its origins in the Moot (Mullins and Jacobs 149; Clements 13; 222). In these ways, Eliot shows himself to be invested in the Moot, an indicator of his feelings about the group.

J.H. Oldham, the founder and leader of the Moot, endeavoured to develop a group of Christian intellectuals that could meet regularly to discuss ushering Christendom back into England, and Europe as a whole, while curtailing the negative effects of totalitarianism. The Moot's origins can be traced to a 1937 international ecumenical conference that took place at Oxford to discuss the topic of "Church, Community and State" (Clements 6). At this conference, there were four hundred delegates representing 120 churches from forty countries. Their aim was to "debate and formulate lines of thought and action for the churches in relation to contemporary society, and all in the face of the growing crises at both the national and international levels and the impending threat of war" (Clements 6).

Oldham, an international figure in Christian circles who was "deeply respected" (Clements 7), put together a membership that consisted of the foremost Christian intellectuals in Europe. Keith Clements, a leading Moot scholar, indicates that Oldham sought to help "catalyse a [wide] movement of faith seeking social transformation" (Clements 9). Twenty-two people accepted Oldham's invitation to join the Moot. Among this group were a mixture of trained theologians and informed laity. T.S. Eliot, "the foremost poet and literary critic of the time," helped to give the group "distinction," along with notable intellectuals such as sociologist Karl Mannheim, literary critic John

Middleton Murry, Roman Catholic historian Christopher Dawson, and theologian Reinhold Niebuhr (Clements 10-11).

The Moot in Brief, Keith Clements's scholarly study on the Moot meetings, provides biographical information about the membership, historical details, excerpts from essays circulated from the members, and near "verbatim records" of the meetings (Clements 1). In the meeting minutes, Eliot expresses an obvious concern about the rise of totalitarianism: "The evils we are conscious of in the present might take several centuries to alter" (Clements 41). Towards the end of the first meeting, Eliot stated that he hoped contributors to the *Criterion* would express interest in "the kind of work this group had in mind" (Clements 59). Theodor Haeckel, a contributor to Eliot's *Criterion* who opposed Hitler on Christian grounds (Cooper, *Ideology* 43), provides an example of the sort of thinker Eliot is describing in this meeting with the Moot.

During the second meeting, John Middleton Murry defends a paper which argues that the best way to witness a thriving international Church was to cultivate national church communities. Adolf Löwe, a lecturer in economics and sociology at Manchester University (Clements 28-29), immediately interjected and stated that "current events proved the breakdown of the national conception," a notion to which Eliot was said to agree "wholly" (Clements 79). Eliot, like the others, maintained that "it was more essential than ever that [society] should be Christian" (Clements 82). In these meetings, Eliot's concerns about political unity, Christian revival, and the threats of totalitarianism are evident, providing useful background material for understanding his literary output at this time.

Other notable details about Eliot's involvement with the Moot rest in his affirmation of the need to accept Christian dogma (Clements 92), an impulse that Christian intellectuals had to "guide [the people's] thought" towards Christianity instead of mere occupation with "economics, class and race" (Clements 114), and his statement that they were "involved in an enormous catastrophe which includes a war" (Clements 229), indicating that the Second World War was merely a part of Europe's central concerns. Eliot also declared that H.A. Hodges, a professor of philosophy at Reading University (Clements 27), ought to be careful when discussing Christian mysticism because the "ordinary person" would associate this with "occultism and theosophy" (Clements 436). Eliot is keenly aware of the religious syncretism prominent among many modernists, acknowledging the need to distinguish proper mystical experiences from those endorsed, for instance, by H.D.

One of the most interesting details from the meetings is a response Eliot gives to Karl Mannheim as to the poet's reason for appreciating the Moot:

I can express what I mean best by mentioning one reason why I have found the Moot most profitable to myself: which is that I find in it, not merely agreement achieved or hoped for, but also *significant disagreement*. [...] What is valuable is the formulation of differences within a certain field of identity – though the identity may be very difficult, if not impossible, wholly to formulate; what is valuable is association with people who may hold very different views from one's own, but are in general at the same stage of development and detachment – these are the people *worth* disagreeing with, so to speak (Clements 343).

This quotation is perhaps Eliot's most charitable description of the Moot. The significance rests in Eliot's reasoning for appreciating Oldham's group: though there remain significant disagreements, disagreements that would later lead to frustration, the Moot is useful because it provides the poet an opportunity to sharpen his own Christianity.

It is notable that Dawson, in one of the three meetings that he attended, when responding to how to curtail the evils presented by Mussolini and Hitler, indicated that "the solution ultimately is a totalitarian Christian Order, but this would be the Kingdom of God – a very long range policy" (Clements 52). Dawson's solution rests in an eschatological view. Eliot clearly disdained any notion of totalitarianism, even if it took on a Catholic form (Kurlberg 525). In Eliot's mind, Christianity existed best when in "local circles and small groups," an ideal that Eliot and Dawson were unsure would ever again come to fruition in Europe (Clements 54-55). The brief dialogue between Dawson and Eliot during this meeting is just one instance where Eliot engages this Catholic historian's thought. As I hope to show, Eliot turned to Dawson extensively for understanding Catholicism, Europe, and culture.

There is a lack of scholarship that highlights how Dawson's ideas influence Eliot's. John Xiros Cooper mentions Dawson, at times engaging his work, but ultimately offering only a very brief consideration (Cooper, *Cambridge* 92). Jeroen Vanheste, when considering Eliot's conception of Europe, mentions Dawson as someone trying to "demonstrate the inseparability" of Europe and Christianity (Vanheste 58). Given Eliot's reliance on Dawson for understanding Europe and Christianity, it seems fitting that a discussion of Dawson's work would precede a consideration of *Four Quartets*.

Dawson believes that religion undergirds every culture, and the abandonment of religion will lead to cultural decay. In *Enquiries into Religion and Culture*, Dawson asserts that “the society or culture which has lost its spiritual roots is a dying culture, however prosperous it may appear externally” (Dawson, *Enquiries* vi). Dawson’s encourages “all Christians to defend their spiritual heritage in the face of the totalitarian menace” (Scott viii). Not surprisingly, Dawson’s thought was heavily influenced by Dante and St. Thomas, a detail that is merely one correlation between him and Eliot (Scott xii). Upon graduating from Oxford, Dawson avoided an academic career, for he instead desired to do research unhindered by teaching and administrative work. Never lacking in ambition, Dawson felt as though he could show the “spiritual origins of the whole history of humankind” (Scott xiii). One of Dawson’s most important contributions to Christian thought, and specifically to Eliot’s, was that he argued that in order for there to be a Christian revival, there must first be a Catholic intellectual revival (Scott xx).

Dawson’s *Progress and Religion: An Historical Enquiry* (1929), his most influential work, directly pertains to Eliot’s primary concerns with European culture. One of Dawson’s central concerns is the predominance of liberalism in European intellectualism. Liberalism, as Oldham and the Moot understood it, because of its *laissez-faire* qualities, made it possible for totalitarianism to arise (Kurlberg 524). Dawson explains on the first page of the opening chapter that “the idea of Progress has occupied a position of [absolute truth and universal validity] in the modern civilization of Western Europe” (Dawson 3). In Dawson’s mind, and also in Eliot’s, the notion of

Progress is an all-encompassing philosophy, something that affects all areas of thought; yet it is also an idea that is antithetical to Christian dogma.

Before delving into the particulars of Christianity and its influence on European society, Dawson spends six chapters discussing ideas about liberalism, the rise of anthropology, and a myriad of world religions and their influences on their respective cultures. It is a startling detail that at a time when Frazer's comparative analysis uses similarities between religions as a means of undermining Christianity's authenticity, Dawson uses these same similarities to buttress his argument about Christianity's importance to Europe (Douglas xxii). Dawson's strategy is clear: before specifically addressing Christianity, show numerous examples of religious systems sustaining a culture. Once these religions are abandoned in favor of an unsuitable replacement, the culture will inevitably fail (Dawson, *Progress* 112). Eliot, in *Notes*, expresses a near verbatim explanation of culture, for the poet-theologian indicates that "no culture has appeared or developed except together with a religion" (Eliot, *Notes* 13). After nearly 150 pages of groundwork, Dawson finally turns to the book's most pertinent sections: Christianity and Western civilization.

Though many in the modern world tended towards religious syncretism, a clear offshoot of Frazer's influence, Dawson instead begins his discussion of Christianity by outlining the distinctiveness of Israelite conceptions of God, morality, and history. Unlike the impersonal conceptions of the supernatural in Greek and Chinese religions, the Israelites emphasized Jahweh, the God of Israel, as a "personal deity" (Dawson, *Progress* 151). This God, unlike those from neighbouring cultures, refused to be worshipped alongside anyone else: "The God of Israel [...] tolerated no companion [...]"

the tendency in Israel was to accentuate the unity and the universality of the national god” (Dawson, *Progress* 152). Such a statement, though the traditional conception of Christianity and Judaism, is controversial and highly subversive because it goes against the syncretism preeminent in many modernist circles. Moreover, the discussion of a national yet universal God directly correlates with Eliot’s Anglo-Catholicism. While Eliot was certainly concerned with Christianity in England, he nevertheless focused on a European unity based on Christianity.

Perhaps the most pertinent detail about Dawson’s discussion of Israel is his argument that the Israelites, unlike other peoples, placed a heavy emphasis on history and God’s apparent intervention in past events: “to the Jews, history possessed a unique and absolute value such as no other people of antiquity had conceived” (Dawson, *Progress* 154). The Jews, according to Dawson, saw God’s provision in their past travails, and it was through the “sufferings of Israel and of the Chosen servant of Jahweh” that God would usher in the “eternal reign of justice in the Messianic kingdom of God” (Dawson, *Progress* 153-54). Jewish understandings of history profoundly impacted their conceptions of the future, thus intertwining the “prophetic and apocalyptic tradition” in such a way as to culminate in the “Kingdom of God [that is] at once a fulfilment of ancient prophecies of the restoration of Israel, and as a new world order which would renew heaven and earth” (Dawson, *Progress* 155). Similar to the discussion in the opening chapter, Dawson demonstrates the *tick* being yoked with the *tock*, that beliefs about the beginning almost always influence beliefs about the end.

When discussing the “restored humanity,” Dawson indicates that “the life of the Church consists in the progressive extension of the Incarnation by the gradual

incorporation of mankind into this higher unity” (Dawson, *Progress* 155). The Incarnation, then, serves as the starting point for the end, the “still point” by which God redeems a sinful people still reeling from the effects of Original Sin. This understanding of the Incarnation, one that is apparent in Eliot’s deployment of this doctrine, goes unnoticed by many Eliot scholars.

While Dawson goes on to discuss Christianity’s influence on European culture in the following pages, the Incarnation remains a central topic. To many Catholics, the Incarnation is the central event in human history. In order for the Incarnation and its implications to affect a culture, there must be a driving intellectual force. During the fourth century, the time when Christianity officially took hold of Europe, it was St. Augustine who “first gave a more profound philosophical and theological orientation to the genius of the Western Church” (Dawson, *Progress* 163). Due to a reliance on mysticism in the East, Christianity fizzled; in the West, on the other hand, Christianity became a “dynamic moral and social force,” largely because of the intellectual accomplishments of St. Augustine (Dawson, *Progress* 165). Eliot envisioned himself as an Augustinian figure, an intellect capable of shepherding a wayward Europe.

Shortly thereafter, Dawson argues that “the new civilization which slowly and painfully began to emerge in the early middle ages was in a very special sense a religious creation, for it was based on ecclesiastical not a political unity” (Dawson, *Progress* 166). In light of the devastation of the First World War, it is unsurprising that Dawson expresses skepticism about the merits of political unity. The alternative is an intellectually-driven Christianity, buoyed by the Incarnation, which thus sustains a multi-national community: “Everywhere men became conscious of their common

citizenship in the great religious commonwealth of Christendom” (Dawson, *Progress* 167). In similar fashion, Eliot states that unity will only be achieved in England if the population returns to Anglo-Catholicism (Eliot, *Idea* 47). Eliot’s 1939 declaration of the unity of England being dependant on Anglo-Catholicism is of no little significance when considering the function of *Four Quartets*, a poem that seeks to spark such a revival.

Due to the “dynamic moral energy of the Augustinian tradition” alongside “the humanity of Christ [becoming] the centre of religious life,” European civilization thrived (Dawson, *Progress* 170). This was not a new idea for Dawson. In a 1916 essay titled “The Catholic Tradition and the Modern State,” he indicates that there is a correlation between nation-states, secularism, and the atrocities of the First World War. Christendom, reasons Dawson, created a “single great fatherland” in Europe (Dawson, “Tradition” 25). In a prophetic declaration, Dawson goes on to say that social change will either take a religious form, such as Eliot’s, or it will take on an economic approach, something that dominates Ezra Pound’s work (Dawson, “Tradition” 26). Dawson also outlines the process of secularization that took place in Europe, so it is unsurprising that Eliot firmly believed that he was living in an age where Britain, by and large, committed apostasy.

The Protestant Reformation, and the subsequent disunity that ensued, largely contributed to the downfall of Christendom in Europe. Luther was instrumental in the “de-intellectualization of the Catholic tradition,” effectively stripping the Church of its “dynamic” forces that hitherto sustained it (Dawson, *Progress* 180). By the eighteenth century, the schism between Catholic and Protestant culminated in a new worldview: liberalism and its insistence on secular progress (Dawson, *Progress* 189). In

contemporary Europe, “[m]aterial progress, unrestricted competition, and national rivalries have led to a social crisis which threatens not only the prosperity, but the very existence of European civilization” (Dawson, *Progress* 208). Secularisation is the reason for Europe’s current issues, for it was Christianity that provided the unity that was essential to its very existence (Dawson, *Progress* 217). At the end of *Progress and Religion*, Dawson states that Europe “has a beginning, and must ultimately have an end [...] Nevertheless, the idea of an absolute beginning or end is [...] repugnant [to] anyone who does not accept a theistic [...] world view” (Dawson, *Progress* 224). It is unsurprising, then, that Eliot continually returns to a discussion of the beginning and the end, the *tick/tock*, throughout *Four Quartets*.

Four Quartets as Eschatology

Four Quartets is a poem profoundly influenced by Christianity and the Second World War. Though much has been made about Eliot’s declaration that the poet ought to engage in a “process of continual extinction of personality” (Eliot, *Sacred* 53), Eliot and his personal concerns are prominent in *Four Quartets*. It is these concerns that Eliot attempts to discuss with the readers of this poem. Tony Sharpe indicates that the majority of *Four Quartets* was “composed with an audience in mind” (Sharpe 164). Helen Gardner puts forward a similar sentiment, indicating that Eliot’s intent in *Four Quartets* is not to “mystify” but, instead, to tackle complex spiritual truths that quite often elude “formulation in words” (Gardner, *Art* 57). As is the case for Eliot’s oeuvre, each section of *Four Quartets* “gathers up into itself all that has been said before, and communication becomes easier as the whole poem proceeds” (Gardner, *Art* 57). Quite simply, “the difficulty of *Four Quartets* is different from the difficulty of the earlier

poetry” (Gardner, *Art* 72). In *TWL*, Eliot intentionally wrote poetry that was obscure, frequently referencing texts and traditions with which the majority of people would have been unfamiliar. In *Four Quartets*, Gardner states that the difficulty is the result of the poet’s attempt at using words, an imperfect means, to understand the divine, the perfect Word. *Four Quartets* marks Eliot’s definitive poetic attempt at fixing civilization “as it exists at present.”

Eliot viewed his faith through contemporary concerns, the foremost of which was European totalitarianism. In *Four Quartets*, Eliot thus undertakes an ambition that began in *Ash-Wednesday*: transforming European culture, a culture threatened by physical and spiritual perils, into a thriving, multi-national community of Christians who base their faith on the Incarnation. Northrop Frye points out that Eliot’s ideal “human culture” would be a reflection of the Incarnation: “Hence human culture is aligned with a spiritual reality which is superior to it and yet within it, the kind of relationship represented in Christianity by the Incarnation” (Frye 12). Eliot’s ambition, then, is to move society closer to Christ’s Kingdom, to an awareness of the importance of the Incarnation, and to a thriving, historical Church.

Four Quartets begins with “Burnt Norton” (1935), a poem made up of excerpts leftover from his play *Murder in the Cathedral*. Though initially envisioned as a stand-alone poem, “Burnt Norton” still “provides the “rhetorical blueprint for the three poems to come” (Cooper, *Ideology* 148). In this section, Eliot reiterates his position as the poet-guide, the intellect capable of navigating the hells of the modern world. Unlike the uncertain Prufrock who implores his reader to “go” before immobilizing himself with ether, the speaker of Eliot’s *Quartets* exudes confidence, actively pushing the reader

“Into the rose-garden” before insisting “My words echo / Thus, in your mind” (Eliot, *FQ* 117). Shortly thereafter, the bird instructs the reader to proceed through the rose garden, and it is within this rose garden that the speaker mentions the “unheard music” and the “Dry pool, dry concrete,” evoking memories of the Word “unheard” in *Ash-Wednesday* and of the dryness of *The Waste Land* (Eliot, *FQ* 118). By using similar phrasing and diction from previous works, Eliot allows his words to “[gather] meaning” (Spencer 14).

In this opening sequence where the bird displays the rose garden, Eliot again hearkens back to another of his previous works, *Murder in the Cathedral*: “Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind / Cannot bear very much reality” (Eliot, *FQ* 118). The question that follows, of course, is what is this reality that Eliot asserts humankind cannot bear? Thomas Beckett utters this line at the point in *Murder in the Cathedral* when his death is imminent, almost immediately before the knights murder him (209). By the time he wrote *Murder*, and subsequently “Burnt Norton,” Eliot had become preoccupied with martyrdom, an interesting detail in light of Eliot’s belief that the “chief quandary of the church of [his] time would be its relation to secular totalitarianism” (Wood 39). Notable Christian intellectuals such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Thomas Haecker would be martyred as a result of resistance to totalitarianism. As England considers the danger of European totalitarianism, it must inevitably acknowledge the “reality” of its own temporality, susceptibility to decay, possibility of martyrdom, and, ultimately, must turn to the “reality” of its only hope for salvation.

“Burnt Norton” continues to wrestle with this reality, culminating in a discussion of “the still point of the turning world” (Eliot, *FQ* 119), which Eliot has trained his audience to associate with the Word in Bethlehem. It is with Jesus’ birth that

Christianity reveals its plan for salvation, a reality that modernism, by and large, rejects. The Incarnation signals “both a new world / and the old made explicit, understood / [...] The resolution of its partial horror” (Eliot, *FQ* 119). Though making sin “explicit,” the Incarnation’s redemptive capacity is only “partial.” Nevertheless, it does point to a higher reality, an end to the suffering on earth: “Yet the enchainment of past and future / woven in the weakness of the changing body, / Protects mankind from heaven and damnation” (Eliot, *FQ* 119). Redemption, as Dawson indicates, “is begun in time [but] is consummated in eternity” (Dawson, *Enquiries* 250). When Eliot’s speaker mentions “the enchainment of past and future,” he is, of course, referring to eternity, a state of being continually in the present moment of a timeless reality. Humanity sees this reality in Jesus who takes on the “weakness of a changing body,” an eternal being who subjects himself to decay over time. Though the Incarnation does not altogether mitigate Original Sin in the present moment, it nevertheless “Protects mankind from heaven and damnation / Which flesh cannot endure” (Eliot, *FQ* 119). Eliot repackages his earlier statement about humanity not being able to bear reality to instead state that “flesh cannot endure” eternity, something the Incarnation addresses. As Eliot discusses time in “Burnt Norton” through various mentions of the past, present, and future, his ultimate aim is to reveal the Christ who conquers time by entering into it. Because Christ enters into the temporal order, humanity can enter into eternity; this is the divine exchange to which the Incarnation speaks.

As this section comes to a close, Eliot insists that he must rely on an imperfect means to communicate Christian truth: “Words move, music moves / Only in time; but that which is only living / Can only die” (Eliot, *FQ* 121). In these highly self-reflexive

lines, Eliot refers to himself writing “Burnt Norton;” the poet is constrained to using words, but this is an imperfect means of communicating salvation, for it is dependent on time for dispersal:

[...] Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay still. (Eliot, *FQ* 121)

Unlike the Word who is the “still point” of the world, the words that Eliot, and every human being, must use are prone to death, decay, and movement. For this reason, it is “The Word in the desert” who “Is most attacked by voices of temptation, / The crying shadow in the funeral dance, / The loud lament of the disconsolate chimera” (Eliot, *FQ* 122). Jesus, the Word who was tempted in the desert, stands in stark contrast to “Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering” words that afflict Him. Because Jesus, the Word, entered into time, He is therefore subjected to “the tension of life in time, which words suffer” (Gardner, *Art* 63).

“East Coker,” the second section of Eliot’s *Quartets*, picks up where the poet left off in “Burnt Norton” by discussing the breakdown and decay of humanity: “In my beginning is my end. In succession / Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended, / Are removed, destroyed” (Eliot, *FQ* 123). As these lines demonstrate, a discussion of time dominates “East Coker.” Revelation focuses on the Jesus who declares himself to be the “Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.” Whenever Eliot repeats “In my beginning is my end,” the reader must therefore look to Revelation. Immediately

thereafter, Eliot alludes to both Genesis and Ecclesiastes, for the “ashes” that return “to the earth” are a clear reference to the lifecycle that God institutes after the Fall, while the discussion of there being “a time for building / And a time for living and for generation / And a time for the wind to break the loosened pane” quite obviously allude to Solomon’s words from the beginning of Ecclesiastes 3 (Eliot, *FQ* 123). Solomon, the biblical source of much wisdom literature, saturates Eliot’s thought. In these previous lines, Eliot turns to humanity’s problem, their inherent sinfulness which began at the Fall, before turning to the wisest man of the Old Testament, Solomon, for commentary on decay over time.

Towards the end of the second section of “East Coker,” Eliot once again reveals Solomon’s influence. The poet indicates that “The only wisdom we can hope to acquire / Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless” (Eliot, *FQ* 126). Throughout Ecclesiastes, and in Proverbs, two books traditionally ascribed to King David’s heir, Solomon emphasizes the importance of wisdom. Humility, as the antithesis of pride, is the key to acquiring wisdom. Like Solomon, St. Augustine popularized the belief that pride is the sin that undergirds all other sins, thereby indicating that humility is a primary virtue for Christians. Eliot, as he does often in his work, relies on Christianity’s brightest forefathers for insight.

Though Eliot mentions the “destructive fire” that will come upon the world, the eschaton remains on the periphery of “East Coker” (Eliot, *FQ* 125). Soteriology and Christology, on the other hand, are of the utmost importance to Eliot’s discussion, particularly in the fourth and fifth sections. The two opening stanzas of the fourth section deserve to be quoted in full:

The wounded surgeon plies the steel
That questions the distempered part;
Beneath the bleeding hands we feel
The sharp compassion of the healer's art
Resolving the enigma of the fever chart.

Our only health is the disease
If we obey the dying nurse
Whose constant care is not to please
But to remind of our, and Adam's curse,

And that, to be restored, our sickness must grow worse (Eliot, *FQ* 127)

The mention of the “wounded surgeon” and “dying nurse” have evoked a plethora of responses from critics. In my reading, it seems obvious that the wounded surgeon is Christ, for it is the “bleeding hands” of this “compassionate” healer that can solve “the enigma of the fever chart.” The enigma, of course, rests in overcoming Original Sin, a topic that the “dying nurse,” the priest, ought to solve by pointing out the patient to the “wounded surgeon.” Eliot’s understanding of sin and redemption, though believed by many to be antiquated, is the result of an intellectually rigorous consideration of the faith and subsequently a reliance on Christian dogma. In Augustinian fashion, Eliot does not merely place the blame on Adam but, instead, insists that sin’s curse is “our” collective problem.

Three more stanzas, all consisting of five lines and adhering to an *ababb* rhyme scheme, comprise the remainder of the fourth section in “East Coker.” The third and

fourth stanzas indicate that “The whole earth is our hospital” before emphasizing the importance of “purgatorial fires” (Eliot, *FQ* 128). Not only is all of humanity sick with sin, but Eliot also acknowledges that everyone on earth is in need of recovery while also stating that purifying “purgatorial fire,” sanctification for the believer, is of crucial importance. Thereafter, Eliot, like a good Anglo-Catholic, emphasizes the Eucharist and Christ’s crucifixion:

The dripping blood our only drink,
The bloody flesh our only food:
In spite of which we like to think
That we are sound, substantial flesh and blood—

Again, in spite of this, we call this Friday good. (Eliot, *FQ* 128)

The Eucharist, a ritual that repeats the Incarnation, is of crucial significance to many Catholics, reminding humanity of Christ’s sacrifice through the “only drink” and “only food.” In Catholic doctrine, the wafer and wine, through the process of transubstantiation, literally turn into Christ’s broken body and spilled blood, a notion that stems from the Last Supper where Christ refashions the Passover feast to commemorate His sacrifice. At the conclusion of these two opening lines, Eliot inserts a colon, an indication of a connecting thought to follow. In spite of the truth that the Eucharist conveys, the modernist era still insists “That we are sound, substantial flesh and blood,” a notion that Eliot insists is false because of time’s decay. Modern men and women, then, are guilty of pride, thinking too much of their “substantial flesh and blood,” to the detriment of their understanding of Good Friday and the Eucharist. The first section from the *Quartets*, “Burnt Norton,” already articulates this reality, that

humanity cannot bear the reality that we are not “substantial flesh and blood.” Yet again, Eliot’s speaker must reiterate the importance of the Incarnation as the only solution to humanity’s inevitable decay.

To end “East Coker,” Eliot offers perhaps the most self-reflexive lines of the poem, articulating despair about his role as a man of letters:

So here I am, in the middle way, having had twenty years—
Twenty years largely wasted, the years of *l’entre deux guerres*—
Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure
Because one has only learnt to get the better of words
For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which
One is no longer disposed to say it. And so each venture
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate
With shabby equipment always deteriorating
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling
Undisciplined squads of emotion. (Eliot, *FQ* 128).

Similar to the ending of “Burnt Norton,” Eliot brings “East Coker” to its conclusion with a meditation on the function of words and his personal shortcomings as a poet. Gardner’s observation that *Four Quartets* represents Eliot’s most “undisguised” autobiographical poetry is evident in these lines (Gardner, *Composition* 4). It is startling to read that Eliot, largely considered the greatest modernist poet, write that the time “*l’entre deux guerres*” has “largely [been] wasted.” *The Sacred Wood*, *The Criterion*, *The Waste Land*, “The Hollow Men,” *Ash-Wednesday*, are, in Eliot’s view, largely

wasted and merely the poet “Trying to learn to use words.” Of course, behind Eliot’s words stands the Word, the perfect Son of God, whom Eliot relies upon in “Little Gidding” for the redemption of words.

It was during the making of “East Coker” that Eliot first envisioned a four-part poem, all interconnected, based on the four elements (air, earth, water, fire) and four locations. “Burnt Norton” is the poem that represents air whereas “East Coker” represents the earth. After the opening two sequences, the next to emerge was “The Dry Salvages,” a poem written in 1940 based on the element of water. The setting, and inspiration, rests in Cape Ann, Massachusetts, a location where Eliot spent much of his childhood (Spencer 101). Given the heavy theological emphasis in the previous two sections, “The Dry Salvages” stands as something of an outlier, for the theological discussion it not always as overt. By opening with a consideration of the Thames, the “Useful, untrustworthy, [...] conveyor of commerce,” Eliot evokes memories of *The Waste Land* and its discussion of “The river [that] sweats / Oil and tar” (Eliot, *TWL* 266-67). Similarly, the speaker of “The Dry Salvages” argues that “We cannot think of a time that is oceanless / Or of an ocean not littered with wastage” (Eliot, *FQ* 132). There is the familiar discussion of a “tolling bell” that “measures time” as well as a mention of the “Consequences of further days and hours” (Eliot, *FQ* 131).

Perhaps the most fruitful portion, for the purposes of this study, is Eliot’s discussion of the occult and religious syncretism. Eliot mentions various practices ranging from séances, tarot cards, horoscopes, palm-reading, and numerous other elements of the occult with diction and a tone that ridicules the practitioners as foolish and naive. Palm-reading, for example, is akin to being able to “evoke / Biography from

the wrinkles of the palm / And tragedy from fingers” (Eliot, *FQ* 135). In this quotation, and in other lines from the fifth section of “The Dry Salvages,” Eliot attempts to use humor, and Christian dogma, to dismantle occultism. In Eliot’s view, mere location, “Whether on the shores of Asia, or in Edgware Road” (Eliot, *FQ* 136), does nothing to substantiate occultism; it is only the Christian who can acquire knowledge about the supernatural: “But to apprehend / The point of intersection of the timeless / With time, is an occupation for the saint” (Eliot, *FQ* 136). “The point of intersection of the timeless,” of course, gestures towards the Incarnation and Christian mysticism. Even the Christian mystic is not fully aware of the divine; there is only a “Moment, the moment in and out of time,” where the Christian can get lost in a “shaft of sunlight” or in “music heard so deeply / That it is not heard at all” (Eliot, *FQ* 136).

Ultimately, Eliot concludes that the only human to ever realize an authentic connection with the divine was Himself divine in origin:

[...] These are only hints and guesses,
Hints followed by guesses; and the rest
Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.
The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation.
Here the impossible union.
Of spheres of existence is actual,
Here the past and future
Are conquered, and reconciled (Eliot, *FQ* 136)

As is the case in earlier discussion of the Incarnation and its consequences, Eliot argues that Christ’s descent from Heaven provides a window for humanity to enter into the

eternal realm. The particular significance for this passage, however, rests in how Eliot explicitly contrasts this Christian dogma with the occultism and syncretism that was a fundamental component to H.D.'s spirituality and that of many others. The authentic supernatural experience is predicated on the Incarnation, for therein lies humanity's only ability to enter into contact with eternity, a realm altogether different from their own.

By discussing communication with the supernatural and the bridge afforded to the Christian believer through the Incarnation, Eliot thus moves his poem to its concluding section, "Little Gidding." In 1936, Eliot went on a "pilgrimage" to Little Gidding with "the eminent Pascal scholar, the Rev Hugh Fraser Stewart" (Schuchard 60). Spencer argues that "The symbolic journey to Little Gidding which is shown in the last Quartet of the poem ends at the world's end, a place of saints" (Spencer 81). I will go a step further than Spencer by insisting that Eliot discusses the world's end by returning to the Garden of Eden. As is evident from the beginning, this section of Eliot's *Quartets* corresponds with the element fire, a trope that Eliot will use to communicate clearly about Christian mysticism, salvation, and eschatology.

Eliot did what he could to help in the war effort from home, leading to fire-watching duties in London. Eliot commented that the war profoundly impacted the manner in which he wrote the later *Quartets*, because he sometimes had to neglect writing for a couple days while he instead fulfilled his responsibility as an air-raid warden. In a very literal sense, the Second World War impacted how Eliot was able to compose his poetry, leading him to "write [*Four Quartets*] in sections" (Sharpe 156). In this way, "the war comes into the poem itself" (Spencer 2). "Little Gidding" is the section that most clearly bears the marks of Second World War fire.

Though his role as fire warden undoubtedly contributed to his understanding of fire, so too did his beliefs about the Holy Spirit. “Little Gidding” relies on Charles Williams’ *The Descent of the Dove: A Short History of the Holy Spirit in the Church*. The Bible represents the coming of the Holy Spirit through fire, made evident in the second chapter of Acts. Eliot relies on Williams’ book to help him transform fire’s destructive qualities to instead discuss eschatological redemption. One of Williams’ opening claims is that at Pentecost, “The apostles set out to generate mankind anew” (Williams 3). The early believers, according to Williams, recognized that Christ’s ascension signalled the beginning of the “new creation” (Williams 7). Williams articulates Eliot’s position: Christ’s birth, death, and resurrection carry eschatological meaning; Jesus thus signals the beginning of the end. In Williams’ retelling of Church history, Paul’s theology took on a distinctly “apocalyptic definition,” thereby differentiating it from Judaic conceptions of time (Williams 10). Evangelism, then, as Williams describes it, seeks to bring the human out of the “old dispensation” and into the “new creation,” effectively moving humanity closer to the eschaton where Christ will declare definitively, “Behold, all things are become new” (Williams 9). The argument that Williams makes in *The Descent of the Dove* was a timely contribution to Eliot’s poetry; its influence can be clearly seen in Eliot’s discussion of time, the dove, and the apocalypse in “Little Gidding.”

In the opening sections of “Little Gidding,” Eliot closely aligns himself with the early Church from the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the (in)famous chapter that describes the descent of the Holy Spirit that causes Pentecostal tongues of fire. Eliot is interested in the descent of the Holy Spirit “now and [in] England” (Eliot,

FQ 145). As an Anglo-Catholic, Eliot interests himself in communication with the dead, something that, on the surface, does not appear altogether different from the séances and occultism Eliot ridicules in “The Dry Salvages.” Nevertheless, Eliot’s communication takes place with the dead saints:

And what the dead had no speech for, when living,
They can tell you, being dead: the communication
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living.
Here the intersection of the timeless moment
Is England and nowhere. Never and always. (Eliot, *FQ* 139)

Like Christ’s followers in Acts 2, dead saints are given the ability to communicate in a manner otherwise inaccessible. Consequently, the reader must remember the passages at the end of “Burnt Norton” and of “East Coker” and the discussion of the insufficiency of words. In eternity, the Holy Spirit imbues Christ’s followers with a new language, and with this new language comes new insight which, though only in glimpses, is given to living Christian believers.

Prominent in the second section is Eliot’s continued battle with words: “So I find words I never thought to speak / In streets I never thought I should revisit / When I left my body on a distant shore” (Eliot, *FQ* 141). These lines quite obviously gesture towards Prufrock, the poetic figure who wanders through “half-deserted streets” (Eliot, “Prufrock” 4) before the poem eventually ends lingering “in the chambers of the sea” (Eliot, “Prufrock” 129). Amid this discussion, in spite of Eliot’s self-proclaimed inability with words, hovers the “dark dove with the flickering tongue” (Eliot, *FQ* 140).

It is this same dove, the Holy Spirit, who carries *Four Quartets* to its conclusion: Eliot's staunch resistance to the Second World War.

At the beginning of the fourth section of "Little Gidding," Eliot, quite provocatively, intertwines the image of the Holy Spirit descending as a dove and the Luftwaffe's Blitz on London:

The dove descending breaks the air
With flame of incandescent terror
Of which the tongues declare
The one discharge from sin and error.
The only hope or else despair
Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre—
To be redeemed from fire by fire.

Who then devised the torment? Love.

Love is the unfamiliar Name
Behind the hand that wove
The intolerable shirt of flame
Which human power cannot remove.

We only live, only suspire

Consumed by either fire or fire. (Eliot, *FQ* 143-44)

Eliot's job as an air-raid warden very likely served as an inspiration for these lines. Out of his personal circumstances encountering England's plight, Eliot finds an opportunity to discuss the importance of penitence and a return to Christ by the power of the Holy

Spirit. Redemption from the Second World War, like redemption from sin, must be England's choice between "pyre or pyre," from "fire by fire." The choice for England is between the physical, destructive fire from the Luftwaffe and the purifying, spiritual fire of orthodox Anglo-Catholicism. Ultimately, Eliot offers only two choices: Christianity or demise. As the aforementioned discussion of occultism and syncretism demonstrates, Eliot left no room for other forms of spirituality to bring redemption.

Perhaps just as provocative as having the descending dove represent both the Holy Spirit and the Luftwaffe is Eliot's insistence that God, whom he refers to as Love, is responsible for designing these events. Williams conceives the Day of the Lord as a "catastrophe of hope and of terror" (Williams 101). In this paradox, Williams, like Eliot, shows the seemingly contradictory details surrounding God's intervention in humanity. Love is the one capable of removing the "shirt of flame," and yet it is He who made it in the first place. It would seem, then, that God, in Eliot's view, oversaw these circumstances as a means of returning a prodigal England back to Himself. Though a tool of destruction in the Second World War, fire becomes a means of redemption for an England in physical and spiritual danger.

The end of "Little Gidding," and *Four Quartets* as a whole, is a wonderful conclusion to Eliot's poem. Eliot begins the ending with a refrain that recurs throughout the poem: "What we call the beginning is often the end / And to make an end is to make a beginning. / The end is where we start from" (Eliot, *FQ* 144). In these lines, Eliot envisions the redemption that comes from the ending, the opportunity for Christians to begin again in the Kingdom of God. Fittingly, the first component of this redemption is by making words "at home:"

[...] And every phrase
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
Taking its place to support the others,
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
An easy commerce of the old and the new,
The common word exact without vulgarity,
The formal word precise but not pedantic,
The complete consort dancing together)
Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
Every poem an epitaph (Eliot, *FQ* 144)

In earlier sections of the poem, Eliot laments his apparent inability to use words properly, how he wasted his time, and that his writing has been ineffective. In Eliot's eschatological vision, the Word will bring redemption to the word. In *The Art of T.S. Eliot*, Gardner argues that this quotation represents the "inevitable defeat of the poet" (Garner, *Art* 9). Quite the opposite is true, for herein lies the poet's fulfillment, an ability to rest from painstakingly working with an imperfect means of communication. In Eliot's vision of the new creation, words no longer suffer decay because they are no longer subjected to time's negative effects; Eliot thus hopes for an end where words are completely immune to the breakdown of the "old dispensation."

After Eliot assures the reader (and himself) of the redemption that will occur with words, he returns to a familiar sight for redemption:

[...] So, while the light fails
On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel

History is now and England

With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling (Eliot, *FQ* 144-5)

Earlier in this chapter, I emphasized the importance of the deserted chapel that was along in the mountains, the location where rain eventually fell, leading to Eliot's discussion of spiritual principles from the Upanishad. At the end of *Four Quartets*, Eliot returns to the "chapel," but it is still "secluded." Though *The Waste Land* indicates that a return to the chapel would bring redemption to Europe following the First World War, *Four Quartets* must reiterate this stance during the Second World War in hope of bringing Europe back from secularism and totalitarianism. At the present moment, "History is now and [in] England," and "Love" is beckoning for England to return to Him. "[A]t one of the darkest moments in [England's] history," writes Gardner, Eliot "wrote as a man which had discovered a spiritual home in the Church of England" (Gardner, *Composition* 58).

In the poem's final stanza, Eliot discusses the Garden of Eden to explain the eschaton. "The end of all our exploring," insists the speaker, "Will be to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time" (Eliot, *FQ* 145). Humanity's beginning, of course, was in the Garden, the location of humanity's Fall. Eliot, as someone who firmly held to a belief in Original Sin, sees God's Kingdom as a return to this perfectly innocent state. Humanity will enter a place that is "unknown" yet "remembered;" though humanity has never known the innocence of Eden, it is in the Garden that we have our beginning.

Eden is "the last of earth left to discover," the site which is our "beginning" (Eliot, *FQ* 145). Children interact freely with the apple tree, a line that reclaims the

seductive fruit for God's New Creation. These children, however, are "Not known, because not looked for / But heard, half-heard, in the stillness" (Eliot, *FQ* 145). After the Fall, God searches for Adam and Eve, and He learns of their sin, leading to their expulsion from the Garden. In this Garden, the children are not known because no one is searching for them. The children, unlike Adam and Eve, have committed no sin, therefore requiring no one to search for them. Eliot's poetry, in effect, undoes the curse brought on through Original Sin, ushering in "A condition of complete simplicity" where "All shall be well" (Eliot, *FQ* 145). In a final image of unity, Eliot returns to the "tongues of flame" that are "in-folded / Into the crowned knot of fire / And the fire and the rose are one" (Eliot, *FQ* 145). Redemption, through the Holy Spirit's sanctifying fire, leads to a unified Europe, free from the corruption of Original Sin, from secularism, and from totalitarianism.

Chapter 3

Making all Things New: H.D.'s Hope for a New Incarnation

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful – Revelation 21:5

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book – Revelation 22:19

During their 1933-34 sessions, Sigmund Freud concluded that H.D. wanted to be the founder of a new religion (H.D., *Freud* 51). Among Freud's many assertions were that H.D. was a megalomaniac, a Moses-figure who believed she was capable of reorienting religious beliefs (H.D., *Freud* 51). Numerous H.D. scholars mention Freud's assertion, a remark that reveals H.D.'s proclivity for the unorthodox, a syncretistic religious system that encompasses beliefs ranging from several geographical regions and historical eras. In H.D.'s finest work, *Trilogy*, she displays this syncretism continually and consistently. In *Trilogy*, H.D. discusses this blend of faith traditions alongside the horrors of the Second World War in England.

There can be no debate that H.D. looked to numerous religious traditions for inspiration. Horoscopes, séances, tarot cards, theosophy, alchemy, the cabala, Hermeticism, Gnosticism, Greek and Egyptian mythology, occultism, and Moravianism, intertwine to inform H.D.'s spirituality. Given my focus on Christian theology, I will focus on Moravianism in particular. H.D. practiced her religious beliefs at a time when orthodoxy was on the decline, especially among intellectuals. As Joy Dixon claims, “[r]eligious authority itself was also being undermined during this period. From the mid-nineteenth century, orthodox Christianity had been called into question” (Dixon 19). Susan Stanford Friedman, a prominent H.D. critic, contrasts H.D. with Eliot, stating

that, unlike her male counterpart, she “turns away from orthodoxies of all kinds” (Friedman, “H.D.’s” 140). H.D.’s oeuvre reveals a poet who positions herself alongside a dominant understanding of Christianity in modernist England, adding to the chorus of intellectuals who sought to undermine the faith that Eliot propounded.

Informing my analysis of H.D.’s religious beliefs in *Trilogy* will be a consideration of Count Zinzendorf, the religious leader for the Moravian community in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania during the 18th century. Count Zinzendorf, in my estimation, is a religious forerunner to H.D., a figure who contributes to this modernist poet’s understanding of Christ, syncretism, and gender. Zinzendorf, like H.D. several years later, was a figure who was highly controversial among orthodox protestant leaders. Through a fascination with Christ’s blood and wounds, a reinterpretation of the Trinity, and a syncretistic approach to denominational theologies, Zinzendorf casts himself as a dissenting protestant theologian.

Leading up to and during the Second World War, H.D. displays a renewed interest in her Moravian heritage, something made evident in both her poetry and prose. As *The Gift* indicates, H.D. believed that she was the inheritor of a divine gift that made her a prophet and/or an initiate, a role that stems directly from her birth into this Moravian heritage. It will be my argument that H.D. sought to use her gift during the Second World War in order to achieve her eschatological vision of a new heaven and a new earth. *Trilogy*, an eschatological epic poem, represents H.D.’s means of communicating her gift, resulting in a work that champions a new understanding of gender and spirituality.

Moravian Beginnings

H.D. was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania on September 10, 1886. She was raised by a scientist father and an artistically-gifted mother (Martz xi). At the age of eight, H.D. moved to Philadelphia: “There were two Biblical towns in Pennsylvania, Bethlehem where I was born, and Philadelphia, where we moved when I was eight” (H.D., *Freud* 32). There are obvious beginnings that occur in Bethlehem, and Philadelphia is a city that emerges in Revelation, the last book of the Bible. It is interesting that in her analysis of her life, H.D. recalls two New Testament cities that can be understood as representative of the beginning and the end, the Incarnation and the eschaton. By the time H.D. was born, many of Zinzendorf’s theological beliefs were expunged from official church doctrine. Nevertheless, an analysis of the original settlers’ and Zinzendorf’s beliefs reveal numerous similarities with H.D.’s religious beliefs. Given that H.D. learned about many aspects of her Moravian heritage leading up to and during the Second World War, they are important details to consider for understanding *Trilogy*.

Informing my analysis of Moravian history and theology are Aaron Spencer Fogleman’s provocatively titled *Jesus is Female: Moravians and Radical Religion in Early America*, Beverley Prior Smaby’s *The Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem*, and Craig D. Atwood’s *Community of the Cross: Moravian Piety in Colonial Bethlehem*. Moreover, I have benefitted from the work of Jane Augustine, an H.D. scholar who has done a considerable amount of work seeking to understand this poet’s Moravian heritage. Atwood’s book provides a comprehensive overview of colonial Bethlehem and Zinzendorf’s theology. This author, alongside Fogleman and Smaby,

depict a community with unconventional understandings of gender, sexuality, and spirituality.

In February 1741, a group of devout Moravians moved to America to avoid further persecution. Moravians, alongside other religious minorities, were religious refugees who fled to the New World (Fogleman 1). While many in the protestant world moved to America in order to find a religious promised land, the situation for Moravians was dire; this was a community that was almost completely eliminated because of persecution (Atwood 21). The preeminent religious leader for the Moravian settlers was Count Zinzendorf. As “a noted preacher, hymn writer, patron of Christian missions, advocate of religious toleration, and social critic” (Atwood 6), Zinzendorf entrenched himself as the preeminent religious authority in this community: “Bethlehem was the embodiment of Zinzendorf’s vision” (Atwood 7).

It is unsurprising that Zinzendorf turned to Pennsylvania for refuge. At this time, Pennsylvania was one of only two colonies that protected religious freedom in its constitution (Atwood 35; Hutton 370). Pennsylvania thus provided the opportunity for Moravians to practice an unorthodox faith that was a combination of “Lutheran liturgy and doctrine with radical Pietist spirituality and communalism” (Atwood 36). According to J.E. Hutton’s 1909 analysis of Moravianism, *A History of the Moravian Church*, a work that H.D. was familiar with (Augustine 20), Zinzendorf eventually came to believe that “the true church of Jesus Christ consisted of many sects and many forms of belief” (Hutton 187). Zinzendorffian theology is predicated on this syncretism, serving as an example for H.D. to replicate in her own spiritual explorations.

Crucial to Moravian practices was community living, with a particular emphasis on working and living together in order to experience a “foretaste of paradise” (Atwood 3). Zinzendorf taught his adherents that because of the Holy Spirit’s work, Christian believers are already “living in heaven on earth,” and that the Moravian community represented a “realized eschatology” (Atwood 63). It seems, then, that a crucial component of Moravian Bethlehem was eschatological anticipation and awareness. Elsewhere in his book, Atwood states that “[Moravians] decided to await the Second Coming in the New World” (Atwood 36). The Moravians were keenly aware of Christ’s return, profoundly influencing the manner in which they interacted with their faith. Humanity, Zinzendorf argued, would be able to recognize Christ at His return because His resurrection occurred before the wounds were able to decay: Christ will be identified by the wounds that are still apparent in His body. Christ’s blood and wounds were of the utmost importance to Moravian theology and religious practice.

On November 7, 1744, a German litany titled *Litany of the Wounds of the Husband* arrived in Bethlehem. In Moravian theology, the wounds of Christ, particularly the side wound from the Roman soldier’s spear (John 19:34), were praised as beautiful examples of Christ’s salvific abilities: “Powerful wounds of Jesus, *So moist, so gory, bleed on my heart so that I may remain brave and like the wounds*” (Atwood 1). The litany describes Christ’s side wound as “*succulent*” just before infantilizing Moravian believers as they approach Christ: “*I like lying calm, gentle, and quiet and warm. What should I do? I crawl to you*” (Atwood 1). As Atwood indicates, the Moravians who sought refuge in America “brought with them a different approach to Christianity” (Atwood 2). Christ’s side wound was the symbol used to “communicate” spiritual

doctrines: “Salvation, sanctification, community life, and divine protection were all brought into a single striking symbol, that of Jesus with an opened side wound” (Atwood 107). One diarist, in describing their longing for Christ’s side wound, went so far as to indicate that the community ““felt homesick for the side wound”” (Atwood 213).

Inherent to discussions of Christ’s side-wound is the belief that the Christian Church was ‘born’ in Jesus’ side (Atwood 64). Moravian Christians compared the side wound to a bed, breast, womb, and vagina (Atwood 219). Fogleman argues that Christ was feminine because he was “bleeding on the Cross through vagina-like side wound to give life to believers, suckling them and warming them like a mother, and giving them sensual pleasure like a lover” (Fogleman 2). In effect, Jesus could be seen as an androgynous figure: the Son of God and yet capable of traditionally feminine forms of creation, nurturing, and pleasures. An androgynous Christ makes the Sonship malleable, inviting differing understandings of gender and spirituality. Though there was still plenty of Moravian literature and artwork that represented Christ as a man, claiming that he is the Husband of the church, there nevertheless remained the perception of a Holy Trinity that was balanced in its representation of gender: God the Father, Holy Spirit the Mother, and Jesus the feminine Son.

Complicating such an understanding of Jesus’ feminine attributes is Zinzendorf’s belief that “Christ is the only true male, and men will be married to him, just as the sisters are” (Atwood 93). Zinzendorf not only complicates Moravian understandings of Christ’s status as the Son but he also creates the perception that Moravian men are feminine. Zinzendorf settles any charges of homoeroticism between the supremely

masculine Jesus and His male followers by insisting that all souls are essentially feminine (Fogleman 79). The Count also insists that in the future all of humanity will become feminine, thereby realizing its true nature (Atwood 94). H.D.'s eschatological vision in *Trilogy* that prizes female divinity and spirituality, therefore, is rooted in her Christian heritage.

In 1746, Zinzendorf preached a sermon in London titled "On the Maternal Office of the Holy Spirit" (Fogleman 75). In the following year, Zinzendorf preached a sermon titled "On the True Evidence of the Maternal Office of the Holy Spirit" (Fogleman 75). Common understanding of Moravianism emphasize the feminine nature of the Holy Spirit, the female wisdom that is personified in the Old Testament, most famously in Solomon's Proverbs. Zinzendorf based his understanding of a feminine Holy Spirit on John 3 where Jesus explains to Nicodemus that, in order to find salvation, one must be born again (Atwood 69). This rebirth, of course, is the result of the Holy Spirit's work. The Holy Spirit displays motherly attributes in that she is the Church's comforter and she also "gathers the children of God into a single, universal community that is under special care" (Atwood 69). It was not simply Zinzendorf who asserted that the Holy Spirit was feminine, but it was also the community diarists. In Atwood's analysis of colonial Bethlehem, "every diarist refers to the Spirit as mother" (Atwood 154). These understandings of gender impacted Moravian conceptions of female leadership in the church, causing no little concern among mainstream Protestants in both America and Europe (Fogleman 36). Smaby goes on to claim that most of the "biographies for females could function quite acceptably as biographies for males if the names and the pronouns were changed" (Smaby 169).

When considering Zinzendorf's understandings of gender and spirituality, it is important to remember the importance of the ancient Gnostics, a group that Fogleman draws attention to in his consideration of Moravianism. H.D. scholars, for their part, have connected H.D. with Gnosticism. Alicia Ostriker argues that by the time *Trilogy* reaches its conclusion, "the poet has written something like a new Gnostic Gospel" (Ostriker, *Stealing* 51) while Dennis Brown links H.D.'s *Trilogy* with 'modern Gnosticism' (Brown 352). Fogleman explains that the Gnostics were a group of mystical Christian believers who flourished from the years 80-200 A.D. (Fogleman 83). Like occultists who claim access to an ancient source of wisdom, the Gnostics put forth a mystical doctrine that insisted there was a "hidden divine wisdom, which they personalized in the term 'Sophia'" (Fogleman 83). Gnostics venerated both Eve and Mary Magdalene while also maintaining that some believed that the "virile woman" was a "powerful sign of redemption" (Fogleman 83). Thereafter, as Christianity became entrenched and orthodoxy established, Gnosticism was forbidden by church authorities and was therefore subject to suppression.

Not unlike Eliot, Zinzendorf placed a heavy emphasis on Christ's Incarnation. According to Atwood, the Incarnation is fundamental to Zinzendorf's theology (Atwood 78). Throughout Zinzendorf's discussion of the Christ-child, he places an emphasis on understanding that Jesus did indeed have a penis (Atwood 89). Zinzendorf discusses Jesus' penis and the circumcision to illustrate that Jesus truly did enter into humanity (Atwood 89). It is this emphasis on Jesus' circumcision alongside his nourishing side-wound that helps Zinzendorf to develop a conception of an androgynous Christ (Atwood 110). While the Incarnation marked Jesus' arrival within humanity, it does not negate

His active presence and participation in Old Testament events. Zinzendorffian hermeneutics placed Jesus at the center of the entire Old Testament, from creation through to the prophets, meaning that He was an active agent in the Bible long before His birth (Atwood 80). For instance, Zinzendorf believed that Jesus was the primary force behind the world's creation in Genesis. By identifying Christ as responsible for creation, argues Fogleman, Zinzendorf effectively undermined the authority of the Father (Fogleman 74).

The Moravian tendency to push the conventions of orthodoxy caused outrage from many mainstream Christians. Consider, for example, the reaction of Heinrich Melchior Mühlenberg, a German Lutheran pastor, who was responding to Moravian literature in Pennsylvania in 1750:

I ask you to examine the Twelfth Part (Appendix) of their hymns (published hymnal) where you will discover that these obscene birds (Moravians) – with your permission – have compared women's genitalia, vagina of the uterus, with the side of the Savior of the world which on the cross had been pierced by a spear (Fogleman 73).

Zinzendorf and his followers were not afraid to challenge dominant conceptions of gender, sexuality, and spirituality, frequently displaying a proclivity for re-envisioning the Bible and its God. When combining these factors with their proselytizing zeal, missionary pursuits very few denominations could match, the Moravians became a highly controversial sect within Christianity (Hutton 246; Fogleman 103).

Consequently, it should be unsurprising that H.D. presents unconventional theology in her discussion of Christianity in *Trilogy*. H.D. developed a highly

syncretistic religious system that sought to re-envision Christ's spiritual significance. What emerges in *Trilogy*, and in other sections from H.D.'s oeuvre, is a poet looking to assert the importance of female spirituality while re-calibrating understandings of Christ to be more inclusive of other religious traditions. Moravian theology and history became more pertinent to H.D. during the Second World War because of a desire to find a spiritual solution to the devastation caused by war. As Jane Augustine notes, H.D.'s surviving the Second World War and her séances therein serve as confirmation of her spiritual gift that stems from her Moravian heritage. H.D. believed that she was to use this gift to redeem Europe (Augustine, "Teaching" 66). Of course, H.D.'s wartime spirituality was the result of years of study and spiritual explorations. After her arrival in England in 1911, H.D. developed a faith practice that was an answer to the "crisis of faith that pervade[d] twentieth-century western culture" (Friedman, *Psyche* 97), made apparent in her poetry and prose throughout her career leading up to the Second World War and *Trilogy*.

H.D.'s Literary Beginnings: Imagism and Christian Rewriting

Towards the end of the nineteenth-century and into the twentieth, female spirituality was becoming increasingly subversive. Joy Dixon claims that there were numerous female-oriented religious groups who pursued esoteric, heterodox understandings of spirituality (Dixon 7). Foremost among these heterodoxies, in Dixon's mind, was an "occult revival" that sprang forth in the late nineteenth-century (Dixon 8). Annette Debo and Lara Vetter, in their brief outline of H.D.'s life, indicate that H.D. was "no different" from the masses who turned to occult practices (Debo and Vetter 25). Women "became emblematic of a personal, emotional, and subjective

religiosity, and spirituality was increasingly represented as an essentially feminine enterprise” (Dixon 67). Though there are differences between Dixon’s focus in her study and H.D.’s spiritual practices, it is nevertheless interesting to note that H.D. went to an England in 1911 (Martz xi) where occultism was being used by women as a means of substantiating female spirituality.

In H.D.’s early career, she was known primarily as an imagist poet. In her early work, H.D. reveals her affinity for the Greek tradition, allowing its many figures and images to serve as the inspiration for her work. Alicia Ostriker, in *Stealing the Language*, argues that during this time the major male modernist poets concerned themselves with “the decline of western values, the death of God” (Ostriker, *Stealing* 46). Nevertheless, many women poets would still “tend to write like pagans, as if the death of God (and His civilization, and His culture, and His myths) were no loss to them. Indeed, it may have been a relief” (Ostriker, *Stealing* 47). Shortly thereafter, Ostriker connects this notion with H.D.’s early poetry, indicating that works that focus on Greek images and figures such as “Helen,” “Demeter,” “Callypso Speaks,” and “Eurydice” all address the shortcomings of patriarchy (Ostriker, *Stealing* 50). Of course, these concerns continue to permeate H.D.’s work, reaching their climax in *Trilogy*: “*Trilogy* is governed by the determination to dismantle orthodox patriarchal structures and to pursue a buried female truth” (Ostriker, *Stealing* 50). Emerging from the literary movement that sought to “make it new” (Debo, *American* 27), H.D. attempts to use eschatology in *Trilogy* to make a new religion through a re-understanding of the Jesus who claims, “Behold, I make all things new.”

Despite the success of *Sea Garden* (1916), there emerged significant personal issues in H.D.'s life, ranging from the failure of her first pregnancy to her marital issues with Richard Aldington (Martz xiv). In *Tribute to Freud*, H.D. recounts the numerous tragedies that confronted her in her early career:

I did say that I had a number of severe shocks; the news of the death of my father, following the death in action of my brother in France, came to me when I was alone in London the early spring of the bad influenza winter of 1919. I myself was waiting for my second child – I had lost the first in 1915, from shock and repercussions of war news broken to me in a rather brutal fashion (H.D., *Freud* 40).

Like Eliot, H.D.'s early career was marked by significant health issues and a failing marriage. It is during this time, argues Louis L. Martz, that H.D. began to break free from Imagism to cultivate “a strongly personal voice” (Martz, “Introduction” xviii-xix). This personal voice permeates much of H.D.'s work for the remainder of her career.

H.D. began to rely on Bryher (Winnifred Ellerman) for support, personally, spiritually, and financially. Debo and Vetter argue that Bryher represents H.D.'s “most significant romantic relationship of [her] life and a lifelong companionship” (Debo and Vetter 27). Bryher offered H.D. the opportunity to partake in a “new world, a new life,” descriptions that carry a distinctly eschatological hope (H.D., *Freud* 40). Bryher is thus a shepherding, savior figure who offers hope for both H.D. and her daughter, Perdita. Bryher eventually took H.D. to Greece, her “new world,” where H.D. experienced a visionary experience that influenced her writing throughout her career. H.D. describes a visionary experience where she sees a projection on a wall before her: “The series of

shadow – or of light pictures I saw projected on the wall of a hotel bedroom in the Ionian island of Corfu, at the end of April 1920, belong in the sense of quality and intensity, of clarity and authenticity, to the same psychic category as the dream of the Princess, the Pharaoh’s daughter” (H.D., *Freud* 41). This vision, with its similarity to Egypt and Pharaoh’s daughter, recalls Freud’s prescription about H.D. desiring to be the founder of a new religion, like Moses.

H.D. and D.H.: Rewriting the Resurrection

It has been well documented that following her separation from Richard Aldington, H.D.’s friendship with D.H. Lawrence quickly became strained, eventually culminating in Lawrence refusing to associate with her. Though they never regained their friendship, critics have drawn attention to when Stephen Guest gave H.D. a copy of Lawrence’s *The Man Who Died*, indicating that she was the priestess, Isis (Fields xix; Martz, *Many* 122-23). As I demonstrated in my opening chapter, Lawrence’s story undermines the orthodox interpretation of Christ’s death and resurrection. What emerges is a version that re-positions Christ as an Osiris figure, one who acknowledges the validity of feminine spirituality and the importance of sexuality.

H.D., in her poetry and prose, reveals a proclivity for not only reimagining orthodoxy’s conception of the Son but also for putting herself in a prized spiritual position, what critics variously refer to as her being an initiate, a priestess, and/or a prophet. Likening Christ to Osiris opens up the need for an Isis-figure to put the Christ/Osiris back together. This figure, it would seem, is H.D. herself. In the same way that Isis gathers the fragments of her brother’s body, so too does H.D. gather the fragments of various religious traditions in order to put forth her own syncretistic Jesus.

Crucial to my understanding of eschatology in H.D.'s *Trilogy* will be the manner in which this poet envisions herself as capable of revising orthodoxy's Christ, something that begins in her early work.

Though often mentioned, one of H.D.'s lesser analysed prose works is *Pilate's Wife*, a fiction that has obvious similarities to Lawrence's *The Man Who Died*. This novel addresses H.D.'s two primary concerns about Christianity: "the absence of powerful women in the Christian story and the ugliness of the church's centrality displayed icon, the mutilated body of Christ on the cross" (Augustine, "Teaching 65). H.D. began working on *Pilate's Wife* in 1924, finishing her original draft in 1929, but she was unable to find a publisher (Burke i). During the 1950s, *Pilate's Wife* was still unpublished, so H.D. made several revisions to the text (Burke ii). Of the four gospels, only Matthew mentions Pilate's wife, saying that, because of her dreams, she implores her husband not to murder Jesus (Matthew 27:19).

The narrative focuses, quite obviously, on Pilate's wife, whom H.D. names Veronica. Unsurprisingly, Isis intrigues Veronica, but she has misgivings about the fate of Osiris. In the second chapter, Veronica discusses these concerns: "Nothing delights man more than hideous slaughter and disfigurement [...] but is there, is there any logic in saying that *God* actually did it? [...] how can an enlightened people say *God not only permitted, but decreed it?*" (H.D., *Pilate's* 21). Christians have commonly looked to passages such as Isaiah 53:10 ("But it was the will of the Lord to crush Him...") to justify believing that the Son's sacrifice was divinely-ordained by the Father. Under the guise of Veronica's discussion of Osiris, H.D. seeks to undermine orthodoxy's veneration of violence and mutilation.

Veronica eventually consults Mnevis, a woman of a “strange cult” with a “stranger credulity” (H.D., *Pilate's* 56). Mnevis tells of a Jew who is a Master, culminating in a spiritual breakthrough for Veronica: “Every phrase of that Jew opened a door” (H.D., *Pilate's* 59). “The Jews,” as Veronica puts it, are the ones who satisfy her desire for “an answer” (H.D., *Pilate's* 63). Mnevis goes on to remember and discuss several of Jesus’ words because of the profound spiritual truths they communicate (H.D., *Pilate's* 64-5). In this Jewish Master, Mnevis indicates that she has found “[a] new way loving,” (H.D., *Pilate's* 72). A peculiar feature of this conception of Christ is his alchemical abilities; Mnevis indicates that Jesus “is a sort of metal-worker of humanity, melting, smouldering, re-casting Spirits” (H.D., *Pilate's* 76). Alchemy and the process of “re-casting Spirits” continues to fascinate H.D., becoming predominant themes in *Trilogy*.

Ultimately, through the efforts of Veronica, Jesus does not die (H.D., *Pilate's* 120). Not insignificantly, at the novel’s conclusion, Veronica infuses Jesus’ life and religious message with eschatological significance, indicating that he was responsible for creating a “new heaven, a new earth” (H.D., *Pilate's* 134). Fabius, though skeptical about whether or not Jesus achieves this eschatological end, believes that if someone could use this Jesus to syncretize the various religious traditions of the past, then humanity could enjoy a “re-created present” that would usher in a “future of perfection” (H.D., *Pilate's* 134). H.D.’s narrator then states that Jesus is a “second Homer.” Jesus is not simply the Last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:22), a means of redemption for the patriarchal tradition; in H.D.’s retelling, Jesus comes as the second Homer, a poet seeking to make all things new.

Freud and H.D.'s New Religion

Perhaps one of the most interesting pieces H.D. produced was her poem “The Master” (probably written in 1935), a designation that she reserved for the great psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud. Despite Freud’s religious skepticism, H.D. “mythologized” him, often equating him with various deities (Friedman, *Psyche* 24). The poem begins by positioning the speaker as a religious figure, one who partakes in a pilgrimage to obtain spiritual enlightenment:

when I travelled to Miletus
to get wisdom,
I left all else behind,
I fasted (H.D., “Master” 451)

H.D.’s journey to “Miletus” recalls stories about discipleship from the biblical canon, such as Elisha abandoning everything to follow Elijah or Peter leaving behind his occupation to follow the Christ. From the outset of the poem, it is clear that H.D. holds Freud in high regard; the speaker indicates that Freud is “very beautiful” and that she “found measureless truth / in his words” (H.D., “Master” 451). Though Freud rejected H.D.’s spirituality, the speaker of “The Master” nevertheless describes Freud in god-like terms while also imploring the divine to reserve a special “surprise in heaven for him” (H.D., “Master” 452). Ultimately, the speaker concludes that Freud is God’s messenger, for it is through this psychoanalyst that God helps H.D. to understand “the impossible” (H.D., “Master” 453). Though the speaker clearly disdains Freud’s misogyny and talk of “man-strength” (H.D., “Master” 455), she nevertheless depends on him for the wisdom crucial to affirming her conclusion: “*woman is perfect*” (H.D., “Master” 455).

Out of these discussions of gender emerges perhaps the most interesting section of the poem for my study, the sixth section. Beginning with a request for the “old man” to return to the earth from which he came, the speaker immediately begins to discuss the possibility of fashioning a “new earth” (H.D., “Master” 457). In Genesis, God uses the earth to create man. Immediately after the Fall, God’s curse on mankind is that he will return to the dust from which he was originally created, bringing life full-circle. With the downfall of man, H.D. leaves the possibility open for woman to rule. For this reason, H.D.’s speaker can claim that it is “only we / who are free,” women, who “may foretell, / may prophecy” that a new earth will form. In this new earth, the misogyny of Freud will no longer exist, nor will the other shortcomings of man. Throughout the discussion, the reader gets the impression that H.D. is positioning Freud in a Christ-like role, a figure whose death will usher in the possibility for a redemptive new earth. Perhaps the greatest clue for this comes towards the end of the section:

(it is he the old man
who will bring a new world to birth)
it is he,
it is he
who already has formed a new earth (H.D., “Master 457).

Before his crucifixion, Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas, along with the Roman authorities, makes his way into the garden to seize Christ. When the authorities ask for Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus responds by stating: “I am he” (John 18:5). In a subtle alteration, H.D. recalls this description of Jesus by indicating that “it is he,” Freud, who offers humanity the possibility of a new earth.

The speaker indicates that future peoples will “travel far and wide” to discuss his “written words,” that Freud’s “pen will be sacred,” and that people will “build a temple” for him (H.D., “Master” 457). Of course, a prized position within this impending Freudian mythology is H.D.’s role as the poet. Freud has the highest regard for poets, and in many ways he affirmed H.D.’s genius. It is this affirmation, seemingly, that allows H.D.’s speaker to declare proudly that “it was he himself, who set me free / to prophesy” (H.D., “Master” 458). Louis L. Martz considers this poem in relation to H.D.’s desire to create a new religion, asking “of what does this ‘religion’ consist?” (Martz, *Many* 90). At the centre is Freud’s psychoanalysis, a liberating figure with a liberating scientific knowledge that allows for H.D. to prophesy about her new earth. Among her first acts as prophet is the bold declaration that “all men will kneel, / no man will be potent, / important” before indicating that “all men will feel / what it is to be a woman” (H.D., “Master” 460). Feminine perfection in a new earth recalls Zinzendorffian ideas about the femininity of all souls. In this poem, H.D. draws on Zinzendorff’s influence to indicate that all men will eventually know what it is like “to be a woman.”

In some of H.D.’s other poetry emerging during this time there are traces of her Moravian heritage and Zinzendorffian theology. In “Magician [Master],” Martz asserts that H.D. offers a “long and subtle evocation of the spirit of Jesus” (Martz xxvi). In the second section of “Magician,” the speaker opens by discussing the possibility of crawling “back into the womb” in order to be “born again” (H.D., “Magician” 433). In these lines, H.D. alludes to the infantile language of the Moravian *Litany of the Wounds*. As she laments Christian shortcomings, she eventually comes to a conclusion that venerates female spirituality in a way that prefigures *Trilogy*:

a girl came where he sat,
flung a rose from a basket,
and one broke
a fine box
of Cyprian ivory,
(or alabaster)
a rare scent. (H.D., “Magician 439).

In the concluding poem of *Trilogy*, “The Flowering of the Rod,” H.D. focuses on the prostitute Mary Magdalene and the magus Kaspar. Through these two figures, H.D. approaches the religious significance of the anointing myrrh that is this “rare scent.”

H.D.’s Gift: The Second World War and *The Gift*

Discussing *The Gift*, Jane Augustine states that this “narrative of female empowerment embodies H.D.’s belief in an eternal creative feminine spirit continually manifesting as the living bearer of peace to the world” (Augustine 1). *The Gift* tells the story of H.D.’s childhood growing up in Moravian Bethlehem. Like *Trilogy*, H.D. wrote this text during the Blitz (Chisholm 98; Augustine 1). Augustine argues that in this narrative, H.D. journeys to her past in order to uncover “the Gift [which] provides access to an all-important secret – the way to end the war” (Augustine 3).⁴ As is often the case in her work, H.D. prizes her artistic ability as being crucial to the salvific process that will unfold if she successfully taps into her gift: “H.D., the initiate, becomes the conduit by which that [universal] consciousness may descend, bringing light to our

⁴ *Majic Ring* pursues a similar endeavour, and it is in this prose work that H.D. further substantiates her position as a chosen, religious mystic capable of syncretising various religions through the use of her Moravian Gift to end the Second World War.

dark, dense, material world” (Augustine 8). Of course, H.D. is only able to propound such a spiritual gift through the inner working of the feminine Holy Spirit, the supernatural force that shapes “her into an instrument of new life, peace and unity” (Augustine 14).

Some of the most interesting sections in *The Gift* comprise H.D.’s discussion of this Gift, of how it will be preserved and with whom. In the opening chapter, “Dark Room,” the narrator asserts that “there is a Gift waiting, someone must inherit the Gift which passed us by” (H.D., *Gift* 50). Currently hindering this Gift is an appropriate avenue to reveal it: “Someone must reveal secrets of thought which combine a new element; science and art must beget a new creative medium. Medium?” (H.D., *Gift* 50). H.D.’s belief system lacks a medium, both a means of communicating and a person to communicate. H.D., with both her artistic ability as a poet and scientific knowledge of psychology, views herself as the individual capable of filling the void. H.D., then, endeavours to create a new medium, her modernist, epic poetry, while also taking on the role of a religious “Medium” who could shepherd a Europe reeling from the Second World War. She is able to accomplish this because of her “own private heritage” (H.D., *Gift* 50).

A curious detail surrounding discussions of H.D.’s faith is that very few, if any, critics discuss the importance of the Incarnation in her work. Jane Augustine indicates that, growing up, H.D. “especially loved the Christmas Eve candlelight service that commemorated the historic 1741 Christmas Eve as well as the birth of Christ” (Augustine, “Teaching” 64). While Eliot more overtly emphasizes the importance of Incarnational theology in his work, H.D. clearly and discernably looks to the birth of the

Christ-child. In her chapter, "Fortune Teller," H.D. mentions the ancient wisdom that led the magi to a star (H.D., *Gift* 77), recalling the birth of the Christ in Bethlehem. To conclude the chapter, the narrator claims that "the Gift would come to a child who would be born under a Star" (H.D., *Gift* 79). In H.D.'s faith, Christ's Gift was eventually stored up in Moravian mystical wisdom, a source that H.D. claims for herself. By linking Jesus with the Gift, Star, and Bethlehem, H.D. leaves it open to view her as a Christ-figure, also born in Bethlehem, another "child [who] was born under a star" (H.D., *Gift* 79).

Interestingly, when H.D. mentions the Gift, Star, wisdom, and birth, she also discusses a specific type of flower: carnations. Though I have not come across any scholar who would support this reading, it seems intentional that H.D. includes these specific flowers as a way of expanding her discussion of the Incarnation. Consider, for instance, how the narrator regards these flowers: "[t]he carnations were of themselves complete and prophesied rich, magnificent life" (H.D., *Gift* 77). Like the Incarnated Christ who promises life in abundance in John 10:10, these carnations prophecy about a "rich, magnificent life." While discussing the Star of Redemption at the end of the chapter, the narrator states: "There was a star, there was a black patch, there was a gift, there was a great swathe of carnations... But the carnations were gone now" (H.D., *Gift* 79). The absence of carnations, then, point to a spiritual infertility. Thankfully, the Gift which accompanies the Star of Redemption is now found with the H.D. of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

As the narrative continues, H.D.'s affinity for syncretism presents itself, something made evident in the discussion of Ammon, Amen, Aries, and Ram in her

chapter, “The Dream” (H.D., *Gift* 84). It is this reasoning that allows the narrator to liken the spirituality of the “Indians” and their discussion of the “Voice of the Great Spirit” to Moravian beliefs in the wisdom-giving Holy Spirit (H.D., *Gift* 112; 168). Shortly thereafter, H.D.’s narrator uses a sort of linguistic alchemy to syncretise various female figures: “Mary, Maia, Miriam, Mut, Madre, Mère, Mother, pray for us” (H.D., *Gift* 113). H.D.’s narrator then performs the same alchemy on male spiritual authorities: “Zeus, to Jupiter, to Zeu-pater or Theus-pater or God-the-father” (H.D., *Gift* 114). Finally, after all this, H.D. offers names that resemble hers: “Ida; Helen? Helen, Hellas, Helle, Helios” (H.D., *Gift* 114). *The Gift* likens feminine and masculine spiritual authorities, with both ultimately boiling down into one being. Underneath this structure emerges H.D., the one who is willing to go “further than Helen, than Helle, than Helios, than light” (H.D., *Gift* 114). In light of these quotations, it is fair to wonder if H.D. establishes a Trinitarian view of these deities, with a divine mother and father and herself emerging underneath in the role of Jesus, the gifted Daughter of the gods.

The undoing of the Moravians, and the undoing of Second World War Europe, was a lack of unity. In a chapter entitled “The Secret,” H.D. talks about this reality, suggesting that part of the downfall of the Moravian believers in America was that “the United Brethren weren’t really united” (H.D., *Gift* 156). H.D. connects the failure to keep the Promise of the Gift with the World Wars (H.D., *Gift* 173). Though this issue plagued the Moravian community, there nevertheless remains the hope that the “Promise [will] be redeemed and the Gift restored” (H.D., *Gift* 160), thus actualising a unity that could stifle totalitarianism’s impositions. Apparently passed down from successive

women within H.D.'s family lineage, the gift eventually found its way to H.D. herself (H.D., *Gift* 166-67).

These discussions culminate in the seventh and final chapter, "Morning Star," which explicitly discusses wartime England. H.D.'s handling of her "Moravian past" alongside "her present community in London" suggests that "the spiritual resources of the former may be a gift for the latter" (Anderson 72). H.D. speaks openly about her circumstances, about Bryher, and about the terror taking place immediately outside of their residence. It is at this point that H.D. states, "There was a Promise and there was a Gift, but the Promise it seems, was broken and the Gift it seems, was lost" (H.D., *Gift* 212). Though she is admittedly "shattered by fears of tension and terror," she nevertheless acknowledges that she has access to this marvelous Gift: "The Gift was a Gift of Vision, it was a Gift of Wisdom, the Gift of the Holy Spirit, the *Sanctus Spiritus*" (H.D., *Gift* 214). Fittingly, H.D. admits that she had to "come back to her beginning" in order to understand this spiritual reality, that she had to return to her Moravian roots (H.D., *Gift* 217). Just as Eliot's speaker states that in his beginning is his end, so too must H.D. realize that if her spiritual ends are to be complete, she must be revisited by the spirituality of her childhood. With this realization, H.D. ends her book with an invocation of Christ's wounds, effectively hearkening back to her Moravian beginnings while simultaneously preparing the way for her eschatological vision in *Trilogy*:

Wounds of Christ,

Wound of God,

Wound of Beauty,

Wound of Blessing,

Wound of Poverty,

Wound of Peace, (H.D., *Gift* 222).

Trilogy: Moravian Syncretism and the Second World War Eschaton

Much has been written about *Trilogy*, and for good reason, since this poem is among the foremost modernist epics. Susan Gubar believes that in *Trilogy*, “H.D. illustrates how patriarchal culture can be subverted by the woman who dares to ‘re-invoke, re-create’ what has been ‘scattered in the shards / men tread upon’” (Gubar 64-65). Martz indicates that *Trilogy* deals with the “struggle of woman to assert her independent integrity in the face of male misunderstanding, betrayal, or demand for submission” (Martz, *Many* 97). Matte Robinson states that “[r]ebirth, resurrection, renewal are the predominant themes in *Trilogy*” (Robinson, Introduction xxii). Elizabeth Anderson argues that *Trilogy*’s dominant theme centers on “a quest for spiritual and cultural renewal for a world shattered by war” (Anderson 8); critical to this renewal is a religious syncretism that brings together elements from “Egyptian, Greek and Roman gods and goddesses” alongside “biblical figures and apocryphal angels to point towards regeneration” (Anderson 8). Sarah Graham argues that *Trilogy* is an epic poem that “offers a spiritual response to war principally through the recuperation of biblical women, particularly Mary Magdalene” (Graham, “*Hymen*” 113).

My analysis will take into consideration what I deem to be the eschatological components of H.D.’s work. H.D., as the poet-prophet, envisions herself as the religious figure capable of ushering in a new religious order, a new heaven and new earth, through poetry that reclaims ancient sources of knowledge and spirituality: “At the core of her unsystematic spirituality is her belief that the artist, someone said to be ‘gifted’ or

‘inspired by the muse,’ has a conduit to the divine” (Augustine, “Teaching” 63). H.D., in my reading, is a Christ figure, something that I hope my analysis of *Pilate’s Wife*, “The Master,” and *The Gift* helps demonstrate. Inherent components to this spirituality is a re-envisioning of gender roles, orthodoxy’s biblical hermeneutics, and an intentional response to the assertions in Eliot’s *Quartets. Trilogy* is made up of three poems: “The Walls Do Not Fall” (1944), “Tribute to the Angels” (1945), and “The Flowering of the Rod” (1946). Each poem has forty-three sections predominantly consisting of two line stanzas. It is within this structure that H.D. reveals her belief in the “revolutionary potential of poetry” (Graham, “*Hymen*” 113).

“The Walls” stands in defiance to the destruction of the Second World War, continually asserting the longevity and endurance of poetry as a means of undermining war. The speaker begins by mentioning “An incident here and there” while recounting how “rails [are] gone (for guns) / from your (and my) old town square” (H.D., *Trilogy* 3). From these opening lines, H.D. shows how war turns “domestic” items into “military objects” (Graham, “*Secret*” 165). This is a process that Morris refers to as “reverse alchemy” (Morris, “*Concept* 128). Though it can be easy to become despairing amid such widespread destruction and terror, the speaker indicates that “eternity endures” and that “inspiration stalks us” (H.D., *Trilogy* 3). For these reasons, H.D.’s speaker can ask: “what saved us? what for?” (H.D., *Trilogy* 4). The answer rests in reclaiming the “Apocryphal fire” (H.D., *Trilogy* 4).

By drawing on fire imagery, H.D. alludes to a wide array of influences. Due to the Luftwaffe’s aerial assault, London was literally subject to flames, a reality that Eliot

also acknowledges in his *Quartets*. Adalaide Morris describes the Luftwaffe's air strikes in detail:

Throughout the Nazi air assault, H.D. had remained in London, close to the Hyde Park anti-aircraft batteries and in the thick of incendiary raids. Bombs -- buzz bombs, fly bombs, oil bombs, doodle-bugs, and low, close V-1 rockets -- in often nightly bombardments tore open apartments, leveled buildings, lodged unexploded shells in areaways and under pavements, and threw the survivors into unregistered dimensions of terror and powerlessness (Morris, "Concept" 127).

Fire also recalls biblical passages, such as Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit descends on the early church, giving these disciples the gift of tongues that appear as fire. The fire that emerges in *Trilogy* though is not that fire from Christian orthodoxy but, instead, is "Apocryphal." In *Tribute to Freud*, H.D. discusses the horror of "apocryphal terror of fire" in relation to her "own personal little Dragon of war-terror:"

There he growled and bit on his chains and was only loosed finally, when the full apocryphal terror of fire and brimstone, of whirlwind and flood and tempest, of the Biblical Day of Judgment and the Last Trump, became no longer abstractions, terrors too dreadful to be thought of, but things that were happening every day, every night, and at one time, at every hour of the day and night, to myself and friends, and all the drab and ordinary London people (H.D., *Freud* 94).

H.D. describes the wartime horror in terms of the Christian apocalypse in the Book of Revelation. H.D.'s engagement with the Second World War, then, must be understood

in eschatological terms. “Apocryphal,” according to Sarah Graham, constitutes an intentional insertion that reveals that “all texts can be rewritten: accepted truth can prove to be false” (Graham, “Secret” 168). With this framework in place, it is unsurprising that H.D. rewrites the Book of Revelation to discuss the beginning of a new heaven and new earth in wartime England.

H.D. explores such ambitions in greater detail in the second section of “The Walls,” made evident in the opening discussion of Good and Evil before turning to a prescription for curtailing the modern world’s religious shortcomings: “so let us search the old highways / for the true-rune, the right-spell, / recover old values” (H.D., *Trilogy* 5). Along the “old highways” of forgotten or suppressed religious traditions rests a spirituality capable of resisting the evils of the Second World War. H.D.’s speaker implores the reader to join her in recovering this faith: “Let us, however, recover the Sceptre, / the rod of power” (H.D., *Trilogy* 7). This “rod of power” recalls Moses’ from Exodus while simultaneously preparing the reader for the spiritual breakthrough that occurs in “The Flowering of the Rod.”

Preeminent throughout these opening sections is H.D.’s emphasis on resisting the Second World War. The sixth section, more overtly than the sections that precede it, make H.D.’s resistance plain. When describing this “persistence,” the speaker states that she “escaped spider-snare” and that she was “unintimidated by multiplicity” (H.D., *Trilogy* 11). This resilient speaker “profit[s] / by every calamity,” all the while finding “nourishment” in and through her hardships (H.D., *Trilogy* 12). Fueling this persistence is religious expectation, the awareness that “the Lord God / is about to manifest” (H.D., *Trilogy* 12). While establishing her resistance to the Second World War, H.D.

simultaneously reveals her eschatological hope: the Lord God will soon descend and manifest in a new incarnation.

H.D. finds entry in a privileged religious position because of her status as a poet and occultist. As an occultist, H.D. believed she was the inheritor of spiritual insight that was suppressed by orthodox powers, that she was a bearer of “the secret wisdom” (H.D., *Trilogy* 14). Occultists “claim the existence of a single, uninterrupted thread of knowledge reaching back to antiquity” (Tryphonopoulos, “Introduction” xxiv). As an initiate in this tradition, H.D. identifies herself as a poet for the “living remnant,” a descriptor that is reminiscent of Old Testament theology and prophecy. Throughout the Old Testament prophets, there is an emphasis on God remaining faithful to His remnant. Though many within Israel commit apostasy, God continually promises to do right by His remnant, those who remain faithful to Him (Isaiah 10:20-3; 28:5-6; Jeremiah 31:7; Amos 5:15; Micah 2:12; 5:7-8; Zephaniah 2:7; Haggai 1:12-13). The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Roman believers, indicates that Christians are “a remnant, chosen by grace” (Romans 11:5). H.D. situates herself within this Judeo-Christian tradition, arguing that it is her syncretism that marks the next step for the remnant who desire to remain faithful and true to the “Lord God.” Interestingly, Jane Augustine describes the Moravian settlers from the eighteenth century as the “remnant” of their denomination (Augustine, “Teaching” 64). Though the speaker mentions that occultism may be the “new heresy” (H.D., *Trilogy* 14), she pre-emptively undermines such an assertion by claiming her status as prophet for the remnant, a leader within the proper interpretation of Christian theology.

Central to the poet's craft are words, the means by which poets convey their artwork. As such, H.D. invokes Thoth and Hermes, Egyptian and Greek gods of writing, respectively, to inspire her work, as guiding sources of wisdom that predate contemporary struggles with the Second World War. Even though "books are a floor / of smouldering ruin under our feet" (H.D., *Trilogy* 16), H.D. is able to turn to the Word for inspiration:

Forever; remember, O Sword,
you are the younger brother, the latter-born,
your Triumph, however exultant,
must one day be over,
in the beginning
was the Word (H.D., *Trilogy* 17).

As she does so often throughout this epic, H.D. turns to John's words for understanding the divine. In the opening lines from John's Gospel, John states, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Perhaps more important to H.D.'s resistance than the Word's longevity is that, in John's theology, "the Word was God." Such a declaration is a Christological assertion: the 'Word' is a stand-in for Jesus, the creative force in Moravian theology that speaks the world into existence in Genesis.

John 1, of course, uses Genesis as an intertext. The author of John's Gospel intentionally recalls the beginning of Genesis, "In the beginning," to highlight Jesus' creative powers. H.D., quite evidently, demonstrates an affinity for Scriptures that are intertextual; John's Gospel, as the opening verse indicates, makes use of allusion to

expand understandings of Christ's religious significance. When H.D. employs her biblical allusion, she taps into a complex web of canonical references.

Trilogy partakes in the “new-world reconstruction / in the confederacy of labour” (H.D., *Trilogy* 22) amid a London suffering under the destruction of the Blitz. Not unlike Eliot, H.D. pursues European unity, though her pursuit relies on the “keepers of the secret, / the carriers, the spinners / of the rare intangible thread / that binds all humanity” (H.D., *Trilogy* 24). Eliot adamantly emphasizes Christianity's exclusivity as the only hope for European unity; H.D., on the other hand, puts forth a radical inclusivity, for she endeavours to achieve European unity through syncretism. It is under these convictions that H.D. implores the reader to “light a new fire” in order to spark Europe's “regeneration” (H.D., *Trilogy* 26). While H.D. admits that “The Christos-image / is the most difficult to disentangle,” she nevertheless believes herself capable of showing the Christ to be akin to Ra and Osiris (H.D., *Trilogy* 27). The guiding wisdom in this endeavour, of course, is the Holy Spirit, the deity that “merges the distant future / with most distant antiquity” (H.D., *Trilogy* 29). Part of the Holy Spirit's function, in H.D.'s view, is to yoke the *tick* and the *tock*, the beginning of religious traditions with the end of religious redemption.

Central to these ambitions is a recasting of Jesus' role in this new religious order. For this reason, H.D.'s speaker remarks that the “Lamb” will be “mothered again” (H.D., *Trilogy* 30). H.D. thus calls for new Incarnation for this Lamb. By invoking the need to be “mothered again,” H.D. prizes the role of feminine creativity and influence. It is by a woman (H.D.) that the new Lamb will come about, a “re-born Sun” (H.D., *Trilogy* 31), and it is through her influence that this Lamb will stand alongside Ra and

Osiris, among others, in a syncretism that unites past and future religions for the present unity of the contemporary world. In this sense, H.D. is indeed incarnational, though her conceptions of the Incarnation take on a radically different nature than Eliot's.

By abandoning "sterile logic, trivial reason," the modern world is capable of grasping the "alchemist's key" that "unlocks secret doors" (H.D., *Trilogy* 40). The "initiate of the secret wisdom," whom H.D. immediately thereafter describes as the "bride of the kingdom" (H.D., *Trilogy* 43), will be the initiate of this new religious order. In this understanding of faith, H.D. implores the readership to "re-dedicate [their] gifts / to spiritual realism" (H.D., *Trilogy* 48). Such a spiritual realism is therefore an intellectual, as well as a religious, reality that the modern world must come to accept. Integral to this realignment is a new veneration for Thoth – "offer incense to Thoth, / the original Ancient-of-Days" – and Hermes, the figure who will "invoke the true-magic, / lead us back to the one-truth" (H.D., *Trilogy* 48). With this understanding in mind, H.D. attempts to emphasize the "resurrection reality" that she must

recover the secret of Isis,
which is: there was One
in the beginning, Creator,

Fosterer, Begetter, the Same-forever (H.D., *Trilogy* 55).

The role of Isis is to offer "recovery and renewal" (Brown 356). The ultimate expression of the religious reality that H.D. is defending rests in her assertion of the sameness of the various deities she has been discussing. With this understanding of syncretism, H.D.'s speaker hopes for the eschaton: "possibly we will reach haven, / heaven" (H.D., *Trilogy*

59). Desiring both a “haven” and a “heaven” reveals H.D.’s hope in a redemption that encompass both temporal and eternal locations, a New Jerusalem and a New Heaven.

H.D.’s “Tribute to the Angels” (1945) picks up on some of the main images and themes from the previous section; it is also a section in which H.D. lauds female spirituality more overtly, what Friedman refers to as a “female Christ figure” (Friedman, *Psyche* 157). This is a section, I believe, that discusses H.D.’s interest in “another incarnation with another sex” (H.D., *Majic* 4). Alchemical language dominates the early stages of the poem. The speaker invokes Hermes Trismegistus, the patron of alchemists, to work with the poet: “plunder, O poet, / take what the old-church / found in Mithra’s tomb” (H.D., *Trilogy* 63). As Elizabeth Anderson explains, Hermes was both a Greek god and an Egyptian sage who possessed ancient wisdom (Anderson 4). As a wise sage, Hermes was reclaimed by some Renaissance Christians as “a means of connecting pagan and Christian wisdom” (Anderson 75). By bringing these religions together, Hermes embodies the unity that H.D. pursues (Graham, “*Hymen*” 120). It is Hermes, not Christ, who ought to shine on the poet. The key to this section, as Graham explains, is to assert that crucial importance of the poet in ending the Second World War (Graham, “*Secret*” 180).

Shortly thereafter, H.D. begins to allude to the Book of Revelation more frequently. Revelation is “itself an account of spiritual information being recovered from a visionary experience” (Robinson and Tryphonopoulos 137). The Book of Revelation is a highly allusive book that relies upon mystical visionary experiences as a means of prophesying about both current and future events. The author, commonly believed to be John, plumbs the Old Testament prophets for images, diction, and structures to inform

his highly complex, eschatological text. For anyone familiar with the prophets, it should be apparent that John places particular emphasis on Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel when composing Revelation. As such, the student of Revelation ought to look to the prophets to understand John's vision; the way to understand contemporary and future destruction is by looking to past literature. H.D., in like manner, plumbs the classical tradition and the Bible to inform her visionary poetic sequence. By referencing the place where there is "*no need of the sun / nor moon to shine*" (H.D., *Trilogy* 64), H.D. thus at once sends her readers backwards to Revelation 21:23 while simultaneously projecting their thought forward to an eschatological vision of paradise.

In the second section of "Tribute," H.D. seemingly positions herself in defiance to the John who claims that "*if any man shall add / God shall add unto him plagues*" (H.D., *Trilogy* 65). Susan Stanford Friedman believes that H.D. "heretically puts herself, a woman, in the place of John and Jesus" (Friedman, "H.D.'s" 140). Common interpretations of this section emphasize H.D.'s blatant defiance of John; but it ought to be obvious that H.D. is, in some ways, not defying John at all. John's words prohibit "any man" from adding to his text but it says nothing of a woman rewriting his Revelation. As a feminine spiritual authority, H.D. stands outside traditional Christian power structures. As such, she is able to interact with Scripture in a manner that is inaccessible to her male counterparts. For this reason, H.D. can still place herself alongside the Jesus who says, "I make all things new" (H.D., *Trilogy* 65).

Part of this process involves dismantling what H.D. perceives to be the violent tendencies of orthodoxy's God. It is for this reason that she clearly attempts to rewrite Exodus 18 in the eighth section of "Tribute." As I discussed in the Introduction, H.D.

uses a phraseological adaptation to reference Moses leading the Israelites to salvation; however, H.D. takes exception to the means by which this salvation is obtained. Moses proudly sings about God's military successes and the destruction of the Egyptians. Feminine spiritual authority, a worship of the "Mother" (H.D., *Trilogy* 71), is H.D.'s apparent solution to this violence. The poet then turns to a discussion that reveals her desire to use an alchemical process to "change and alter, / mer, mere, mère, mater, Maia, Mary" (H.D., *Trilogy* 71). By likening these names, the speaker manipulates words in a linguistic alchemy that reveals her capacity to come alongside the Christ of Revelation and say, "Behold, I make all things new." Alchemy is the transformative agent in this situation, thereby revealing H.D.'s willingness to step outside the boundaries of Christian orthodoxy in order to achieve her redemptive end.

The emergence of the Lady in "Tribute" represents a climactic moment of the section because she shows the way to redemption. A continual image in *Trilogy* is that of fire, the force that at once causes tremendous destruction, pain, and suffering while also providing the opportunity for refinement and renewal. The Lady, "beauty incarnate" (H.D., *Trilogy* 82), reveals a "charred tree" that was "burnt and stricken to the heart," prompting the poet to ask, "was it may-tree or apple" (H.D., *Trilogy* 82). Before the reader can get an answer, the poet indicates that this burnt tree was nevertheless producing blossoms: "we saw the tree flowering; / it was an ordinary tree / in an old garden-square" (H.D., *Trilogy* 83). In spite of the fire, the tree thrives, blossoming in a way that stupefies the poet, leaving her to struggle with words to describe it (H.D., *Trilogy* 84-85). Nevertheless, the poet believes that "we are part of [...] the transubstantiation," that God will manifest himself in the "other-half of the tree" (H.D.,

Trilogy 87). For H.D., Eliot's transubstantiation is insufficient, something that occurs "merely in the bread" (H.D., *Trilogy 87*). In H.D.'s religious system, she experiences a "vision" from the "Holy Spirit" that reveals "a half-burnt-out apple-tree / blossoming" (H.D., *Trilogy 87*). The female Holy Spirit thus provides H.D. with the visionary experience that she will use in her poetry to try and usher in a new religious reality.

H.D. is in awe of the Lady, indicating that she is akin to Jesus: "For I can say truthfully, / her veils were *white as snow*, / so as no fuller on earth / can white them" (H.D., *Trilogy 97*). During the transfiguration, the author of Mark's Gospel describes Jesus' clothes as "shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them" (Mark 9:3). By using a moment where God definitively displays Jesus' divinity, H.D. positions her Lady as akin to Jesus, one on an equal level who will perform a similar function. While H.D. is clearly positioning the Lady in an unfamiliar position for women in Christianity, she nevertheless feels it necessary to explain that "she bore / none of her usual attributes; / the Child was not with her" (H.D., *Trilogy 97*). This Lady is not like the women of Christian orthodoxy: she exists independent of maternal functions, yet is still capable of creative qualities. Moreover, the Lamb is not with her (H.D., *Trilogy 104*), indicating that the Lady also exists independent of a spouse. The Lady thus appears alongside Thoth, Hermes, and Saint Michael since H.D. hopes for the time when "the darkness of ignorance" will cast "the Old Dragon / into the abyss," (H.D., *Trilogy 98*), an image that is taken directly from the conclusion of John's Revelation while recalling her own words in *Tribute to Freud*.

This Lady is the "incarnate symbol of the Holy Spirit" who is carrying the "Book of Life" (H.D., *Trilogy 101*), another carryover from Revelation. H.D.'s poet is quick to

add that the book she carries does not contain “the tome of ancient wisdom” but, instead, “are the blank pages / of the unwritten volume of the new” (H.D., *Trilogy* 103). Robinson explains that the pages are blank because “the new dispensation – the new story – will be written in it” (Robinson, Introduction xxviii). H.D. thus imbues her Lady with the ability to redeem Eve’s transgression independent from a patriarchal tradition. In the first Incarnation, God redeemed mankind; God redeems man’s Fall through the emergence of the Last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45). In H.D.’s retelling, she pursues the “other-half of the tree,” through the Lady who serves as the Last Eve that illustrates H.D.’s “liberating revisions of the past” (Gubar 74). H.D. points to “beauty incarnate” as a leading figure in her religion that will lead to a new heaven and a new earth, a new woman for a redemption in poetry that is driven by the impulse to “make it new.”

The concluding section of *Trilogy*, “The Flowering of the Rod” (1946), was written in two weeks during the Christmas season in 1944. Consequently, it is unsurprising that this section focuses on the Incarnation of the Christ child, a discussion that occurs alongside another attempt at asserting the validity of feminine spirituality through Mary Magdalene. The title evokes memories of Numbers 17 when Moses gathers the “rods” from male authorities in each tribe of Israel, including Aaron’s. Moses places these rods outside of the tent of meeting, and it is Aaron’s that flowers: “behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds” (v. 8). Dianne Chisholm describes this poem as “a reconstruction of the fabled, apocryphal Gospel of Mary” (Chisholm 100). Jesus is the focus of the section’s opening lines, and it is noteworthy that H.D. discusses his “beautiful garment” and “the beautiful raiment” (H.D., *Trilogy* 113), the same

descriptions that H.D.'s poet ascribes to the Lady in "Tribute." Moreover, H.D., not unlike "The Walls," situates the reader in Second World War England, lamenting the "bitter fire of destruction" before offering another rallying cry for her readership: "above all, let us leave pity / and mount higher / to love -- resurrection" (H.D., *Trilogy* 114).

Resurrection comes after death, and thus the final section of H.D.'s *Trilogy* focuses on preparing the Christ for His crucifixion. Crucial to this preparation is the myrrh, an embalming agent that plays a significant role in the two central events in Jesus' life: his Incarnation and the Passion (H.D., *Trilogy* 123), the *tick* and the *tock* of Christ's earthly ministry. In H.D.'s poetic descriptions of the Christ, Jesus is one who "journeys back and forth / between the poles of heaven and earth forever" (H.D., *Trilogy* 128). As a revolutionary saviour, the Christ offers His salvation to "outcast" and "vagabond," promising that "to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (H.D., *Trilogy* 128). Christ's first act of redemption extends to individuals whom society largely rejects, an act that appeals to H.D. It is noteworthy that shortly thereafter H.D. clings to the detail that the first person to see Jesus after his resurrection is "an unbalanced, neurotic woman" (H.D., *Trilogy* 129). While the disciples, all of whom are men, are in hiding, it is a sinful woman who first interacts with the risen Christ.

In like manner to *Pilate's Wife*, H.D. capitalizes on the Bible's silence surrounding this interaction to narrate the events leading up to Mary Magdalene's encounter with Jesus. H.D., argues Sarah Graham, challenges "heteropatriarchy" through a classical woman that the poet reimagines in order to speak to a "modern audience" (Graham, "*Hymen*" 117). How Mary obtains the myrrh and the subsequent interaction with Jesus dominate "Flowering." The concluding thirty sections of *Trilogy*,

then, do not deal directly with the Second World War but with rewriting the story of Mary Magdalene (Graham, "Secret" 200). Nevertheless, this section indirectly appeals to wartime redemption by discussing the issues that, in H.D.'s mind, led to the Second World War: patriarchy in the orthodox tradition and the redemption to be found in feminine spirituality.

H.D. indicates that Mary receives the myrrh from an "Arab" who was travelling to a "coronation and a funeral – a double affair" (H.D., *Trilogy* 130). The intent of the Arab's journey fits perfectly into Jesus' crucifixion; the crucifixion is His funeral, and yet the means by which He ascends to His eternal throne. Mary Magdalene intervenes in the Arab's plans, whom we later understand to be Kaspar, by presenting herself to obtain the myrrh. By not conforming to gender conventions, Mary is able to obtain a precious balm that is instrumental in preparing Jesus for His sacrificial death.

Mary asserts her identity, stating at the beginning of section sixteen, "I am Mary, she said, of a tower-town, / or once it must have been towered / for Magdala is a tower" (H.D., *Trilogy* 135). Like Veronica in *Pilate's Wife*, Mary identifies herself confidently, declaring "I am Mary" in a manner that recalls the God of Exodus who identifies himself as "I AM" (Exodus 3:14). Just as Jesus extends salvation to the thief and vagabond, H.D. offers redemption to a "woman conventionally dismissed as a prostitute" by giving her "strength and autonomy" (Graham, "*Hymen*" 122). Mary equates herself with various other women, using diction that obviously recalls H.D.'s earlier descriptions of women: "I am Mary – O, there are Marys a-plenty, / (though I am Mara, bitter) I shall be Mary-myrrh" (H.D., *Trilogy* 135). This Mary thus defines herself in terms of her role in helping the Christ to His crucifixion by anointing His feet.

H.D. then shifts her focus to Mary and the anointing of Jesus' feet. Morris argues that Mary's act in this instance ensures that Jesus' crucifixion will "be the first step in triumphant regeneration" because "she anoints him with the elixir of life" (Morris, "Concept" 132). Judas Iscariot and Simon do not understand the significance of her gesture because they concern themselves with the morality of her actions. Nevertheless, the speaker focuses on her "extraordinary hair" (H.D., *Trilogy* 141) and how she was "kissing his feet" (H.D., *Trilogy* 143), indicators of her physical and spiritual beauty. While Jesus allows her to perform these acts, the disciples question the Master's discretion: "this man if he were a prophet, would have known / who and what manner of woman this is" (H.D., *Trilogy* 143). Mary, like Jesus, ignores the patriarchal standards of the day and the judgement of Christ's disciples, realizing that she is fulfilling a critical role in preparing the Christ for His crucifixion.

Kaspar, the other main figure in "Flowering," receives a sort of spiritual enlightenment through his interactions with Mary. The twenty-ninth section of "Flowering" indicates that through his family lineage, Kaspar received "the legend [that] was contained in old signs and symbols" (H.D., *Trilogy* 151). The speaker states that only the "very-few" could achieve the level of spiritual enlightenment that Kaspar possesses. Through intellectual rigour, spiritual devotion, and a fortunate lineage, Kaspar earns the "title Magian," which the speaker then translates as "*Wise Man*" (H.D., *Trilogy* 151). In all these aspects, Kaspar is similar to H.D., and, in many ways, Eliot. Like Kaspar, H.D. believes that she descends from a family lineage that imbues her with significant spiritual abilities, something that she supplements with both study and religious practice.

The conclusion of “Flowering” recalls the arrival of the Magi before the Christ child: “Dramatically ending at the beginning, [...] H.D. illustrates the cyclical renewal she personally seeks of dying into life” (Gubar 77). H.D. refers to famous details in the story, the foremost of which being that there was no room at the Inn before entering into the ox-stall where Jesus lay. Balthasar, one of the other magi, approaches Christ and touches the “High Priest’s side,” recalling the side-wound theology that Zinzendorf preached in colonial Bethlehem (H.D., *Trilogy* 170). In awareness of the greatness of the Incarnation, “the Holy-Presence-Manifest” (H.D., *Trilogy* 170), the wise men bow low (H.D., *Trilogy* 171). While the Virgin Mary ascribes the beautiful scent to the gift of myrrh, Kaspar knows that the scent comes from her Son, the Christ-child (H.D., *Trilogy* 172). H.D. uses prolepsis to explain Kaspar’s acknowledgement of the myrrh; Kaspar anticipates Mary Magdalene’s interaction with Jesus, indicating that her anointing of Jesus’ feet is a divinely-ordained event.

In order to fully understand Christ’s Incarnation and crucifixion, insists H.D., the Christian must comprehend the significance of the women in His life. Kasper is thus a stand-in for patriarchal, religious authority; he is an educated, affluent, and powerful religious leader: a magi. Yet, upon interacting with Mary, Kaspar is awakened to a higher spiritual reality, one where feminine expressions of spirituality are given their proper due. This is a startling declaration, for Kaspar was present at Christ’s birth, and, according to H.D.’s epic, the moments before Christ’s crucifixion. The Christ does not alert Kaspar to the need for a new religious reality though; H.D. reserves this realization to the influence of a woman who humbles herself before the Incarnate Son of God.

Alicia Ostriker explains that the ending of *Trilogy* is not really an ending at all (Ostriker, *Feminist* 78). Instead, H.D. points to a beginning, one that is predicated on establishing the pre-eminence of women in spirituality. While the opening sections attempt to dismantle the patriarchy of European Christianity during the Second World War, H.D. ends her poem by recalling the Incarnation in Bethlehem to inspire a new beginning for H.D.'s syncretic religion; the combination of the Incarnation and the Passion connects the *tick* and the *tock*. H.D. can thus situate the eschatological hope in *Trilogy* within a discussion of the Incarnation that carries hope for renewal, a new beginning for feminine spirituality in a Europe that H.D. is seeking to bring to “*haven, / heaven*” (H.D., *Trilogy* 59).

Conclusion

Eliot's *Four Quartets* and H.D.'s *Trilogy* represent modernist, poetic explorations of eschatology. By examining each poets' use of allusion, I have endeavoured to ascertain a clear and discernable eschatological argument within each poem. Though quite different in many of their ideals, Eliot's and H.D.'s eschatological hopes rest in establishing European unity. In Eliot's view, this involves an Anglo-Catholic awakening, one where Europeans collectively acknowledge their need to return to faith in the Incarnated Christ. H.D., on the other hand, points to a syncretism that she believed could establish a pan-European unity. The result, I argued, is sophisticated theological debate between two of the preeminent modernist poets.

In my opening chapter, I considered some of the epistemological shifts that took place in the nineteenth century, both scientifically and theologically. Crucial to this epistemological crisis was the pre-eminence of evolutionary biology, a scientific theory that reached its highest point with the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859). Darwin's understanding of evolution by means of natural selection provided an alternative to biblical conceptions of creation, undermining the legitimacy of the biblical creation account. Theology, I argued, spoke in unison with science, for its most influential intellectuals undermined doctrines of biblical inerrancy by subjecting Scripture to a new hermeneutic. As a result of the work of Strauss, Feurbach, Renan, Jowett, and many others, the Bible was increasingly subject to critical scrutiny, undermining this text's authority. Orthodox Christianity, at least among the Western intelligentsia, began to lose currency. Science and reason, argued many intellectuals, would replace antiquated beliefs about God. Though Nietzsche proclaimed God's death

at the end of the nineteenth century, many twentieth century thinkers revealed a very different impulse.

The early 1900s was not a secular utopia but, instead, a time in which theologically heterodox ideas were circulated. At the forefront of these heterodoxies, I have argued, were new ideas about the eschaton. Because the nineteenth century discredited traditional understandings of creation, the twentieth century was free to reconceptualise the biblical apocalypse as described in John's Revelation. The First World War created a heightened interest in discussing eschatological redemption. Many prominent modernist poets reveal a fascination with this topic, made evident in the work of W.B. Yeats, D.H. Lawrence, Wallace Stevens, and W.H. Auden; Eliot and H.D. were far from alone in their fascination in eschatology.

In my second chapter, I attempted to articulate my understanding of the nature and content of Eliot's eschatology as revealed in *Four Quartets*. I began my study of Eliot's eschatological poetry by briefly considering the emphasis on time in "The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock" before turning to a more sustained consideration of *The Waste Land*. This modernist epic chronicles Eliot's spiritual explorations. While there are many different religious traditions under consideration, I focused on some of the Christian references and images. Though not a Christian at the date of publication, Eliot nevertheless reveals that he was engaging with Christianity. Eliot's conversion to Christianity was by no means a sudden event but, instead, an intellectual process. The chapel may suggest Eliot's desire for Europe to return a traditional faith, and it is an image that re-emerges in his *Quartets*.

Eliot's fascination with time was satisfied in his understanding of the Incarnation; the salvific implications of the hypostatic union settled Eliot's intellectual explorations for a religious system that reconciled the distinction between the temporal and eternal (Spurr 21). Eliot's conversion, I argued, signalled the beginning of his sustained effort at redeeming England, and Europe as a whole, from liberalism, secularism, and, eventually, totalitarianism. "The Journey of the Magi" and "Song of Simeon" reveal the poet's affinity for the doctrine of the Incarnation. It is the birth of the Christ, the arrival of the "still unspeaking and unspoken Word" (Eliot, "Simeon" 70), who marks the end of the "old dispensation" (Eliot, "Magi" 69). *Ash-Wednesday* further reveals Eliot's emphasis on the Incarnation, made evident in his discussion of "unheard [...] silent Word" who is capable of providing salvation for the "unstilled world" (Eliot, *Ash* 65). Through his encounters with the Moot and its members, particularly Christopher Dawson, Eliot came to understand the Incarnation as a profoundly eschatological event, one capable of leading a prodigal England back to its God.

Four Quartets, like so much of Eliot's poetry, discusses time through paradox. The "still point," which recalls the Word in the "unstilled world" of *Ash-Wednesday*, is able to "protect mankind from heaven and damnation" that the "weakness of the changing body" "cannot endure" (Eliot, *FQ* 119). It is the "wounded surgeon," states Eliot's speaker in "East Coker," who can overcome Original Sin to cure the "disease" of "Adam's curse" (Eliot, *FQ* 127). Throughout these soteriological claims, I attempted to distinguish Eliot's thought by discussing how he blatantly rejects occultism and syncretism; he insists that communicating with the spiritual realm is the "occupation for the saint" (Eliot, *FQ* 136). The Christian's ability to do this, ultimately, must rest on

their acknowledgment of the “impossible union” found in the “Incarnation,” allowing the poet to declare, “Here the past and future / Are conquered, and reconciled” (Eliot, *FQ* 136). “Little Gidding” is the most explicitly eschatological section of Eliot’s poem. The emphasis on fire, as a destructive, redemptive, and communicative agent permeates the section, providing the poet with an image to discuss the horrors of the Second World War and redemption therefrom. Fittingly, the Word redeems words (Eliot, *FQ* 144), the means by which the poet communicates, thereby allowing Eliot to discuss humanity’s return to its beginning, the Garden of Eden, as the site of its eschatological end.

H.D., not unlike Eliot, endeavours to create a modernist epic that engages in eschatological discourse to point toward religious redemption in and through the Second World War. I began my consideration of H.D. by seeking to understand the particulars of Moravianism. Under the guidance of Count Zinzendorf, Moravian Christian settled in Pennsylvania in order to continue pursuing a Christianity that stood outside of orthodox Protestantism. Prominent in Zinzendorffian theology is the emphasis on Christ’s side wound, a wound that the Count reconfigured to be representative of a woman’s vagina to emphasize Christ’s maternal, redemptive capacities. Zinzendorf made the Sonship malleable, inviting new understandings of this androgynous Christ. Through a belief in the Holy Spirit as mother and synthesis of denominational theologies, among many other unorthodox beliefs, I claimed that Zinzendorf provided H.D. with a spiritual heritage that encouraged and legitimized many of her theological heterodoxies.

Pilate’s Wife offers a revised understanding of the Passion. H.D. writes about Veronica, Pilate’s wife, who actively petitions her husband to save Jesus from crucifixion. This novel ends with an eschatological hope, one that points to the

possibility of a “future of perfection” (H.D., *Pilate’s* 134) as a result of religious syncretism. In my analysis of “The Master,” I drew attention to the eschatological hope that Freud awakens and stimulates in H.D., something that she directly ties to a veneration of femininity (H.D., “Master” 455; 460). In *The Gift*, H.D. claims that her family lineage, specifically the women in her family, have possessed a divine gift. Her Moravian heritage, then, provides the means by which she is able to resist the Second World War. H.D., an initiate in an esoteric religious tradition, ends her book by describing the Blitz, effectively communicating her desire to use her spiritual heritage and literary output to help England overcome the Second World War.

The opening poem of *Trilogy*, “The Walls Do Not Fall,” most clearly stands in defiance to the destruction of the Second World War. In this section, H.D.’s speaker implores her reader to “search the old highways / for the true-rune, the right-spell, / recover old values” (H.D., *Trilogy* 5), revealing the poet’s desire to syncretise a myriad of religious traditions. H.D.’s speaker gestures towards the “bearers of the secret wisdom” and the “living remnant” (H.D., *Trilogy*, 14), an indicator of H.D.’s belief in using her occultist syncretism to redeem those within the Christian tradition: “The Christos-image / is the most difficult to disentangle” (H.D., *Trilogy* 27). I argued that H.D. more explicitly lauds feminine spirituality in *Trilogy*’s second poem, “Tribute to the Angels,” through the discussion of the Lady. Fittingly, this Lady carries the Book of Life, and she is, in many ways, akin to Jesus; in H.D.’s words, “this is the new Eve” (H.D., *Trilogy* 101). Through the Lady, H.D. discusses the eschaton in terms from John’s Revelation, signalling the poet’s desire to overcome the “darkness of ignorance” so that she can cast “the Old Dragon / into the abyss” (H.D., *Trilogy* 98). I ended my

discussion of *Trilogy* with a consideration of “The Flowering of the Rod” and the discussion of Christ’s Incarnation therein. Mary Magdalene, a woman who was victimized by her patriarchal culture, bears the gift of myrrh that prepares Christ for His crucifixion: “*the house was filled with the odour of the ointment*” (H.D., *Trilogy* 141). Kaspar, the magi, provides this myrrh for Mary, and in the process recalls the Incarnation of Christ. By returning to Bethlehem with a discussion of the Incarnation and Mary Magdalene’s significance, H.D. signals her belief in the need for a new religious beginning where feminine spirituality will be exalted.

Studying Eliot’s *Four Quartets* and H.D.’s *Trilogy* through a theologically-informed methodology provides a fruitful outlook on these modernist epics. Paradoxically, each poet understands eschatology, in large part, through their consideration of Incarnational theology. Most Eliot critics mention the significance of the Incarnation, but there are very few, if any, who consider the Incarnation to be a profoundly important eschatological event that provides the foundation for European unity. H.D., in like manner, points to her eschatological hope through her discussions of her own birth while also maintaining that Europe needs to embrace her religious syncretism to defeat totalitarianism. *Four Quartets* and *Trilogy* share a similar ambition: stifling totalitarianism by unifying Europe through a new religious order. Whether through the exclusivity of Eliot’s Anglo-Catholicism or the inclusivity of H.D. syncretism, European unity rests at the heart of each poem’s eschatological vision. Incarnational theology thus becomes crucial to each poet’s spiritual endeavours, illuminating the means by which Europe can enter into a New Creation.

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