SPACE, TIME AND THE PILGRIMAGE

IN MODERNIST LITERATURE

By

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ABSTRACT

The changes in temporal and spatial orientation that occur at the turn of the twentieth century in visual arts, science and philosophy provoke a re-evaluation of one of the defining myths of modernist literature. When time is shown to be neither objective nor constant and the notions of a single, unified perspective in space are revealed as illusory, the quest’s sequential outcome; unified, authoritative view; and reliance on an exclusively aristocratic, male protagonist are shown to be inadequate. The search by modernist writers for a new paradigm uncovers the pilgrimage. The pilgrimage focuses on goalless activity where meaning and significance are determined not temporally, but spatially, through relationships between characters or words on the page. This endeavour is linked to the recovery of the archetypal feminine, associated with cyclical and eternal time, which is repressed in Western culture since it may appear chaotic and disruptive to the linearity of the quest.

The transition in mythic form from quest to pilgrimage in literature is neither uniform nor immediate and is approached with some ambivalence as modernist writers acknowledge the inadequacy of the classical inheritance and the simultaneous difficulty of relinquishing the potential for accomplishment afforded by the quest. However, the loss of the quest motif is less troubling for some modernist writers than others, particularly women who were not afforded a subject position within the quest. This thesis will consider the development of the pilgrimage as a literary trope through a study of six modernist texts: Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness, Dorothy Richardson’s Pilgrimage, James Joyce’s Ulysses, T.S. Eliot’s poems, The Waste Land and Four Quartets, H.D.’s long poem, Trilogy, and a final text, generally considered to be postmodern, Michael Ondaatje’s The English Patient.
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INTRODUCTION

Every period has its bias, its particular prejudice, and its psychic malaise. An epoch is like an individual; it has its own limitations of conscious outlook, and therefore requires a compensatory adjustment. This is effected by the collective unconscious when a poet or seer lends expression to the unspoken desire of his times and shows the way, by word or deed, to its fulfilment - regardless whether this blind collective need results in good or evil, in the salvation of an epoch or its destruction (Jung 15: 98).

Whether working from an aesthetic or materialist perspective, critics uniformly describe the modernist period in terms of “rupture”, "crisis" and "upheavals" (Friedman Joyce 5; Levenson “Introduction” 4; Bradbury 19). Thomas Vargish and Delo E. Mook, in their book, Inside Modernism: Relativity Theory, Cubism, Narrative, coin the term “epistemic trauma” to describe “a kind of primary or initial difficulty, strangeness, opacity; a violation of common sense, of our laboriously achieved intuitions of reality; an immediate, counter-intuitive refusal to provide the reassuring conclusiveness of the past....” (14). T.S. Eliot's poem The Waste Land has often been seen as the epitome of this epistemic crisis and Eliot described as the spokesperson of his generation. Writing in Poetry magazine a few months after the publication of The Waste Land, Harriet Monroe wrote that “Mr. Eliot's poem... gives us the malaise of our time.....what whole groups of impassioned intellectuals are saying to each other....” (326). Conrad Aiken, in a 1923 review in New Republic, described The Waste Land as the poem that “captures us” (181). Eliot, however, denied such intentions:

(I dislike the word 'generation,' which has been a talisman for the last ten years; when I write a poem called The Waste Land some of the more approving said that I had expressed ‘the disillusionment of a generation,'
which is nonsense. I may have expressed for them their own illusion of being disillusioned, but that did not form part of my intention.)
("Thoughts" 368)

Whether intentioned or not, *The Waste Land* did express the thoughts and disillusionment of a generation, but perhaps not in the way that has been commonly interpreted. In the same *New Republic* review, Aiken took to task the earlier critical assessments of the poem as a modern epic. Aiken announced his intention to:

> dispel, if possible, an illusion as to its [*The Waste Land*’s] nature. It is perhaps important to note that Mr. Eliot, with his comment on the ‘plan,’ and several critics, with their admiration of the poem’s woven complexity, minister to the idea that *The Waste Land* is, precisely, a kind of epic in a walnut shell: elaborate, ordered, unfolded with a logic at every joint discernible; but it is also important to note that this idea is false. (179)

By Eliot’s ‘plan’, Aiken was referring to the poet’s notes, absent from the first publications of the poem in *The Criterion* and *The Dial*, but added to the book version published by Liveright. The notes clearly direct the reader to Jessie Weston’s book, *From Ritual to Romance*, which describes various versions of the Grail myth. As Eliot writes:

> Not only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem were suggested by Miss Jessie L. Weston’s book on the Grail legend: *From Ritual to Romance* (Cambridge). Indeed, so deeply am I indebted, Miss Weston’s book will elucidate the difficulties of the poem much better than my notes can do; and I recommend it (apart from the great interest of the book itself) to any who think such elucidation of the poem worth the trouble. (*The Waste Land* 21)

Weston’s consideration of the Grail legend had particular significance for modernists; the image of the wounded Fisher King languishing in an arid landscape and awaiting the appearance of the Grail knight resonated with modernist feelings of disillusionment. As Weston describes the myth, in order to heal the Fisher king, the heroic knight must recover the elixir of the Holy Grail and return it to the kingdom. The contents of the Grail heal the wounded Fisher King and fertility is restored to the kingdom.
Aiken points out how Eliot himself contributed to the mistaken reading of *The Waste Land* as a quest. Given the unfamiliar format of the poem and its numerous and obscure references, it is perhaps not surprising that many critics, unsure of how to read the poem, relied, perhaps too heavily, on Eliot’s notes.\(^2\) Eliot later tried to retract the notes in a public lecture, apologizing for misleading the critics:

> Here I must admit that I am, on one conspicuous occasion, not guiltless of having led critics into temptation. The notes to *The Waste Land*! I had at first intended only to put down all the references for my quotations, with a view to spiking the guns of critics of my earlier poems who had accused me of plagiarism. Then, when it came to print *The Waste Land* as a little book – for the poem on its first appearance in *The Dial* and in *The Criterion* had no notes whatever – it was discovered that the poem was inconveniently short, so I set to work to expand the notes, in order to provide a few more pages of printed matter, with the result that they became the remarkable exposition of bogus scholarship that is still on view to-day. I have sometimes thought of getting rid of these notes; but now they can never be unstuck. They have had almost greater popularity than the poem itself – anyone who bought my book of poems, and found that the notes to *The Waste Land* were not in it, would demand his money back. (“Frontiers” 121)

As Eliot makes clear, the addition of the notes was made as an expediency, rather than an attempt at edification, but by the time of the lecture, in 1956, the interpretation of *The Waste Land* as a quest was canonical.\(^3\)

Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that so little attention has been paid to the references in the opening lines of the poem which refer not to a quest, but to a pilgrimage:

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

These 4 lines from “The Burial of the Dead” recall the opening lines of Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*:
When in April the sweet showers fall
And pierce the drought of March to the root, and all
The veins are bathed in liquor of such power
As brings about the engendering of the flower.... (Canterbury Tales Illustrated II 1-4)

Chaucer’s pilgrims seek Canterbury, the location of the shrine of Thomas à Becket, who was murdered by the knights of Henry II in an argument about the separation of church and state. Following Becket’s death, miracles began to occur in which individuals were healed with Becket’s blood. As a result, Becket was canonized as a saint soon after and Henry II, perhaps one of the first Canterbury pilgrims, walked barefoot through Canterbury to be flogged by the monks in penance for contributing to Becket’s death (Ellis 2).

As Chaucer notes in his lines, Medieval pilgrimages to Canterbury were annual events. Pilgrims undertook their journeys for a variety of reasons: Chaucer’s pilgrims, we are told,

down to Canterbury they wend
To seek the holy blissful martyr, quick
To give his help to them when they were sick. (II 16-18)

and the knight, in particular, sought Canterbury to “render thanks” (80) for surviving battle. Henry VIII made a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham to give thanks for the birth of son (Starkey 121). 4 Pilgrimages might also be undertaken as an act of devotion or penance, a punishment, or as a means of re-enacting a religious event by journeying to a specific locale. It was even acceptable to undertake a pilgrimage by proxy (Finnucane 39), paying someone else to make the arduous journey on your behalf.
Eliot's early intertextual reference to pilgrimage begs the question of his intentions. John Cooper has written that Eliot's "allusion to Chaucer ... is also an allusion to a particular conjunction of socio-cultural meanings. 'April is the cruellest month...'

because it reminds us of Chaucer and the medieval world, acting as an emblem of social and spiritual values and the deeper civic rationality and order that Eliot always sought for contemporary England" (69). Kenner argues that Eliot has thwarted such an impulse: "instead of pilgrimages, we have European tours...." (Invisible Poet 157), providing in the juxtaposition of the past and present a "denial of Chaucer" and a commentary on the present as a "restless, pointless world" (158). However, I would argue that Eliot's foregrounding of pilgrimage in the first lines of The Waste Land registers a significant shift in the positioning of the hero and acknowledges the value of the pilgrimage; the juxtaposition of interest is not between pilgrimages and contemporary European tours, but rather between the tropes of pilgrimage and quest. Further, Eliot's rejection of the quest as an inadequate myth for contemporary life is shared by other modernists, such as Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, H.D., and even Michael Ondaatje, generally viewed as a postmodern writer. A more detailed discussion of the nature of pilgrimage and the quest is necessary to appreciate fully the ways in which modernist writers manipulate these tropes.

**Quest and Pilgrimage**

**The Quest**

From the Latin root, *quaerere*, to seek or inquire, a quest is defined as a "search or pursuit, made in order to find or obtain something." More specifically, in medieval
romance, a quest is an “expedition or adventure undertaken by a knight to procure some thing or achieve some exploit” (Oxford Universal Dictionary). These definitions point to the goal-oriented nature of the quest – “something,” whether an exploit or the answer to a question, is to be achieved or found. In literature, the quest may involve an activity carried out by an aristocratic and successful warrior, who incurs fame and the spoils of war, the latter which it is his duty to share with his loyal retainers. While the quest may be traditionally portrayed as a group activity, only one man can be the hero, and thus the quest is an individualistic enterprise. Some early examples of the heroic quest survive in Homer’s epic, *The Odyssey*, and in the Old English *Beowulf*, in which the male hero aspires to an ideal of excellence. These are told through a linear narrative that reflects the hero’s values of progress and accomplishment.

Several theories exist which analyze the elements and the nature of the heroic quest. For example, Sir James George Frazer’s 13 volume work, *The Golden Bough*, which was well known to late Victorian readers, identifies the stages of “conflict, death, and discovery or resolution” that typically accompany “the slaying of a dragon and the acquisition of wealth in some form (Vickery 132). Otto Rank, a disciple of Sigmund Freud, characterized the heroic quest in terms of the Oedipal conflict, but unlike Freud, Rank focused on the relationship of the hero to the parents in his adult life, rather than in childhood. Rank described the hero as a historical or legendary figure who returns home to take his rightful place on the throne and who derives his heroic qualities from his desire to kill his father to regain the love of his mother (Rank 57).

Carl. G. Jung, another early disciple of Freud, saw the heroic quest as an element of what he called the collective unconscious. Unlike the personal unconscious, the collective unconscious is universal, “it has contents and modes of behaviours that
are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals" (Archetypes 4). The collective unconscious consists of "pre-existent forms" (Archetypes 43), called archetypes. Archetypes manifest as motifs, symbols or fantasies which have both an emotive and a visual component that is recognizable in any culture. The hero is one such archetype; other common archetypes include that of the child, the trickster, God, the wise old man, the earth mother, as well as natural and crafted objects such as the moon or various weapons (Hall 41-2). For Jung, the hero archetype “always refers to a powerful man or god-man who vanquishes evil in the form of dragons, serpents, monsters, demons, and so on, and who liberates his people from destruction and death” (Man 79).

Joseph Campbell undertook a cross-cultural Jungian analysis of the hero archetype and delineated three distinct phases of the heroic quest, which exist in all cultures: the departure of the hero, as he steps over the threshold into a world of supernatural forces; the initiation into the supreme ordeal and recovery of the boon; and the return to the community (see Figure 1). The initiation phase consists of a call to adventure, followed by events such as a dragon battle, crucifixion, descent, a night-sea journey, or ingestion into the belly of the whale. The resolution of the ordeal may present itself as a sacred marriage of opposites signifying wholeness, atonement with the father, or apotheosis, and recovery of the boon. According to Campbell, “the boon is simply a symbol of life energy stepped down to the requirements of a certain specific case” (189). The hero’s task is to use the boon to transform or rejuvenate society, which “suffers from a symbolical deficiency” (Hero 37). But in a successful quest, the hero may also be transformed, experiencing a change of consciousness.
Figure 1. *The Keys*

**THE KEYS**

The adventure can be summarized in the following diagram:

```
Call to Adventure
Threshold crossing
Brother-battle
Dragon-battle
Dismemberment
Crucifixion
Abduction
Night-sea journey
Wonder journey
Whale's belly.
```

```
Helper
Tests
Threshold struggle
```

```
Elixir
Return
Resurrection
Recue
```

```
1. SACRED MARRIAGE
2. FATHER ATONEMENT
3. APOTHEOSIS
4. ELIXIR THEFT
```


Jessie L. Weston's description of the Grail legend which Eliot consulted is a specific example of the heroic quest. As Weston describes the myth, in order to heal the Fisher King, the heroic knight must recover the Holy Grail and return it to the kingdom.
Once the knight locates the Grail, he cannot possess the Grail until he asks the correct question – ‘What is the Holy Grail?’ Only then is the Grail released to him. The knight returns to the ailing kingdom with the boon, the wounded Fisher King is healed, and fertility is restored to the land.

The archetypal nature of the Grail myth has been considered by Emma Jung and Marie Louise von Franz. In their formulation, the lance as archetype reveals qualities of “aim or direction and impact .... This characteristic of the weapon can be understood metaphorically as perception of the goal or awareness of one’s intention, or as keeping one’s eye on and reaching further possibilities” (82). Like all archetypes, the lance has both positive and negative qualities and can work to wound or heal (86). The Grail, literally a cup or goblet, is associated in archetypal terms with the “primal image of the mother, the wonderous vessel .... that which receives, contains and supports....” (113). It is associated with life-giving properties as in a receptacle of water, the Eucharistic chalice of Christian transubstantiation, and the cauldron of magic potions. It is also associated in its negative aspect with death in the form of the sepulchre; the tomb is emblematic of Mother Earth who “receives the dead back into herself” (127). The essence of the Grail myth is the recovery of the female physical energy, represented by the Grail or chalice that balances the masculine energy of the lance.

In all of these cases, the quest offers the predictability of a fixed pattern. While it begins in turmoil, it ends in restoration, redemption, and a return to a new order. This suggests that chaos is necessary, but transient. And it requires a search for a source of knowledge, which will provide the wisdom for transformation, both of the community and the individual. Ernest Becker, in his book Denial of Death, argues that the heroic impulse is a natural one; we all suffer from the “ache of cosmic specialness” (4). Humans, he
argues, are unique among species in that we experience a dual existence: we are both in time, where we confront our mortality, and in eternal time, where we are conscious of our name, our identity, and our individuality. This creates a mind/body split. To accept the presence of the body is to acknowledge our inevitable outcome as food for worms. Western culture avoids the knowledge of death on the most superficial level with a massive cosmetic and surgical industry, but in a more complex way in the cultural and social forces that we create to assure us of our symbolic nature and repress our physical nature. We live in terror of the cosmos and its power to destroy us, but to be consistently aware of the possibility of death would lead to madness. The role of culture is to shore us up with defenses against the reality of our mortality and provide a way of ascribing meaning to our existence. It is the mechanism by which humanity tries to repress its knowledge of the “terrifying paradox” that “one must be born not as a god, but as a man, or as a god-worm, or a god who shits” (58). As Becker writes, “This is the terror: to have emerged from nothing, to have a name, consciousness of self, deep inner feelings, and excruciating inner yearning for life and self-expression – and with all this yet to die” (87). The heroic myths supported by culture provide models of grandeur and immortality that allow us to live in the knowledge of our inevitable death.

The Pilgrimage

A pilgrimage is substantially different from a quest, offering a radically altered worldview. A common feature of the Medieval period, pilgrimages still exist today. From the Latin peregrinum, for stranger, a pilgrim was someone who traveled to a sacred place, “believed to be chosen by the gods....” (New Catholic Encyclopedia 362). As mentioned earlier, pilgrimages are undertaken as a form of penance, as a devotion,
to give thanks, to appeal for healing, or to re-enact a religious event. Where the hero of
a quest is traditionally a warrior aristocrat who displays excellence in fulfilment of some
idealized behaviour, pilgrims may be foolish, confused and uncertain of their identity. For
example, Margery Kempe, who left her family to travel as a pilgrim to Jerusalem and
other prominent shrines, was abandoned by her fellow pilgrims "because she wept so
much and spoke all the time about the love and goodness of our Lord...." (Kempe 97).
Further, while the quest is well characterized as a masculine enterprise, pilgrims are
neither necessarily male, nor heroic. While knights traveled in a hierarchical
organization, no class was excluded from the pilgrimage (Webb 83-84); the pilgrims of
The Canterbury Tales include among their professions, a knight, religious men and
women, tradesmen, a doctor, the Wife of Bath, and a cook, to name a few. The quest is
an individualistic enterprise – only one man can be the hero – but pilgrims often traveled
together for protection, and, as we see in The Canterbury Tales, for the joy of
companionship on what could be a long and tedious journey. While the quest is deemed
to be a rare event, carried out by an exceptional individual, pilgrimages were so common
that roads and hostels were built, particularly in the more dangerous parts of the journey,
and pilgrimage were often celebrated as annual, devotional events. The 7th of July, for
example, was a celebrated "occasion for pilgrimage and the granting of indulgences"
(Duffy 47). Pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostella were so common that The Pilgrim's
Guide: A 12th century Guide for the Pilgrim to St James of Compostella, the equivalent of
a Medieval Baedeker, still exists. The Guide details favourable routes to the Spanish
shrine, where to find food and water, and how to avoid unscrupulous individuals such as
"wicked boatmen" and "wicked toll-collectors" (Picaud 19) who collect money by force,
rather than exempting pilgrims who are entitled to free passage.⁷
The objectives of the pilgrimage and the quest are also substantially different. The success of the quest is measured by the ability of the hero to surmount various obstacles and evince an outcome in the present time. Whereas heroes measure the success of their quest in their ability to secure the goal in the future, a pilgrim is not assessed for accomplishment and failure is not a concern. The only tangible marker of a completed pilgrimage is the badge or insignia, rather like a contemporary bumper sticker, worn by those who chose to make the return journey home as proof of their experience (see Figure 2). The accoutrements of the hero are typically the armour and weapons of the warrior, while the Medieval pilgrim’s garb consisted of “a broad-brimmed hat, a wallet, or pouch, slung across his [sic] back and a long iron-shod cane or ‘pilgrim’s staff’ in his [sic] hand” (New Catholic Encyclopedia 367), items which were designed to identify the pilgrim as receptive, rather than aggressive.

A pilgrim has no expectation of earthly reward. A prospective pilgrim was “advised to put his [sic] affairs in good order, return any money unjustly acquired, make provisions for the support of his family in his absence, and give alms while retaining enough money to defray the expenses of his often long and costly journey” (New Catholic 367). Margery Kempe, prior to her departure on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, asked the parish priest of the town where she was living to say on her behalf from the pulpit that, if there were any man or woman who claimed any debt against her husband or her, they should come and speak with her before she went, and she, with God’s help, would settle up with each of them so that they would hold themselves content. (96)

Kempe’s actions suggest the possibility that the pilgrim might not return. Where a hero intends to overcome hardship, a pilgrim seeks it, in order that he or she divest themselves fully of the connections to the mundane world. For example, Webb writes
that pilgrims intent on the penitential aspects of the journey might undertake their pilgrimage "barefoot, in fetters or under certain dietary restrictions" (xiv). These rejections of the prosaic concerns of daily life are part of the nature of the pilgrimage in which pilgrims seek to move into a communal space of ritual activity, walking toward a shrine to encounter "the sacred Time of myth" (Eliade Myths 139).

Figure 2. Ampullae & Pilgrim Badges

Source. © Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; reprinted with permission.
The quest and the pilgrimage can be seen to differ most distinctly in their approach to time and space. Thomas Merton, the monk and theologian, describes pilgrimage as a "return to a mythical source, a place of 'origin'" (91), while Victor Turner, the anthropologist, notes that pilgrims move from "a mundane center to a sacred periphery which suddenly, transiently, becomes central for the individual, an axis mundi of his faith...." (Image 34). The pilgrim's interest in journeying to a particular locale allows them to take in through physical and spiritual experience the truth of a particular religious event. Entering the site and sometimes the landscape surrounding it provides an opportunity to make history manifest in the present. Looking for Mount Sinai, for example, becomes a means of re-enacting the occasion of the handling down of the ten commandments to Moses from God in the Judeo-Christian mythos. Blake Leyerle notes that this is a type of pilgrimage in the style of the female pilgrim, Egeria, in which "the realness of the landscape supports scripture's claim to historicity" (138). It is also the type of linking of land and history that occurs in some traditional cultures. Eva Linklater notes that in the Cree culture, "[a]n explanation of the landscape itself, its form and its features, is an integral component of several historical narratives. The landscape is the way it is because of the event that took place" (58). Pilgrimage is an opportunity to move into a sacred space where history is made manifest.

The pilgrim is thus seen to be seeking a place outside chronological time, revealing a Medieval focus on timelessness, where all history is present simultaneously. For example, Christian, the protagonist of John Bunyan's allegorical Pilgrim's Progress seeks a "heavenly" country (82). Whereas the Grail knight of the Fisher King myth must ask "What is the Holy Grail?," Christian, the pilgrim, asks, "'What shall I do to be saved?'" (40). Instead of moving toward a goal in chronological time, Christian is running
to "Life! life! eternal life!" (41). This sense of time is not unlike that seen in traditional cultures where history is not linear, but reversible or spatial. Linklater describes this as "ancient time," a translation of the Cree word "kiyahs:"

[The concept of kiyahs is not a history with chronological order, at least one that can be differentiated beyond the creation myths themselves. Rather, it is a series of synchronic events and transformations, and in this regard it must be viewed as history in the spatial realm. (60)]

Linear or chronological time, as we know it in Western culture, is always moving forward; one anticipates that progress is inevitable, if manifest only in a smaller and faster computer. Kiyahs, or ancient time, has no sense of progress or directionality; all time is present simultaneously. Or, as Ezra Pound writes in The Spirit of Romance, "All ages are contemporaneous" (8).

Additionally, the intent on entering eternal time changes the nature of the goal and the notion of 'progress' is taken out of the earthly realm. As a consequence of this focus on ancient or eternal time, the pilgrimage often lacks closure. The 'end' has no significance since the only goal of the pilgrimage is to move into eternal time in which all time is present. In the Prologue of The Canterbury Tales, for example, the Host proposes that each of the twenty-nine pilgrims tell two stories on the outward bound journey and two on the return (Chaucer, trans. Ecker 45), yet only thirteen stories are told. While it would be convenient to assume that Chaucer did not complete the tales, the Parson, in his, the last recitation, declares in his Prologue, "We're lacking no more tales but one...." ((I. 16), and proceeds to give his tale, suggesting that the Tales were never intended to be finished.

Karen Armstrong's distinction between logos and mythos is useful here in making distinctions between these various notions of times and space. In her discussion of the
development of religious values, Armstrong argues that *mythos* and *logos* exist as two prevalent epistemological methodologies. In earlier cultures (700 – 200 BCE), these two perspectives were considered essential and complementary, but since the Enlightenment, Western society has privileged *logos*. *Logos* is “rational, pragmatic, and scientific” (xvi), relying on facts, evidence and discursive forms of persuasion. It is task oriented and the activities of *logos* are those that seek to invent, control, and analyze. History in *logos* is linear and progress is seen as inevitable. *Mythos*, on the other hand, looks backward to some primordial event to reify the timeless and the transcendental. The purpose of *mythos* is to provide meaning to our everyday, mundane activities. *Mythos*, writes Armstrong, “does not bring us ‘news,’ but tells us what has always been....” (35). It is associative in process and utilizes ritual and orality as a means of making the mythic perspective manifest. It is based in the unconscious, in archetypes, stories and the metaphorical.

As Armstrong points out, it is a mistake to conflate *logos* and *mythos*. Myths are stories that are told to communicate eternal, transcendent truths about the meaning of life. It is neither possible nor desirable to quantify or prove these stories. For example, in the Christian myth of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, it doesn't matter when or where Adam and Eve lived or whether they ate an apple, a fig or a tomato. In *mythos*, the power of the story arises from the way the story speaks to our communal need for an account of an origin.

The approach to time and history is also quite different in *mythos* and *logos*. In *mythos*, history is spatial, like the concept of *kiyahs* that Linklater mentions from Cree culture. Rather than consistently looking forward to the future or even a Christian eschatological end, *mythos* looks backward to the Golden Age which we can now only
hope to approach through our connection to our ancestors (Armstrong 35). In *mythos* there is also a greater awareness of cyclical time as reflected in natural processes, such as the tides and diurnal or seasonal cycles. Typically, cyclical time is affiliated with the feminine. The earth and the sea, which manifest cyclical time, are linked to this sense of a feminine *mythos*. Linear time is affiliated with a masculine *logos*. As Mircea Eliade notes, the Medieval period saw history as both eschatological and cyclical; the linear notion of history did not appear in Western culture until the seventeenth century:

> From the seventeenth century on, linearism and the progressive conception of history assert themselves more and more, inaugurating faith in an infinite progress... predominant in the century of 'enlightenment' and popularized in the nineteenth century by the triumph of the ideas of the evolutionists. (*Myth of the Eternal* 145-6)

The quest, with its emphasis on completion of a task, is a *logos* activity. The pilgrimage, focused on a return to origins, cyclical and eternal time and spatial history is an activity more suggestive of *mythos*. D. H. Lawrence, in his essay *Apocalypse*, articulates a similar division between linear and cyclical time:

> Our idea of time as a continuity in an eternal straight line has crippled our consciousness cruelly. The pagan conception of time as moving in cycles is much freer, it allows movement upwards and downwards, and allows for a complete change of the state of mind, at any moment. One cycle finished, we can drop or rise to another level, and be in a new world at once. But by our time-continuum method, we have to trail wearily on over another ridge. (87)

In the above passage, Lawrence is clearly disappointed by the constraints of linear time. Further, his notion of "pagan" time as inclusive of multiple time frames is suggestive of *mythos*. Lawrence’s remarks embody the changing notions of time and space at the turn of the twentieth century. It is these changes that contribute to the failure of the heroic
quest that Eliot points to in *The Waste Land*. As temporal and spatial notions change, the dominant cultural myth also changes.

**Modernist Conceptions of Space and Time**

To understand the modernist approach to space and time, a brief historical review that maps these changes is required. In the Middle Ages, time was reckoned by natural markers – the cyclical rhythms of nature, the body and the church. Mechanical timekeepers were not invented until around 1200 and until the 1300s, watches were primarily items of jewellery available for the wealthy (Lippincott). Daily time was most often reckoned by the diurnal cycles or in more urban areas, measured by a sundial or the public clock. For example, in the "Parson's Prologue" of *The Canterbury Tales*, the narrator notes that:

```
When his tale the Manciple had ended,
The sun from the south line had descended
So low that it was by my calculation
Not twenty-nine degrees in elevation.
The time was four o'clock then, as I guess,
For eleven feet (a little more or less)
My shadow was at that time and location
(Such feet as if my height in correlation
Into six equal segments would be hewn).
(Chaucer, trans. Ecker ll. 1-9)
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Here, the narrator clearly uses the length and position of his shadow combined with the position of the sun on the horizon to determine the time of day.

To keep track of annual events of a significant nature, the Christian liturgical calendar provided a convenient means of reference. As Eamon Duffy notes, "legal deeds, anniversaries, birthdays were reckoned by the religious festivals on which they occurred, rents and leases fell in at Lady Day, Lammas or Michaelmas. The seasonal
observances of the liturgical calendar affected everyone. No one could marry during the four weeks of Advent or the six weeks of Lent....There were therefore almost seventy days in the year when adults were obliged to fast..." (41). Personal and public activities were thus organized around the church.

A new sense of time emerges in the Renaissance in which, as Matei Calinescu has noted, humanity desired to "participate consciously in creating the future" (22). The prevailing notion of Medieval time now exists in tension with this new sense of time which is "practical," largely linear, and I would add, abstract. It is during this period that Sir Issac Newton is developing physical models and mathematics to explain the heliocentric view of the universe, observed by Copernicus. In the 17th century, Newton invents calculus and Newtonian mechanics to explain the revolution of the earth around the sun. He also determines the relationship between velocity, distance and time, calculating that the distance traveled by an object in motion is equal to the quotient of velocity divided by time.

Philosophy and Physics

In the late nineteenth century, the prevailing notions of time that defined the Renaissance were undermined by developments in science and philosophy. In philosophy, Henri Bergson, the French mathematician, challenged commonly held assumptions about time in his essay, *Time and Free Will* (1889). Bergson's writings were available in English translations by 1911 and as Mary Ann Gillies notes, "[h]is ideas were common currency, in the academic as well as the fashionable societies throughout Europe and North America" and his work was analysed in numerous journals by the intellectual community (3, 33). Two of Bergson's ideas have significance to my study. In
his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Bergson argues that there is a reality, but it is always in flux. According to Bergson, it is difficult for us to exist in a world that is inconstant so we try to map it or "reconstitute" it in ways that establish reality as a constant (275). For Bergson, differential mathematics (i.e. calculus) is the only accurate measure of reality because the premise of calculus is to measure the change in reality. Yet, Bergson argued for a primacy of intuition over science. Intuition, he claimed, provides for an apprehension of reality in the moment in its wholeness, without trying to fix it and find a pattern. Bergson's perspective led to his division of time into two categories – *l'entendu* and *la durée*. *L'entendu*, or clock time, is a necessary fiction in which we spatialize time in order to construct an external reality. *La durée*, or experienced time, is subjective time as we experience it from our individual psychological perspectives. Bergson argues that we live in *la durée*, but we spatialize time to make it static, just as we try to confront a reality which is in flux by reconstituting it as constant. *L'entendu* is a cultural artifact which is necessary for existence; it is how we order experience. True growth and development can only occur in *la durée*. Both time frames are necessary.

Another challenge to commonly held conceptions about time and space came from theoretical physics in the early part of the twentieth century with the development of quantum mechanics. While Bergson articulated the notion of the perceived differences in subjective time, Albert Einstein postulated that objective time is relative. In his *Special Theory of Relativity* (1905), Einstein contradicted some of Newton's earlier conclusions. For example, one of Einstein's discoveries was to show that an observer moving at uniform speed relative to an event will see the event occurring at a different time than a stationary observer of the same event. That is, two individuals, in different locations, observing the same event, will perceive that objective, physical time passes at different
rates. This does not mean that the laws developed by Newton to calculate time and distance no longer hold, but rather that the measurements of time vary because of the physical positions of the individuals. While the effects are very small and only strictly true for objects moving at the speed of light, the radical nature of Einstein's theory is evident in the difficulty we still have, nearly one hundred years later, to comprehend the seemingly counter-intuitive notion that there is no objective time. As Vargish and Mook point out, the consequence of Einstein's discoveries is not that 'everything is relative.' Nor is it a question of determining which observer's measurements are correct. Rather, the significance of Einstein's discovery is that "[t]here is no privileged or 'objective' viewpoint" (*Inside Relativity* 65).

Einstein also showed that light had a dual nature — it could behave both as a particle and as a wave, depending on which experiments are made. This new conception of light as having both wave and particle aspects, often referred to as the 'wave-particle' duality, undermines earlier notions of the kind of predictions that scientists could make about matter. As Gary Zukav notes, one of the consequences of the wave-particle duality theory was that "the world consists not of things, but of interactions" (95). This challenges the notion of the totally objective scientist, since the ways in which the scientist designs the experiments can affect the outcome. One consequence of these empirical observations was that scientists moved away from study of a single frame of reference and were forced to consider "the relations between different frames of reference...." (*Van Fraassen* 140).
Visual Art

Conceptions of spatial orientation, manifest in visual art, also changed from the Medieval to the modern period. Medieval art was a conscious effort to reject the pagan Classical model. Where Classical art had shown 3-dimensional construction, Medieval artists deliberately adopted an “abstract and transcendental style,” utilizing a 2-dimensional construction to focus emphasis on relational activity and spiritual issues (Kitzinger 2). The subject matter of Medieval painting is typically Christian, individual characteristics on the subjects are minimized, and composition is simplified, focusing on the relationships between the figures. In the same way that Medieval time was reckoned by liturgical references, the emphasis in Medieval painting is on a content in which God is at the centre. As Ernst Kitzinger explains, art becomes a “vehicle for the propagation of the Faith” (15), and the “subordination of the material world to a spiritual and transcendental order of which the Church is the centre and the guardian” (96). Medieval paintings tend to look “flat” because they lack the depth we have come to expect in a painting. Their treatment of spatial perspective reflects the Medieval world view in which God is at the centre of the world and the emphasis is on humanity’s relationship to God and to each other.

During the Renaissance, painters “discover” single point perspective, returning to 3-dimensional portrayals of subject matter. Piero della Francesca is one of the first Renaissance painters to use linear perspective to reveal a depth of space. A mathematician as well as an artist, Piero wrote the treatise, On Perspective For Painting, a manual intended for other painters which used mathematical principles to demonstrate the construction of perspective (Field 2). The use of parallel lines, colour and blurred detail were some of the techniques developed to fool the eye into thinking three
dimensions exist on a two dimensional canvas (Hunter 10). In the Renaissance period, form becomes as significant as content as more realistic representations of reality are emphasized. The single point perspective provides a unified, authoritative view, where the spectator is forced to look into the painting as if through a window from a particular standpoint. This corresponds to a world view which shifts away from the relational and religious topics of Medievalism to reflect an emphasis on hierarchy, order, and the privileged viewpoint. The academies that supported and, therefore, determined the content of visual art, expected artists to emulate the classical art of the past. The focus was no longer God, but rather humanity.

By the 1860s, the perception of reality, as represented in art, changed. The Renaissance model of creating a three dimensional perspective on the canvas began to appear contrived. The classical tradition, although still supported by the academy, was viewed by the avant garde as a false representation of reality, having its "origins not in nature but in habit and authority" (Harrison 30). The new representation of reality focused on personal experience and imagination, placing value on the "truth' of sensation" which was believed to be valid since it was "involuntary and thus unquestionable" (Harrison 30). Wielded by the so-called Impressionist painters, the new technique was to make the viewer of the art self-consciously aware of him or herself as a participant, thereby dismantling the Renaissance hierarchies. The goal of the Impressionists was in "producing the sensation of reality perceived in a fleeting instant of time" (Hunter 20), an attempt to portray the "impression" of a Bergsonian moment of la durée. Not surprisingly, Impressionist work was not recognized by the Academy in Paris and many of the Impressionist painters, such as Monet, Renoir, Pissaro, Degas, and
Manet were forced to exhibit their work in independent salons such as the Salon des Refusés of 1863.

Another substantial shift in visual art occurred with the development of Cubism. Beginning with Paul Cezanne, the painters of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century display "a general impatience with the assumption that external reality is stable...." (Vargish and Mook *Inside Modernism* 30); Cezanne’s still life paintings often show discontinuities in surfaces. Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque follow Cezanne’s work, rethinking Renaissance notions of space in what has been described as an “immense destruction of received art forms” (Hunter 13). Where the pre-Raphaelites returned to Medieval content, the Cubists returned to Medieval form in their flat and shallow constructions. But they also added “a new, fourth dimension: time” (133) which Sam Hunter and John Jacobus argue challenged “the age-old sanctity and significance of the human image” (133), marking the shift away from humanism.

Picasso and Braque, for example, discarded the Renaissance model of single point perspective, to reveal objects from all perspectives simultaneously. Picasso’s *La Demoiselles d’Avignon*, often considered to be the first Cubist painting, differs from Renaissance art in several ways: the subject matter is “low brow,” prostitutes rather than aristocratic women or religious themes; the women are painted as if wearing primitive masks, rather than attempting to depict them realistically; and their bodies are distorted into facets or “cubes.” And most significantly, the facets reveal multiple perspectives of the bodies simultaneously so that even in a full frontal view, the figure in the bottom right of the painting reveals the back of her buttock and also the side of her hip (see Figure 3). Modern art, then “offered, in lieu of the unitary, fixed, egocentric focus of Renaissance perspective, multiple and mixed perspectives, thus presenting the subject in its many
aspects all at once” (Hunter 133). Knowledge of reality is determined through several perspectives, and meaning in a Cubist painting is acquired not from the relationship of the parts to the centre, but rather in the relationships that exists between the various facets. The shift is away from art that attempts to represent reality to a rendering of subjective experience. This is not unlike the approach to theoretical physics resulting from Einstein’s discovery of the wave-particle duality in which the focus shifted from measuring objects to investigating the relationships between frames of reference.
Figure 3. *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1907, Pablo Picasso (1881-1973).


Literature

The consequence of these shifts in the perception of time and space is that reality was no longer perceived as neutral and universal. As Vargish and Mook point out,
Modernist aesthetics propose not just one possible approach to representation, but offer as a primary premises [sic] the viability and even contradictory (though not exclusive) interpretations or descriptions of objects and events. (Inside Modernism 68)⁹

This world view undermines the heroic quest, which relies upon the significance of a goal which is determined by mutual agreement. The pilgrimage is a more amenable form for the twentieth century since it can accommodate multiple perspectives and is gender neutral. Additionally, the view of time in pilgrimage in which the focus is on the spatial, rather than on linear, history is more suitable to the knowledge lent by quantum mechanics or Cubism. In the same way that the Cubists break down the single point perspective inherited from the Renaissance, modernist writers break the traditional narrative sequence in which meaning was inferred through a linear sequence of plot. Virginia Woolf articulates such a notion when she writes,

... if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style, and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the Bond Street tailors would have it. ("Modern Fiction" 154)

The technique that she advocates is reminiscent of the Impressionist painters who reject representations of reality originating in an authority, whether the French Academy or Bond Street tailors, for the "truth" of the subjective experience. Whereas narrative was previously constructed through a "succession of words proceeding through time," modernist writers, like their counterparts in visual art, now construct literary meaning through "the simultaneous perception in space of word-groups that have no comprehensible relation to each other when read consecutively in time" (Frank 7–8, 15). Thus meaning is no longer constructed temporally, but spatially. What is significant is the
relationship between the fragments in space, not the sequential outcome. As Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane note,

Modernist works frequently tend to be ordered, then, not on the sequence of historical time or the evolving sequence of character, from history or story, as in realism and naturalism; they tend to work spatially or through layers of consciousness, working towards a logic of metaphor or form. (50)

And just as visual art becomes more abstract in its emphasis on the subjective, narrative form becomes reflexive. Meaning is inferred as plot lines become less conventional and closure is deferred. This shift in narrative style corresponds thematically to a shift from the linear, chronological emphasis of the quest to the transhistorical, multiple perspective of the pilgrimage.

Modernist writers recognized the limitations of the heroic quest in the drastically altered cultural milieu that they inhabited and deliberately attempted to create a new form that was not heroic at all. Their linking of form and content is not only an aesthetic gesture, but also a deliberate attempt to find a new literary paradigm which would adequately describe the experience of the modern world while they simultaneously grappled with grief and confusion due to the inadequacy of existing cultural forms. Our insistence on reading these modernist texts as re-envisioned quests obscures the point that many modernist authors were trying to make; yet, as readers, we continue to re-entrench the anachronistic paradigm. For example, Michael Levenson describes The Waste Land as "a grail poem in which no grail appears" (Genealogy 200). Similarly, Andras Unger reads Ulysses as nation building, categorizing the novel as a "resuscitation of the epic" (4). Ezra Pound’s Cantos is described as a revised epic by Mary Ellis Gibson (xii) and Thomas Grieve notes Pound’s aspirations “in creating a
modern epic in the *Cantos*" (22, 156). In some cases, critics show an awareness of the inadequacy of the epic label, without suggesting an alternative categorization. For example, Allen Tate notes that Hart Crane’s long poem "*The Bridge* is presumably an epic" (215), while also noting how the poem is incompatible with the epic genre. Stephen Collis has discussed the problem of previous categorizations of William Carlos Williams’ long poem *Patterson* as epic despite the ways in which the poem confounds epic traditions (99). Prevailing thought, then, has lent itself to reading modernist works as neo-heroic with the accompanying notion that such a development functions as a means of coping with modernist angst. Writing in 1987, Susan Stanford Friedman notes “The dissolution of symbolic systems unveiled as grand illusions impelled a literature centered on quest, art whose forms and themes were consistent with the search for new patterns of meaning (*Psyche* 3). In her assessment, the revised epic allows authors to both reinscribe the past to cope with modernist epistemological uncertainty, while simultaneously subverting and re-envisioning it to accommodate the present conditions. While the critical practice of reading texts by male modernist writers as re-envisioned heroic quests can be seen to have arisen, in part, due to the miscues of the author’s themselves, as the effort of Eliot attests, critics and readers, schooled in the recognition of the quest trope, continue to identify the quest, even when evidence suggests that the heroic quest is inadequately formed.

The categorization of modernist works as neo-quests has had additional fallout. Such a formulation necessarily omits work by modernist women writers since the quest is well characterized as a male enterprise. For example, in identifying the "masterpieces" of what Hugh Kenner calls International Modernism, he includes "*Ulysses, The Waste Land*, the first thirty *Cantos*" ("The Making" 34), but pointedly excludes the work of
Virginia Woolf: "She is not part of International Modernism; she is an English novelist of manners, writing village gossip from a village called Bloomsbury for her English readers...." (37). Similarly, Michael Levenson, in A *Genealogy of Modernism*, (1984), conceives of modernism as born of an exclusively male interaction that produced a linear inheritance. Bradbury and McFarlane, in their essay, "The Name and Nature of Modernism," more open-mindedly acknowledge Woolf's contribution as a modernist, but recognize no other female writers.

Feminist scholarship of the 1980s sought to redress the exclusion of modernist women writers. The canon was significantly redefined by Friedman's work on H.D., Shari Benstock's *Women of the Left Bank*, and Bonnie Kime Scott's *The Gender of Modernism*. Scott's work noted how modernism was unconsciously gendered masculine.... Typically, both the authors of original manifestos and the literary historians of modernism took as their norm a small set of its male participants, who were quoted, anthologized, taught and consecrated as geniuses. (2)

Subsequently, rediscovery in the 1980s of work by modernist women writers – for example, H.D.'s long poem *Trilogy* and Dorothy Richardson's novel, *Pilgrimage* – was accompanied by categorization of these texts as feminist reworkings of male forms, perhaps in part to legitimize their admission to the canon. Since only works that follow the male quest motif are admissible into the canon, feminist critics have had a vested interest in demonstrating that works by modernist women writers fit the pre-existing model. For example, Alica Ostriker argues that H.D "works in an ancient genre, the quest, but with a significant difference. Instead of a poet-hero, these long, arduous, glorious poems center themselves on a poet-heroine" (29). In her article, "Who Buried H.D?", Friedman writes that H.D.s' "epic poetry should be compared to the Cantos,
Patterson, the Four Quartets and The Bridge..." (802), attempting to establish H.D. as a poet of equal calibre to the iconic male modernists. In her later book, Psyche Reborn, which traced the development of H.D.'s oeuvre, Friedman wrote:

What Woolf did in the novel, H.D. did in the epic. But since the epic, more than any other genre, has typically centered on heroic action in a masculine world, H.D.'s meditative epic is a more radical departure from literary convention and perhaps consequently less understood or accepted. In making the hero of her epic a woman, she had to redefine epic form.... (69)

Friedman's argument is that H.D.'s work, by necessity of her gender, was more radical than that of her male counterparts and, therefore, perhaps not easily recognizable as fitting the quest model, and thus dismissed. Yet, Friedmans' attempt to recover H.D.'s work from contemporary oblivion seems to ignore the ways in which Trilogy, like the 'epics' of Eliot, Crane, Pound and Joyce, does not fit the genre to which Friedman and others have ascribed these works. While Friedman acknowledges the philosophical bent of Trilogy, calling it a "spiritual quest" (Psyche 11), she seems intent on arguing that H.D.'s woman-centred text is the-same-but-different from the texts in the canon of literature written by men about men in order to legitimize H.D.'s work. Similarly, Rachel Blau Duplessis has read Richardson's Pilgrimage as a "female quest" in which the narrative structure works to undermine gender expectations for the female protagonist, Miriam Henderson, to either die or marry. In DuPlessis's formulations, Miriam's realization of her "vocation as a woman writer and spiritual community in a 'lay convent' of Friends" (143) is a subversion of the male quest.

My thesis poses three challenges to the prevailing designation of the modernist texts as neo-quests. First, the critical practice of reading texts by male modernist writers as re-envisioned heroic quests is, no doubt, part of the classical inheritance of Homer,
which is presumed to define all narratives that follow. We find what we expect to see. And while I agree that both male and female modernist writers are attempting to re-envision the heroic quest, it is my contention that these writers recognize the limitations of the heroic quest in the drastically altered cultural milieu that they inhabit and are seeking a new paradigm.

Second, I argue that modernist writers are seeking to replace the quest with the pilgrimage. The pilgrimage differs from the quest in several important ways that make the pilgrimage a more amenable literary trope for modernist writers than the quest. Where a quest is goal-oriented, focusing on the future accomplishment of the hero, the pilgrimage is less concerned with achieving some ideal, instead emphasizing relational activity and process over product. This shift in the dominant cultural myth arises in response to the changes in the conceptions of time and space that occur at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Third, the pilgrimage is entwined with the recovery of the archetypal feminine principle. The quest is generally considered to be an exclusively male rite of passage in which the would-be hero leaves home to accomplish a task of some difficulty. In this heroic journey, women function only as the object(ive) of the quest or as the obstacle to the quest, often in the form of the mother from whom the hero must assert his independence at departure. In this framework, women are denied a subject position and the cultural dominance of the quest motif is accompanied by the repression of the feminine within the culture. The cyclical and eternal time associated with the feminine often appears chaotic and disruptive to the sequential nature of the quest, leading to the repression of the archetypal feminine within culture. The modernist texts that I will
consider uniformly reject the masculinist pursuit of the heroic ideal and the process of pilgrimage they describe uncovers the repressed body of the female.

The shift from quest to pilgrimage that I propose does not occur instantaneously, but is worked out over time. The stages of transition involve first a literalization of the quest, followed by an impasse in which the quest is recognized as a failed trope; a rejection of the quest in which the quest is subverted; and finally a re-envisioning of the quest as pilgrimage.

Chapter one will demonstrate the literalization of the quest in a study of Joseph Conrad's novella of 1899, *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad's protagonist, Marlow, articulates a recognition of the quest as a decaying form, revealing the way in which the quest for the Grail has been perverted into an imperialistic seizure of ivory. While the novel hints at the pilgrimage as a replacement cultural form, it is too unfamiliar for Marlow -- or his culture -- to embrace. The feminine presence in the novel is uniformly associated with death and oblivion, whether in the primeval forest or the sepulchral streets of London, as the Grail energy eludes Marlow.

Chapter two will consider Eliot's poem, *The Waste Land*, as an example of the impasse generated when the quest is acknowledged as a failure. *The Waste Land* articulates the despair in the absence of the Grail knight who never arrives. Additionally, the poet recognizes the new paradigms associated with time and space, in terms of multiple perspectives and lack of closure, but he is unable to see these changes as anything other than chaotic; they offer no possibilities to him. Where *Heart of Darkness* provided a protagonist rather than a hero in Marlow, *The Waste Land* lacks any such a unifying voice. The absence of a central consciousness is not seen as a liberation from authoritative positions, but rather as emblematic of discontinuity. The pairing of the
feminine presence with death is even more pronounced in The Waste Land than in Heart of Darkness as Eliot’s female figures are associated with abortion, decay, and rape in an utter loss of the generative principle.

The loss of the quest motif is less troubling for some modernist writers than others. Since the hero is traditionally a white, heterosexual, upper class male, undertaking a pilgrimage can be seen as a loss of privilege and a ‘power drain,’ – a step down, as it were. But writers who are marginalized by race, gender, or ethnicity have nothing to lose in undertaking a pilgrimage since they were never traditional hero material. Women writers, in particular, are often on the vanguard of this new movement. Dorothy Richardson’s novel, Pilgrimage, notifies the reader of its dismissal of the quest in its very title. Her protagonist, Miriam Henderson, an outsider by virtue of her gender and class, struggles to define a subject position for herself within a culture that recognizes women only as wives and mothers of the hero. Miriam moves from situation to situation without achieving any sense of accomplishment or the resolution achieved in the traditional quest. This works to reinforce the ways in which Miriam is hampered by her marginalized state, but it also deconstructs the sense of progress. As I will show in Chapter three, as Miriam searches for a new paradigm with which to replace the inadequate quest, she demonstrates stylistically the pilgrimage in the novel’s lack of a teleological perspective.

Where Richardson considers only the single perspective of an outsider, James Joyce undermines the quest through a consideration of the multiple perspectives of an Irishman, a Jew and a woman – characters who are not part of the dominant culture. In Chapter four, I show how Ulysses reveals both a subversion of the quest as well as residual elements of the epic as the quest and pilgrimage run parallel to one another.
Joyce undermines the hero's central position by giving us a multiplicity of perspectives in the figures of Stephen Dedalus, Bloom, and his wife, Molly, as well as other minor figures. Stephen, like Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, recognizes the futility of the quest, a conflict that is complicated by Stephen's position as a cultural outsider, but he is often reluctant to relinquish the quest. It remains for Bloom to mentor Stephen and reveal to him the possibility of the pilgrimage. The novel recovers the Grail as chalice from the patriarchal Catholic church and restores it to figures of the triple goddess – the maiden, the mother and crone – as represented by Gertie, Molly and Bella. Joyce subverts the quest even further, by giving the last word in the novel to a woman, whose voice would normally be excluded from the quest, using Molly's soliloquy to bring the feminine into consciousness.

In Chapter five, I will show how T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* is a resolution of the problem he articulated in *The Waste Land*. In this later work, the poet journeys to various locations from his personal and historical past as he seeks the eternal moment. The feminine is now seen as the generative principle in the form of Gaia in the garden. Able to bring the feminine to consciousness, the poet can now relinquish the quest. While he struggles with the dilemma of how to make life meaningful without a goal, he is able to come to an acceptance of the pilgrimage.

In Chapter six, I will examine how H.D.'s World War II poem, *Trilogy*, written contemporaneously with *Four Quartets*, presents a fully formed pilgrimage. Like Eliot, H.D. seeks a replacement for the quest, but H.D.'s work is more radical in its approach. Using Greek and Egyptian myth, Hermeticism, occult sources such as the Eleusinian Mysteries, and non-canonical Biblical texts, H.D. legitimates the recovery of the feminine archetype as well as the right of the female prophetic role. She re-envisions the lance of
the Grail myth both the pilgrim's staff and the rod of transformation. United with the feminine generative principle, the product is a child, which symbolizes a healing vision for a world at war.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I consider Michael Ondaatje's novel, *The English Patient*, and its conscious dialogue with Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, to show how the problems portrayed in Conrad's novella are finally worked out in Ondaatje's novel, almost one hundred years later. Usually considered as a postmodern novel, I will argue that the characteristics most often designated as postmodern are rather an extrapolation and further development of the movement begun by the early modernists, but which critics have overlooked. This chapter will serve as a conclusion to my thesis to show how a re-reading of modernism as pilgrimage might shape our perception both of the canon of modernist literature and of modernist and feminist criticism.
CHAPTER I.
"HOLLOW AT THE CORE":
THE LITERALIZATION OF THE QUEST
IN JOSEPH CONRAD'S HEART OF DARKNESS

The recognition of the inadequacy of the heroic myth to address the experiences of modern life is visible as early as 1899 in Joseph Conrad's novella, Heart of Darkness, the publication of which precedes many of the events considered to initiate modernism. Heart of Darkness portrays the awareness of the importance of heroic myth and the anxiety that arises when Marlow discovers the ways in which the myth has been literalized in order to preserve it. The text's opening descriptions of the Thames river as the sun sets can also be seen as a description of the epistemological dilemma confronting modernists and the problem of the nineteenth century mindset confronting a new century:

The old river in its broad reach rested unruffled at the decline of the day, after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks, spread out in the tranquil dignity of a waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth. We looked at the venerable stream not in the vivid flush of a short day that comes and departs forever, but in the august light of abiding memories. And indeed nothing is easier for a man who has, as the phrase goes, 'followed the sea' with reverence and affection, than to evoke the great spirit of the past upon the lower reaches of the Thames. The tidal current runs to and fro in its unceasing service, crowded with memories of men and ships it had borne to the rest of home or to the battles of the sea. It had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud, from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin, knights all, titled and untitled – the great knights-errant of the sea. It had borne all the ships whose names are like jewels flashing in the night of time, from the Golden Hind returning with her round flanks full of treasure, to be visited by the Queen's Highness and thus pass out of the gigantic tale, to the Erebus and Terror, bound on other conquests – and that never returned. It had known the ships and the men. They had sailed from Deptford, from Greenwich, from Erith – the adventurers and settlers;
kings’ ships and the ships of men on ‘Change; captains, admirals, the
dark ‘interlopers’ of the Eastern trade, and the commissioned ‘generals’ of
East India fleets. Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they all had gone
out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of
the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. What
greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an
unknown earth!... The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the
germs of empires.

The sun set; the dusk fell on the stream, and lights began to
appear along the shore. (28-9 ellipses in text)

Conrad captures two significant modernist concerns in this passage. The first is the
multiple senses of time that the narrator perceives. There is diurnal and lunar time in the
“flush of a short day that comes and departs for ever” and in the change of the tide,
which the ship awaits in order to move out. But Conrad makes it clear that he is
concerned with something more than the repetition of cyclical time. He is interested in
“the great spirit of the past.” The river carries both past and present time, and holds the
notions of British imperialism, conquest, the sword, “messengers of might” – in essence,
the images of the heroic quest. The narrator also mentions “bearers of a spark from the
sacred fire”, the “seed” of commonwealths, the “germs” of empires, so that there is also
the sense of the Thames, “in its unceasing service,” carrying light and civilization from
England into the rest of the Empire where it will flourish and reproduce English culture.
Conrad is also giving us the Enlightenment view of history as inevitable progress. It is as
if the tidal movement allows the river to flow both forward and backward, but the return
now brings only the “august light of abiding memories” of Britain’s greatness. The vision
of the “germ of Empires” is followed with the diurnal reality in the comment which mirrors
the political reality of the English Empire: “The sun set...". While Marlow would prefer to
valorize time bound by *logos*, his experience tells him that the Enlightenment view of history as progress and conquest is inadequate.

Marlow, like this vision of England, is in some ways an anachronism, “the only man of us who still ‘followed the sea’” (29). The narrator tells us that Marlow “was not typical” (30). Unlike the seamen, who see mystery only in the sea, Marlow has a passion for maps and the “blank spaces on the earth” (33). He makes a connection between the English knights who sailed the Thames and the Roman Knights from Ravenna who invaded England, heroic figures who “were men enough to face the darkness” (31):

They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force – nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind – as is very proper for those who tackle a darkness. The conquest of the earth, which mostly means taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty idea when you look into it too much. (31-2)

In this critique of imperialism, Marlow reveals that the heroic quest has been perverted from its mythic origins and literalized as a venture for materialistic gain and the exercise of power. The grail is no longer representative of the feminine generative principle that restores the ailing land, but rather mere lucre. It is as if the questers mistook the Grail itself for its contents and what it represents. But Marlow stops short of dismissing the English effort entirely, discriminating between the Roman invaders and the English by claiming that the British have “efficiency” which the Romans lacked. And he is willing to put aside his scruples about working for the Company, which he suspects intends to “run an over-sea empire, and make no end of coin by trade” (35), in order for the opportunity to fulfill his own desire to investigate those “blank spaces on the earth”
In particular, he is fascinated with the unfamiliar river he sees on a map of the Southern hemisphere, "resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land" (33). In the Employer's office, Marlow focuses not on the Company's need of someone to retrieve the body of "one of their captains [that] had been killed in a scuffle with the natives" (34), but on the map in the Employer's office, and notes that he was going "Dead in the centre. And the river was there – fascinating – deadly – like a snake" (36), suggesting his awareness and desire to confront death.

As he begins his journey, the snake that had "charmed" him (33) is revealed to be as he suspected: malignant and disturbing in its unfamiliarity. Where the Thames is a river of known dimensions, a journey on this other river takes him into a new universe in which normal boundaries disappear: custom-house clerks were rumored to have "drowned in the surf; but whether they did or not, nobody seemed particularly to care. They were just flung out there, and on we went" (40). He feels isolated "amongst all these men with whom I had no point of contact, the oily and languid sea, the uniform somebreness of the coast, seemed to keep me away from the truth of things, within the toil of a mournful and senseless delusion" (40). His only contact with "reality" is the occasional boat he spies,

paddled by black fellows. You could see from afar the white of their eyeballs glistening. They shouted, sang; their bodies streamed with perspiration; they had faces like grotesque masks – these chaps; but they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast. They wanted no excuse for being there. They were a great comfort to look at. For a time I would feel I belonged still to a world of straight-forward facts; but the feeling would not last long. Something would turn up to scare it away. (40)
Conrad gives the reader a contrast between the energetic, yet “grotesque” bodies of the native paddlers and the world of “straight-forward facts” that reveals itself to Marlow as increasingly degenerate as his journey progresses. The insistence on English efficiency, civility, and hierarchy in spite of its utter uselessness begins to confound him. Culture is seen as absurd, or in Ernest Becker’s schema, is no longer capable of holding at bay the fear of death. Marlow arrives at the first Station to find it full of “decaying machinery” as the old ways, even technology, become impotent in this new order (42). He observes the “objectless blasting” of a cliff to make way for a railroad, even though the cliff is not in the way (42). There are native workers dying of disease and starvation in the shade, discarded because they are “inefficient” and therefore useless. The only work he observes is meaningless and without significance, as he observes the man with “a hole in the bottom of his pail” dipping water (52).

Meanwhile, a revised system of values is presented in which Kurtz, the mysterious man at the end of the mysterious river, is touted as one who will “be a somebody in the Administration before long. They above – the Council in Europe, you know – mean him to be” (47). Even progress through the hierarchical framework to which one ought to aspire is mysterious to Marlow. He recognizes that the goal is to be ‘somebody,’ to reach the top of the chain of command, yet observes, paradoxically, how success is measured in one’s ability to avoid illness, by one’s right to possess candles in a lampless environment or by one’s ability to be as efficient as Kurtz, in accomplishing the task of getting the ivory out of the jungle. The heroic ideal has somehow become altered in ways which Marlow cannot decipher.

The further Marlow and his crew go into the unfamiliar jungle, the more inadequate the vestiges of his former life seem. Marlow asks:
You wonder I didn’t go ashore for a howl and a dance? Well, no- I didn’t. Fine sentiments, you say? Fine sentiments, be hanged! I had no time. I had to mess about with white-lead and strips of woolen blanket helping to put bandages on those leaky steampipes – I tell you. (69-70)

Not insignificantly, the steam pipes, the accoutrements of one of the pre-eminent innovations of the nineteenth century – the steam engine - are failing. Not withstanding his disparaging remarks about going ashore for “a howl and a dance,” Marlow is attracted to the physicality and vibrancy of life on the shore, in contrast to London, which Marlow describes as having “been one of the dark places of the earth” (29). For all his talk of being a wanderer who is not implicated in the imperial venture, he cannot allow himself to get off the boat and experience another way of being. We see this in Marlow’s determination to take the boat down the river, to follow the straight line of progress, despite his critique of those who persist in clinging to an obviously outdated and ‘inefficient’ way of being. When he begins his two hundred mile journey into the jungle with the sixty men, he notes that there are “[p]aths, paths, everywhere; a stamped-in network of paths spreading over the empty land....” (47-48). But he sticks to his goal, despite his recognition of the contrast between the exploitative claw of the Eldorado Exploring Expedition which sees the forest as an object to be mastered in its intent: “[t]o tear treasure out of the bowels of the land....” (61) and the energy he feels emanating from the forest itself.

Marlow’s goal, however, becomes increasingly difficult to complete. The notions of progress with which he is familiar are somehow perverted in the forest and he can no longer make sense of this “new” world. At the same time, the mythos which he projects onto the land he envisages as vacant frightens him in that the paths through the forest have no discernible goal. As the route through the forest becomes more harrowing, he is
forced to put aside his primary objective of recovering the dead captain to focus on piloting the boat:

... I managed not to sink that steamboat on my first trip. It's a wonder to me yet. Imagine a blindfolded man set to drive a van over a bad road. I sweated and shivered over that business considerably, I can tell you. After all, for a seaman, to scrape the bottom of the thing that's supposed to float all the time under his care is the unpardonable sin. No one may know of it.... (67)

As the narrator tells us at the outset of this tale, for a seaman, a pilot is "trustworthiness personified" (27) and Marlow has not only lost his way, but may run aground. He is beyond maps, and in any case, it seems that the rules that govern his experience do not apply in this unfamiliar terrain. He begins to suspect that the moral and intellectual codes that make up his society are inadequate for this world he encounters. The culture that produced Marlow defines itself through its history of conquest, as the purpose behind the "ships whose names are like jewels flashing in the night of time," through its civility, its patriarchal and intellectual framework, and its repression of the feminine. And Marlow defines himself by his place in that culture. He is Marlow precisely because he is not one of the "savages" he sees from the boat or in the jungle. As Chinua Achebe points out, the Africa of Heart of Darkness is constructed "as a foil to Europe"... as "the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization ...." (2). Marlow's experience of this "other" world challenges both his identity and his cultural position. Everything that he has believed in as fixed and right and deserving of immortal praise is now suspect. As he says to his listeners:

You can't understand. How could you? — with solid pavement under your feet, surrounded by kind neighbours ready to cheer you or to fall on you, stepping delicately between the butcher and the policeman, in the holy terror of scandal and gallows and lunatic asylums — how can you imagine what particular region of the first ages a man's untrammelled feet may
take him into by the way of solitude — utter solitude without a policeman —
by the way of silence — utter silence, where no warning voice of a kind
neighbour can be heard whispering of public opinion? These little things
make all the great difference. When they are gone you must fall back
upon your own innate strength, upon your own capacity for faithfulness.
(85)

For Marlow, the absence of familiar social constraints is terrifying. Marlow's
response to his auditors articulates Becker's premise that it is culture that holds chaos
and fear of death at bay; the absence of familiar social constraints is overwhelming in
the loss of boundaries. Culture allows us to repress our inevitable fate, the knowledge of
which would drive us mad. Marlow's confusion and anxiety mirror the loss and confusion
experienced by the Victorians when their belief systems are challenged. The familiar
rules that determine both cultural and personal identity are obsolete in this encounter,
but for Marlow to let go of them entirely is to experience the terror of his own mortality.
As he moves further into the jungle, this tension, which he suggests is polarized into
nature versus culture, increases as does his fear of completely losing geographical
orientation:

Were we to let go our hold of the bottom, we would be absolutely in the
air - in space. We wouldn't be able to tell where we were going to —
whether up or down stream, or across — till we fetched against one bank
or the other — and then we wouldn't know at first which it was. Of course I
made no move. (77)

Marlow's paralysis is indicative of the fear of the loss of all familiar paradigms. Kurtz,
whom Marlow's discovers to have "gone native," begins to symbolize everything Marlow
fears – the complete disintegration of the cultural framework. Marlow reports that there
were rumours that Kurtz undertook "certain midnight dances with unspeakable rites"
(86). Kurtz has apparently embraced the mythos of the forest, which is inexplicable and
frightening from the perspective of logos. The "holy terror of scandal and gallows and
lunatic asylums" that Marlow fears will be the result of the "utter solitude without a policeman" is now embodied in the figure of Kurtz. This world without culture and English civility becomes chaos, which Marlow perceives as outside of mechanical, linear time as he descends further into the jungle:

We were wanderers on prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet.... We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse. We could not understand because we were too far and could not remember, because we were travelling in the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign – and no memories.

...if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you – you so remote from the night of first ages – could comprehend. (69)

Marlow's description is suggestive of a mythic or liminal space. While he is geographically travelling upriver, his path is one of descent in latitude, to the southern hemisphere. Marlow cues us to the descent metaphor at the outset when he tells us that, "for a second or two, I felt as though, instead of going to the centre of a continent, I were about to set off for the centre of the earth" (39). His imagined destination downward, continually characterized as occurring in darkness, his confrontation with death and the physical rituals of the men in the forest, the loss of cultural influences, and the loss of his identity, suggest a mythic descent, a journey to the underbelly of his culture. In this space, Marlow is reconnecting to that mythic past from which he felt distanced in his initial description of the Thames, but he is finding it presents a frightening and disturbing vista.
Critics have remarked on the nature of this descent. Northrop Frye, Deborah Guth and Lillian Feder, for example, have tended to see Marlow's journey as a confrontation with evil. Frye has called *Heart of Darkness* a "journey into the darkness of the human heart as represented by the figure of Kurtz" (223) and notes that in the Christian period, the journey downward tends to be "demonized" (222), which we see in Marlow's description of the voices of the crowd on the riverbank as "satanic" (108). Similarly, Guth suggests that the purpose of Marlow's descent is a confrontation with the "actual wellspring of ... evil" (158) and Feder notes the parallels between Marlow's journey and that described in Virgil's *Aeneid*, where the hero voyages to Hell (281). While these descriptions are suggestive of the mythic aspects of the novel, their moralistic overtones obscure for me what is a much more complex encounter.

Psychological readings of the mythic aspects of the text have been undertaken by Albert Guerard, who argues that "[t]he jungle was for Conrad as symbolic of the preconscious or subconscious as the sea was for Melville ..." (36), and Frederick Crews has given the text a Freudian reading, seeing it as a dream of the primal scene of Oedipal struggle (57). I want to suggest an alternative reading of the descent that focuses less on Marlow's psychological conflicts and instead on its more archetypal aspects and the way in which Marlow's journey speaks to the broader issues of the period in which it was written.

Marlow's journey can be seen as a perverted version of the Grail myth in which the hero seeks to heal his ailing community. As Weston describes, in the versions in which Gawain is the hero,

...the hero sets out on his journey with no clear idea of the task before him. He is taking the place of a knight mysteriously slain in his company,
but whither he rides, and why, he does not know, only that the business is important and pressing. (12)

This is certainly the case for Marlow, who is sent by the Company to recover the body of the dead captain, whose death, as in the Grail myth, is a mystery. As Marlow tells us: "It was only months and months afterwards, when I made the attempt to recover what was left of the body, that I heard the original quarrel arose from a misunderstanding about some hens. Yes, two black hens" (34). However, as we see from this quotation, unlike the noble purpose associated with the Grail myth, the death of the previously slain captain occurs under more mundane circumstances. In fact, the captain had beaten a native man to the point that another tribesman ran the captain through with a spear.

Nor is it reaching too far to see Kurtz, the "animated image of death carved out of old ivory" (99) as the ailing Fisher King. Lying on a stretcher and surrounded by the skulls mounted on the stakes marking the perimeter of his Station, he and his environment are the embodiment of Weston's description of the myth's "insistence upon the sickness, and disability of the ruler of the land, the Fisher King" and the wasting of the land (13). But again, this aspect of the myth is perverted. It is not Kurtz's illness that concerns the Employer, but rather the fact that the ivory shipments have been curtailed due to Kurtz's obsessive behaviour, which as Marlow tells his auditors, has become Kurtz's undoing:

You should have heard him say, "My ivory," Oh yes, I heard him. "My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my - " everything belonged to him. It made me hold my breath in expectation of hearing the wilderness burst into a prodigious peal of laughter that would shake the fixed stars in their places. (85)

While Kurtz's ability to accumulate ivory 'marked him for advancement' within the imperialistic culture, in the mythic framework, he is "hollow at the core" (97). Rather than
seeking the grail and showing reverence for its feminine energy, Kurtz has focused on
the more masculine, indeed, overtly phallic tusks of ivory and the pecuniary
considerations attached to them. And lest we think Kurtz an anomaly, Marlow tells us,
"All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz...." (86). Marlow recognizes that the
mythic Fisher King is dying, as is the culture that supports him, of avarice, madness, and
absurdity because of an insistence on pursuing the wrong goal.

It then remains for Marlow, in his role as the Grail knight, to right the quest and
recover the Grail, but while he sees that the quest is perverted, as an individual of the
nineteenth century, he has nothing with which to replace it. While he feels the utter
inadequacy of the passing order as well as its unethical position, he isn't capable of
living any other way and so the alternative looks like the wilderness to him. When the
boat gets stuck, mirroring his own stasis in a dying order that is incapable of reconciling
itself to that of the new, he projects a hostile and archaic sentience onto this
environment that is both familiar and foreign:

I had my shoulders against the wreck of my steamer, hauled up on the
slope like a carcass of some big river animal. The smell of mud, of
primeval mud, by Jove! was in my nostrils, the high stillness of primeval
forest was before my eyes; there were shiny patches on the black
creek....I wondered whether the stillness on the face of the immensity
looking at us two were meant as an appeal or as a menace. What were
we who had strayed in here? Could we handle that dumb thing, or would
it handle us? (56)

In anthropomorphizing the geography, Marlow twice uses the word primeval,
which suggests an ancient source. It both attracts and repels him. On the one hand, it
seems to beckon him to return to the womb of earth in unification with the Great Mother,
the cosmos. Recall that the Grail is an archetype of the generative mother, the feminine
principle required to balance the lance. But the feminine archetype has been repressed
in the focus on logos. As a result, the archetype is perceived in its negative capacity. The landscape that Marlow sees as primeval suggests the terrifying power of that cosmos which can thwart even technology, culture, and science. And unification with such a power means oblivion, loss of individual consciousness and death. What Marlow is confronting is the archetypal, mythic figure of the Great Mother in her negative aspect as the Terrible Mother.

The archetype of the Terrible Mother, unlike the more positive aspect of the fecund and nurturing Great Mother, represents death, destruction, hunger, nakedness, and helplessness. She is the darkness found in the earth, the underworld, and the ocean. Erich Neumann describes her presence as

the deadly devouring maw of the underworld, and beside the fecundated womb and the protecting cave of earth and mountain gapes the abyss of hell, the dark hole of the depths, the devouring womb of the grave and of death, of darkness without light, of nothingness. For this woman who generates life and all living things on earth is the same who takes them back into herself, who pursues her victims and captures them with snare and net.... This Terrible Mother is the hungry earth.... (149).

She is "herself the earth, in which things rot" (162). Marlow recognizes this aspect of the archetype when he tells his auditors:

The earth for us is a place to live in, where we must put up with sights, with sounds, with smells, too, by Jove! – breathe dead hippo, so to speak, and not be contaminated. And there, don't you see? your strength comes in, the faith in your ability for the digging of unostentatious holes to bury the stuff in – your power of devotion, not to yourself, but to an obscure, back-breaking business. (86)

But Marlow wants to “bury” this rotting presence in “unostentatious holes”; his notion of culture is to keep the feminine buried or repressed.¹ Yet, the pursuit of this Terrible Mother has been, at the very least, Marlow's unconscious intention from the beginning. Neumann tells us that the Terrible Mother is often symbolized as a snake, an
uroboric goddess who is of both upper and lower worlds (19) and this is reinforced by Jung, who notes that "any devouring and entwining animal, such as a large fish or a serpent" represents the negative aspect of the mother and her association with that which is "secret, hidden, dark, the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate" (Archetypes 82).

When Marlow declares his intention early on to go "Dead in the centre," he is referring both to the state he wishes to attain within his own psyche as he "dies" in order to evince a transformation, but also to his goal to reach the centre of the earth, the omphalos or navel. It is here that he will encounter the mythic aspects of the feminine as she manifests herself as the devouring mother who is outside of linear time, in what Sylvia Perrera calls the "preverbal tomb-womb" (57). He seeks to reach the depths of his own unconscious, which can feel like both a death and immortality.

This association of the wilderness with the feminine continues in Marlow's description of the native woman, who is "like the wilderness itself," a "wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman" (101, 100). Her ornaments are "barbarous;" she wears innumerable necklaces of glass beads on her neck; bizarre things, charms, gifts of witch-men.... She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent....And in the hush that had fallen suddenly upon the whole sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul. (100-1)

Anne McClintock has noted how

the uncertain continents – Africa, the Americas, Asia– were figured in European lore as libidinously eroticized.... [and] long before the era of high Victorian imperialism, Africa and the Americans had become what can be called a porno-tropics for the European imagination – a fantastic magic lantern of the mind onto which Europe projected its forbidden sexual desires and fears. (22).
This projection is evident in Marlow's explicit identification of the woman with the devouring landscape. The repressed feminine which appears to Marlow as the devouring earth, is now embodied by the woman on the beach. The projection intensifies when, while loading Kurtz on the steamer the first time, Marlow sees her standing on the shore, uniting earth and sky as she

opened her bared arms and threw them up rigid above her head, as though in an uncontrollable desire to touch the sky, and at the same time the swift shadows darted out on the earth, swept around on the river, gathering the steamer into a shadowy embrace. (101)

The woman is portrayed as a siren who beckons to Marlow, her "mythic plenitude" both welcoming and terrifying; she is the only one who does not flinch when the steamer sounds its whistle, suggesting a fearlessness of the technology that Marlow uses to hold her at bay.

Joseph Campbell describes the hero's encounter with the feminine as a necessary aspect of the quest. In Campbell's formulation, the hero often

discovers and assimilates his opposite (his own unsuspected self) either by swallowing it or by being swallowed. One by one the resistances are broken. He must put aside his pride, his virtue, beauty, and life and bow or submit to the absolutely intolerable. Then he finds that he and his opposite are not of differing species, but one flesh. (108)

The taking in of the opposite results in a mystical marriage of the hero with the Queen Goddess of the World, in the "darkness of the deepest chamber of the heart" (Campbell 109). However, Marlow refuses such a union, and in the mythic realm, this is akin to the refusal of the patriarchal culture to acknowledge the presence of the feminine that has been pushed into the unconscious.

Marlow's repression of the feminine is evident in his portrayal of women, even before he leaves London; Gabrielle McIntire has noted "how unsettling women are to
Marlow’s order of things...." (265). While Marlow describes his aunt as “a dear enthusiastic soul” (34), he also notes that she is, like others of her gender, “out of touch with truth....They live in a world of their own, and there had never been anything like it, and never can be. It is too beautiful altogether, and if they were to set it up it would go to pieces before the first sunset” (39). In Marlow’s opinion, women are incapable of running the world and yet, ironically, he must rely on his aunt’s connection with the wife of an official to get him a job.

Marlow makes much of the women in the anteroom of the Employer’s office, associating them with death, rather than fecundity. Often remarked by critics for their resemblance to the Fates or the Sibyl (McIntire 271, Guth 156, Feder 283), the women function as another archetype of the Terrible Mother (Jung Archetypes 81). As the women sit outside the waiting-room, Marlow describes them as “guarding the door of Darkness, knitting black wool as for a warm pall” prompting him to say to himself: “Ave! Old knitter of black wool. Morituri te salutant” (37). Conrad glosses the Latin in a footnote as “Hail... those who are about to die salute you’....” (37), making explicit Marlow’s linking of this feminine presence with death. It also heralds Marlow’s reluctant identification of his role with that of the Grail knight.

One could argue that the “Fates” merely foreshadow Marlow’s encounters in the jungle and his own illness, but his visit of consolation to the Intended upon his return is also permeated with references to death. Kurtz’s fiancée is in mourning for Kurtz, as well as for Kurtz’s mother who has recently died; Marlow’s projection of mortality onto the Intended and her surroundings goes beyond the literal into the mythic realm. Waiting in her drawing room, as he waited in the anteroom at his Employer’s, he sees the piano as resembling “a sombre and polished sarcophagus,” another archetype of the Terrible
Mother (Conrad 117, Jung Archetypes 82). While the Intended, clothed head to foot in black attire, appears to him as "guileless, profound, confident, and trustful," her fair hair forms an "ashy halo from which the dark eyes looked out at me" (117). Portrayed as a near corpse, she becomes a virtual sarcophagus herself, and Marlow sees in her grief-stricken pose, a resemblance to the woman at the river, the ultimate incarnation of the Terrible Mother.\(^2\)

Rita Felski, in her book *The Gender of Modernity*, has described how the strict gender roles of the late nineteenth century relegated women to the domestic sphere where they were often seen as outside culture and therefore untouched by the difficulties of modern life. The late nineteenth-century tendency to see the modern world as "overcivilized, overrational" led to a nostalgia for a mythic plenitude, "an earlier more primal, more authentic time" (50). Women's reproductive capacity suggested an authentic link to nature and this earlier, primal source – a link that could redeem masculine culture. As a result, the feminine in the nineteenth century is both idealized and eroticized as "elemental and libidinal forces that exceeded the bounds of reason and social order" (50) and "woman is seen to exemplify a blissful and non-alienated condition not unlike that of the noble savage" (56). While Felski valorizes the positive aspect of the feminine and neglects the more terrifying aspects that confront Marlow, her analysis suggests the paradox by which the feminine has both a privileged position in culture vis-à-vis an idealized eroticism, yet remains subordinate to the masculine, which is identified with culture, consciousness and speech. Marlow's comparison of the woman on the river and the Intended function as two aspects of the same principle that echoes Felski's notion of the female as idealized as well as eroticized (and here exoticized) in a splitting of the archetype. This splitting reveals a traditional Madonna/whore dichotomy that
reflects Marlow’s inability to see women as whole individuals. He is perceiving the feminine archetype in both its positive and negative capacities and projecting that archetype onto the figures of the woman on the beach and onto Kurtz’s Intended.

Marlow’s obsession with death is not limited, however, to projections onto women, but also includes his environments. When he returns to London, he finds himself “back in the sepulchral city resenting the sight of people hurrying through the streets to filch a little money from each other....” (113). The emphasis on material gain is offensive to him. Having “wrestled with death” (112), he sees Londoners as:

intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating pretence, because I felt so sure they could not possibly know the things I knew. Their bearing, which was simply the bearing of commonplace individuals going about their business in the assurance of perfect safety, was offensive to me like the outrageous flauntings of folly in the face of a danger it is unable to comprehend. (113-4)

In contrast to Londoners’ naïve unawareness of mortality, Marlow presents himself as transformed by his experience, suggesting the successful completion of the quest. But the only thing he brings with him is a literal, rather than mythic, knowledge of death (112). Guth has described this knowledge as “a burdensome, unspeakable vision” which “he will consciously conceal” becoming “an active accomplice of the very world he had denounced and rejected” (163). I think this makes Marlow both more knowing and malignant than he really is. He doesn’t know how to communicate what has been for him an unresolved encounter with the Terrible Mother. He, too, is a victim of a culture, as are the other inhabitants of the sepulchral city, which makes no provision for the release of the unconscious feminine into the conscious realm.

Campbell asserts that “[t]he effect of the successful adventure of the hero is the unlocking and release again of the flow of life into the body of the world” (40), in other
words, the return of life to the Fisher King, through the recovery of the Grail. But
Marlow's preoccupation with death betrays his failure to integrate the feminine archetype
into his psyche and successfully complete the quest; he has made the heroic descent to
the underworld, but returned without the Grail. As noted earlier, Jung argues that when
dealing with an archetype, the most important step is to bring it into the conscious realm.
If the archetype falls into the unconscious,

the whole elemental force of the original experience is lost. What then
appears in its place is fixation on the mother-imago; and when this has
been sufficiently rationalized and "corrected" we are tied fast to human
reason and condemned from then on to believe exclusively what is
rational....

Whether he understands them or not, man must remain conscious of the
world of archetypes, because in it he is still a part of Nature and is
connected with his own roots. A view of the world or a social order that
cuts him off from the primordial images of life not only is no culture at all,
but, in increasing degree, is a prison or a stable. (Archetypes 93)

In Jung's view, to disconnect from the archetypes is to limit our world to an exclusively
rational experience. If we take Marlow to be a mythic representation of the heroic, and
not just an individual character, then his descent of 'de-culturation' - the denigration of the
feminine, the preoccupation with efficiency and civility, the anxiety about the physical
body - is emblematic of the failure to deal with the feminine archetype. When Jung
asks:

...what has become of the characteristic relation of the mother-image to
the earth, darkness, the abysmal side of the bodily man with his animal
passions and instinctual nature, and to "matter" in general? (Archetypes
107)

he could be describing the loss experienced by Marlow - and by Western culture. What
Conrad shows us is the energy present in the forest contrasted with the failed attempt of
Western culture to transplant its own seeds of life. The darkness of the river and forest,
the corpse of Kurtz, "hollow at the core" become for Marlow the chaos of modern life and his inability to confront it on any level other than as polarities. Faced with the emphasis on bureaucracy for its own sake, gross materialism, exploitation of other races, and the failure of technology to ameliorate these conditions, the quest is seen by Marlow to be perverted, the journey a grotesque and terrifying failure. Without the mythos that provides meaning to life, and in the terrifying failure of logos, Marlow is on the verge of madness.

Conrad presents two rather tentative alternatives to the heroic quest. The first involves relational activity. Marlow is always solitary. The only family that he mentions is his aunt, who functions as a mentor, procuring him his job, but for whom he expresses limited feeling. On his journey, he remains detached from the others on the boat; with the exception of Kurtz, he refers to the people he encounters by their function or relationship to him, never by name. The only person he seems to have any emotional connection to is the pilot of the boat, who dies during the approach to the Final Station. Marlow notes that he "missed my late helmsman awfully" and thinks Kurtz's life not "worth the life we lost in getting to him" (87). In an aside to his auditors, Marlow says,

Perhaps you will think it passing strange, this regret for a savage who was of no more account than a grain of sand in a black Sahara. Well, don't you see, he had done something, he had steered; for months I had him at my back - a help - an instrument. It was a kind of partnership. He steered for me - I had to look after him, I worried about his deficiencies, and thus a subtle bond had been created, of which I only became aware when it was suddenly broken. (87-88)

Our post-colonial sensibilities bridle at Marlow's racism in his characterization of the helmsman as a "savage," and an "instrument", but that doesn't obviate Marlow's other comments about him as a "help" and their relationship as a "kind of partnership" (87).
Marlow's evaluation of the helmsman and their interaction is more likely Conrad’s critique of Marlow's limited ability to step outside the heroic motif and interact with other individuals in a non-hierarchical way rather than as a commentary on the qualities of the helmsman. The helmsman had a purpose, a purpose that Marlow envies. If Marlow finds any meaning in his journey, it is in the simple interactions he experiences aboard the boat with the helmsman as he attests in his statement: "I had to look after him." Marlow interprets the look the helmsman gave in death as being "like a claim of distant kinship" (88). While we are not party to the helmsman's perspective, we are given to know that Marlow contextualizes their interaction as familial.

The second alternative that Conrad poses to the obsolete heroic quest is the figure of the Russian. He is the one man who is not driven insane by this experience of the jungle, by the loss of culture. And the Russian is clearly not on a quest; he is goalless, with "no more idea of what would happen to him than a baby. He had been wandering about that river for nearly two years alone, cut off from everybody and everything" (91). When Marlow sees him for the first time, Marlow experiences a moment of recognition: "His aspect reminded me of something I had seen – something funny I had seen somewhere" (90). Marlow recognizes the Russian as a "harlequin", his clothes, "covered with patches all over, with bright patches, blue, red, and yellow, - patches on the back, patches on the front, patches on elbows, on knees; coloured binding around his jacket, scarlet edging at the bottom of his trousers...." (90) and later describes him looking "as though he had absconded from a troupe of mimes, enthusiastic, fabulous. His very existence was improbable, inexplicable, and altogether bewildering" (93). C.F. Burgess identifies the Russian as a trickster or jester figure to Kurtz's "king" (190, 192) without developing the idea further. Jung identifies the trickster
as “God, man, and animal at once .... whose chief and most alarming characteristic is	his unconsciousness” and who is abandoned by his mortal companions as a result
(Archetypes 263). As a literary figure, the trickster or jester is somewhat of a paradox, in
that the figure is of a lower class, yet has licence to mock anyone, including pre-eminent
authority figures. While typically antic in behaviour and foolish, the trickster’s mockery is
often wisdom couched in humour. One thinks of Lear’s fool, for example, whose position
in the court hierarchy is subordinate and yet he is encouraged to be forthright with the
King, even calling Lear “my boy” (Shakespeare I. IV.134). In a similar fashion, the
Russian is Kurtz’s ‘subject,’ in Kurtz’s thrall despite Kurtz’s attempt to shoot him for ivory.
Yet, the Russian shows concern for Kurtz’s wellbeing, nursing Kurtz through his
illnesses and begging him to leave when his insanity becomes apparent.

With respect to Marlow, the Russian’s task is to guide Marlow through the
remaining trial of the quest to apprehend Kurtz and bring him out of the jungle. But in
the mythic framework, the fool or trickster has another task. Victor Turner, the
anthropologist, identifies the trickster as a marginalized individual who commonly
appears in the liminal phase of rituals, where ritual is sometimes seen as the physical
actualization or embodiment of myth. Liminaries are characterized as “betwixt-and-
between established states of politico-jural structure. They evade ordinary cognitive
classification, too, for they are neither-this-nor-that, here-nor-there, one-thing-nor-the-
other” (“Variations” 37). Lacking possessions, property, and rank: “[t]heir behaviour is
normally passive or humble; they must obey their instructors implicitly ....” (Turner The
Ritual Process 95). Such a designation is appropriate for the Russian, who, dressed
only in motley, is outside the social hierarchy of both the Station culture and the tribal
one by virtue of his ethnicity. The Russian’s position as a liminal figure symbolizes what
Turner calls the experience of **communitas**, an undermining of social and juridical structures. *Communitas* breaks in through the interstices of structure, in liminality; at the edges of structure, in marginality; and from beneath structure, in inferiority. It is almost everywhere held to be sacred or "holy," possibly because it transgresses or dissolves the norms that govern structured and institutionalized relationships and is accompanied by experiences of unprecedented potency. (*The Ritual Process* 128)³

As such, *communitas* is anti-structural and provides a space in which the traditional elements of culture are released in favour of new "myths, symbols, rituals, philosophical systems, and works of art .... that incite men to action as well as to thought" (128-129). The liminal figure, like Lear's fool, subverts the dominant culture to provide a new vision. This new vision will then become entrenched and outdated, to be subverted through another episode of *communitas*, to regenerate cultural forms. As Turner points out, "no society can function adequately without this dialectic" (129). The appearance of the Russian signals a subversion of the nineteenth century focus on the quest as a dominant cultural myth.

The Russian's indifference to the quest and to the accumulation of ivory baffles Marlow. He considers the Russian's wanderings "futile" (93), evaluating them from the position of the quest and *logos*, which valorizes accomplishment. Marlow's description of the Russian's outlook, however, suggests an alternative perspective that Marlow can't quite comprehend, yet to which he is drawn:

He [the Russian] surely wanted nothing from the wilderness but space to breathe in and to push on through. His need was to exist, and to move onwards at the greatest possible risk, and with a maximum of privation. If the absolutely pure, uncalculating, unpractical spirit of adventure had ever ruled a human being, it ruled this be-patched youth. I almost envied him the possession of this modest and clear flame. It seemed to have consumed all thought of self so completely, that even while he was talking
to you, you forgot that it was he – the man before your eyes – who had gone through these things. (93)

Marlow “almost” envies the Russian, but at the same time, finds the harlequin’s behaviour unsettling. The Russian’s need is “to exist”, not to conquer, subdue or loot. His “modest and clear flame” of purpose completely consumes him so that he does not doubt his choice and he is almost devoid of ego. The Russian would seem to be experiencing what Turner, after Mihali Csikszentmihalyi, has described as the “flow” of communitas in which there occurs a “merging of action and awareness, an ego-less state that is its own reward…” (“Variations” 51). In an experience of flow, one is fully focused on the task so that “only now matters;” there is a loss of a sense of chronological time and the activity is spontaneous (“Variations” 49). While Kurtz “talks,” the Russian’s actions reveal a union of mind and body, in which myth and ritual come together. Unlike the stagnant excesses of overbureacratization and hyperefficiency that occur in the culture of the colonizer, the marginalized figure of the Russian demonstrates mythos, showing Marlow the possibility of a journey undertaken for the activity in itself.

The Russian’s behaviour is emblematic of that of the pilgrim. Conrad presents the Russian’s wandering as an alternative to the literalized heroic quest that Marlow has observed to be a failure. But while Marlow is fascinated with the possibility of the Russian’s way of life and “the blank spaces on the earth,” Marlow is too fearful to get off the boat of nineteenth century thought and embrace the pilgrimage as a replacement myth. In the chapter that follows, I will show how Eliot’s The Waste Land fully articulates the awareness of the failure of the heroic quest for modernists.
CHAPTER 2.
"ALL THE WOMEN ARE ONE WOMAN":
THE FAILURE OF THE QUEST
IN T.S. ELIOT'S THE WASTE LAND

In the Introduction, I argued that Eliot's reference to *The Canterbury Tales* at the outset of *The Waste Land* indicates recognition of the failure of the quest as the dominant cultural trope in favour of the pilgrimage. The failure of the quest is evident in the poem's overarching concern with the death of the king, the failure of the Grail knight to appear, and the ensuing waste land. But I want to further problematize traditional readings of the poem to argue that the real concern of *The Waste Land* is the poet's mourning for the lost Grail, and thus, the absent feminine presence. If we read the poem's discontinuities from a cubist perspective, looking for relationships between the fragments, the poem's central concern as a lament for the missing maternal archetype becomes apparent.

As I argued in the Introduction, while *The Waste Land* now holds a prominent position in the modernist canon, early reviewers found the poem's innovative structure troubling. In particular, they noted the discontinuity of the poem. For example, John Crowe Ransom described the "extreme disconnection" of the poem, noting that "[i]t is good for some purposes, but not for art" (826). The review in the *Manchester Guardian* called the poem "a mad medley. It has a plan, because its author says so: and presumably it has some meaning, because he speaks of its symbolism...." (Powell 156). Conrad Aiken wrote in his review "that the poem is not, in any formal sense, coherent" and "most invitingly offers itself – as a brilliant and kaleidoscopic confusion...." (178,
180). The discontinuities that Ransom and others observed, were originally attributed to Pound's editing of the poem. Hugh Kenner, for example, wrote that the poem's quality of "dense mosaic" was "a quality arrived at by Pound's cutting...." (148). Eliot's remarks somewhat contradict Kenner's assertion. In a 1959 interview, when asked if Pound's editing altered the 'intellectual structure' of The Waste Land, Eliot responded that "... I think it was just as structureless, only in a more futile way, in the longer version" ("The Art of Poetry" 54). Critics at the time lacked access to or even awareness of the early drafts of the poem. Once these were "discovered" in the Berg collection at the New York Public Library, Eliot's intentions became apparent to the critical community.¹ As Helen Gardner points out:

The famous inconsequence or discontinuity was there from the beginning and Pound's reduction did not turn an ordered sequence of action or thought into a cryptic puzzle. It was not linking passages that he removed. There never were any links in the poem as Eliot conceived it.... It was, as originally drafted, to be a poem in violently contrasting styles which were to be juxtaposed, a poem of episodes following each other without narrative consequence, of allusions and quotations that drift across the mind. (Paris 77-78)

Gardner's description of Eliot's aim to create an episodic poem "without narrative consequence" suggests the modernist fascination of working in spatial, rather than linear temporality. The innovations of cubism and quantum mechanics tell us that as the temporal focus shifts from linear to spatial time, relationships between the facets in painting or between the frames of reference in quantum mechanics become more significant than establishing a hierarchical or authoritative position. Meaning is not derived from the sequential positioning of information, but rather from the relationships between the fragments in space. The fragmentary or discontinuous nature of The Waste Land models the experience of encountering the void and losing one's boundaries. Like
the contemporary critics of the poem, who felt frustrated by the poem's discontinuity, Eliot's poet also functions with a nineteenth century mindset that can see only fragments, not frames of reference. The poem enacts the absence of a privileged position from which to map reality and the anxiety of the realization of that absence.

The lack of an authoritative position is evident in the poem, in part, in the absence of a monovocal, authorial voice. As Levenson notes, "No single consciousness presides; no single voice dominates" in The Waste Land (172). While Heart of Darkness takes up subject matter similar to Eliot's poem in the recognition of the failure of the quest, Conrad offers the reader the guidance of Marlow. Although not a heroic figure, Marlow's interpretation of events provides a fixed position to which we can anchor ourselves in the boundary-less forest. Consequently, we see Marlow as isolated and alienated in his awareness of the inadequacy of the quest. And the crisis with which Conrad presents us can be viewed as exclusively Marlow's. The Waste Land, however, shows Marlow's experience to be a universal one. Whereas Marlow imagines that as long as he stays on the boat, the logos of technology, culture and reason will protect him from the contamination of the void, Eliot's poet can find no cultural or technological protection against such contamination.

The poet interrogates multiple mythic systems, each of which fails to provide a model for a successful quest. In a list by no means exhaustive, the poet sifts through Classical sources (Greek myth, Petronius Arbiter's Satyricon, Virgil's Aeneid, the Bible, Ovid's Metamorphoses), the Italian Medieval period (Dante's Divine Comedy), English Renaissance (Shakespeare's plays The Tempest, Antony and Cleopatra, and Hamlet, John Webster's The White Devil), nineteenth century Symbolism (Charles Baudelaire), and, what were for Eliot, contemporary sources of both high and low culture (Huxley's
Eliot even goes outside Western culture with his intertextual references to the Sanskrit text, _The Upanishads_. And he inserts multiple references in the languages of French, Greek, Latin, German, Hindu and Italian. In a panorama of cultural references, the poet reveals that, regardless of the system to which he turns, he encounters the void.

However, if we read the poem as one informed by principles of cubism and quantum mechanics, the poem's discontinuities take on a different cast. We know to look not at the discontinuities or fragments, but at the relationships between the fragments. My reading of the poem will focus on the mosaic of references pertaining to the quest: the King, the Grail knight, and the waste land, as well as those that refer to feminine presence as representative of the Grail to establish Eliot's means of confronting the failure of the quest.

The reader's first clue that the quest is no longer in operation lies in Eliot's choice of epigraph regarding the prophetess, Sibyl. Mythic accounts record the Sibyl as asking Apollo for eternal life, but neglecting to ask for eternal youth. As a result, she hung in a sealed jar to prevent her complete physical decomposition. As Bernard K. Dick points out, it is the role of the prophetess or seer to initiate the descent of the hero, "address[ing] the hero in direct and exhortative language, ordering him to embark on a journey designed to give him knowledge of the future" (35). The role of the Sibyl is thus not unlike that of the knitting women in _Heart of Darkness_, who usher Marlow into his descent to the underworld. But in Eliot's version, the Sibyl fails as prophetess and guide. She provides no telling vision of the future to the poet as he embarks in his descent. Where Marlow imagines the women saying, "Hail.... those who are about to die salute..."
in an acknowledgment of the hero’s probable demise, the Sibyl’s words are translated as “I want to die” (North 3). In her desire for mortality, the Sibyl abandons both the quest and the quester, actions that suggest that she sees the quest enterprise as corrupt. To the classically trained reader, the epigraph at the outset of the poem announces the dubiousness of the endeavour and the possible failure of the quest paradigm.

Similarly, Eliot’s treatment of the figures of the King and the Grail knight reveal the failure of the quest. Traditional, mythological readings have taught us that the illness of the King is a signal for the Grail knight to go on a quest for the healing Grail. But each reference that Eliot summons shows the Grail knight to be a failure and the King as corrupt or absent entirely, suggestive of his death. The title of the first section of the poem, “The Burial of the Dead,” is not a triumphant beginning, but is instead indicative of the King’s death. This circumstance, in turn, points to the failure of the Grail Knight in his task to restore the King and the kingdom. The poet cites lines from Richard Wagner’s opera, *Tristan und Isolde*, a variant of the Fisher King myth. Lines 31-34, quoted in the original German in Eliot’s poem, are sung in the opera by one of the boatmen who is trying to console the unhappy Isolde who is leaving behind her family and country to marry King Mark. Isolde’s initial role is that of a healer in the Wagnerian opera; she tends the wounded Tristan unaware that he has killed her fiancé. However, once Isolde is married to King Mark, she betrays him in an affair with Tristan. When Tristan is wounded a second time, Isolde is unable to reach Tristan in time to heal him and Tristan dies. Line 42, “Oed’ und leer das Meer” (I 42), translated as ‘Desolate and empty is the sea’ (Eliot 6), is uttered by Tristan in the last act of the opera as he dies waiting for Isolde. While the opera celebrates the passion of the love of Tristan and Isolde for one
another, it also acknowledges their respective failures. Isolde, as the symbol of the healing Grail, is unable to reach Tristan in time to save him. Tristan, in his role as the Grail knight, betrays the King. The implication is that the Fisher King will die.

In the second section, “A Game of Chess”, John Cooper has noted how the absence of the king leaves the scene “[w]ithout its center of gravity…” and as a consequence, “the social whole is doomed to stasis” (79). And as Kenner points out, “[c]hess is played with Queens and Pawns”, where the King is “the weakest piece on the board…” (Invisible 152, 3). This trio of King, Queen and Pawn is reminiscent of the King Mark, Isolde and Tristan configuration in which the King is cuckolded by his wife and his less than loyal retainer. The net result is to leave the kingdom without an heir and in political chaos, echoing the collapse of the quest evident in Section I of the poem.

In “The Fire Sermon”, the poet uses the intertextual reference to the story of Philomel and King Tereus, from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. The lines, “The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king/ So rudely forced…” (99-100), refer to Tereus’s rape of his sister-in-law, Philomel. To prevent Philomel from revealing the identity of her attacker, the King cuts out her tongue. But Philomel weaves a tapestry that reveals the truth to her sister, Procne. Procne is so outraged by her husband’s behaviour that in revenge, she has their son killed. Procne feeds her son’s body to Tereus at a banquet as Philomel throws the boy’s head at the King. Here, the King is revealed as having abused his power in a failure of leadership; his heir is destroyed as a consequence.

“The Fire Sermon” mingles the story of the Fisher King with the figure of Ferdinand, from William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, in the lines:

While I was fishing in the dull canal  
On a winter evening round behind the gashouse
Musing upon the king my brother's wreck
And on the king my father's death before him. (189-192)

Shakespeare's original lines read: “Sitting on a bank, / Weeping again the King my
father's wrack...." (I.ii. 392-3). Ferdinand, the heir to Naples, is given to believe that his
father is lost at sea. In fact, as the audience is aware, King Alonso betrayed his brother,
resulting in Prospero and Miranda being marooned on the island. King Alonso is thus
linked by analogy to King Tereus as an example of a corrupt ruler.

The fourth section of the poem, “Death by Water,” bears out the earlier prediction
of Madame Sosostris’s to “Fear death by water” (55). Phlebas the Phoenician, is "a
fortnight dead": “A current under sea/ Picked his bones in whispers” (312, 315-6). In
elucidating this section, Cleanth Brooks cites Jessie L. Weston and notes that a ritual
drowning was enacted each year in primitive cultures in which

an effigy of the head of the god was thrown into the water as a symbol of
the death of the powers of nature, and that this head was carried by the
current to Byblos where it was taken out of the water and exhibited as a
symbol of the reborn god. (158)

In his portrayals of the Phoenecian Sailor, Eliot evokes the fertility rituals that generally
signal an impending rebirth, both of the king and the kingdom. But the lines that follow in
the final section, “What the Thunder Said,” suggest that the fertility ritual had no effect:

After the torchlight red on sweaty faces
After the frosty silence in the gardens
After the agony in stony places
The shouting and the crying
Prison and palace and reverberation
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains
He who was living is now dead
We who were living are now dying
With a little patience. (322-330)
The above lines refer to the crucifixion of Christ in the Christian myth, but also more generally to the death of the resurrection god mentioned in the previous section. The activity of drowning also links the Phoenician to King Alonso of Naples, whom Ferdinand mistakenly believes drowned. What is significant here is that there is no awaited resurrection, no ensuing spring. Instead we have "frosty silence in the gardens," suggesting inert soil. The sterility of the land is reflected in the condition of its inhabitants: "He who was living is now dead" and "We who were living are now dying." As Brooks points out, this latter quotation suggests a "death-in-life" (159). This death-in-life also hearkens back to the initial image of the Sibyl, hanging in the jar, trapped in a stasis from which there is no relief.

Each section of the poem makes reference to a king that is absent, corrupt, or drowned in the very water that is supposed to revivify the kingdom. If the quest were operational, these references to the ailing king should be met with redemption through the actions of the Grail knight and the retrieval of the restorative Grail. Instead, as the poet surveys multiple mythic systems, he finds, in each case, that the quest paradigm is inadequate.

The failure of the quest is also apparent in the references to the waste land. Following the paradigm laid out by Weston, the effect of the death of the king is the wasting of land in the absence of all fertility. Certainly this topic is sufficiently important to merit the poem's eponymous title. In the first section of the poem, the landscape is described as one of "stony rubbish",

[a] heap of broken images, where the sun beats and the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief and the dry stone no sound of water.... (20, 22-24)
This is the arid landscape that announces the decrepitude of the Fisher King.

The first glimpse of an alternative, mythic paradigm comes in the association of the dry stone with the pilgrimage of the Israelites. Cast out of Egypt, the Israelites travel for forty years without a map, food, or water, relying on manna from heaven for sustenance as they seek the promised land. But in the Biblical version, Moses, aided by God, touches a stone and water is released (Ex 17:6). The poet finds no such reassurance. Dal-Yong Kim has noted that Eliot's references to the Biblical myth also suggest the Puritan exodus from religious persecution in England to the 'promised land' of the American colonies. Kim argues that Eliot "used in a manner of Puritan poetry the typological images such as the 'waste land,' 'wilderness,' 'water', 'promised land,' and 'garden' in order to characterize the precarious situation of modern beings in relation to the Absolute" (76). More importantly, I think, by evoking terminology associated with the pilgrimage of the Israelites and the immigration of the Puritans, Eliot is reminding his readers of the pilgrimage tradition, in which suffering is a deliberate act by which one comes to the grace of God and enters the realm of the eternal. Eliot has deliberately placed his poet in the desert where the cultural markers of Western thought or logos are failing him. But the poet lacks the faith to conceive of a promised land beyond the wilderness and sees only fragmentation, death and decay.

The waste land observed by the poet extends beyond the mythic realm to the urban environment. London is seen to be peopled by walking dead, a "crowd [that] flowed over London Bridge, so many,/ I had not thought death had undone so many" (62-3). Similarly, in "The Fire Sermon," the "last fingers of leaf/Clutch and sink into the wet bank" of the Thames (173-4). It is as if the corpse "planted last year" in the garden (71) were now not sprouting, but rather reaching its malignant fingers out of the ground.
The effect of these lines is to suggest that the living earth is pulled back into the womb of
the Great Mother in her guise as the devouring figure rather than generative Gaia. The
urban landscape, like the mythic kingdom of the quest, is seen also to be ailing.

The cataloguing of the absence of the expected detritus:

... no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends
Or other testimony of summer nights. (ll. 177-179)

highlights the lack of social encounters and the absence of fertility. The ensuing
intertextual references to Andrew Marvel's "To His Coy Mistress" more explicitly focus on
the absence of sexual interactions. Marvel's poem is written from the perspective of a
poet who points to his inevitable death as a means of persuading a member of the
opposite sex to accept the poet's sexual advances. But Eliot takes Marvel's lines "but at
my back I always hear/ Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near" (ll. 21-22) and omits the
classical references to give them a more ironic cast: "But at my back in a cold blast I
hear/ The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear" (185-186). The lines
are repeated later, with a slight variation: "But at my back from time to time I hear/ The
sound of horns and motors...." (196-7). Eliot contrasts the sounds of the urbanized city –
"horns and motors" -- with the wasteland of Marvel's vision. Where Marvel envisaged
death as the emptiness of "[d]eserts of vast eternity" (l. 24), Eliot instead paints a vision
of the city as hell, where technology has destroyed or usurped the natural human
impulse to procreate. The ailing kingdom has been urbanized as a dystopia in which the
land is barren and the city offers technology in lieu of human interaction. Where the
failure of the 'Coy Mistress' to yield to her beau's advances is playfully held up as
causiing the man's imminent death, the failure of the generative feminine in the urban
wasteland is more malignant in the effects of her absence. It is not only a missed sexual encounter that is at stake, but rather the death of the culture.

The notion of the lack of the generative feminine is carried through to "What the Thunder Said," the last section of the poem. The poet tells us that "Here is no water but only rock/ Rock and no water and the sandy road" (331-2). It is now apparent that the waste land identified at the outset of the poem has never been redeemed. The land is not only arid, but decaying, the poet describing a "[d]ead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit" (339) and "this decayed hole among the mountains" (385). The images of a mouth of carious teeth and a mountainous hole of decay suggest the archetype of the Terrible Mother as devouring maw. Her presence announces the world of death, not regeneration. But the absence of the generative aspect of the Great Mother is more than the cyclical decay that follows summer; Eliot is describing a land consumed by rot, unable to reconstitute itself. This lack of fertility and the "[m]urmur of maternal lamentation "(367) are suggestive of the myth of the abduction of Persephone by Hades, in which her mother, Demeter, is so troubled by her daughter's absence that Demeter causes the crops to fail. In Eliot’s conception, the feminine has also gone ‘underground’, but in the sense that it is repressed from the culture. Like Marlow who sees the feminine in her destroying capacity, Eliot’s poet also confronts the Terrible Mother who can destroy.

Maud Ellman has noted the poem’s preponderance of waste, calling the poem “one of the most abject texts in English literature” (93). Tim Armstrong enumerates:

[the materials of abjection include bodily parts (dirty ears, hands, feet; teeth, parted knees, bones, hair), clothing (underwear), places (dead land, desert), animals (scorpions, bats), acts (rape, abortion, copulation), and actors. (286)
As both Armstrong and Ellmann note, the abject in the poem is “coded as ‘feminine’” (287, 98). Ellmann has gone so far as to call this a “misogyny” as the “poem is enthralled by the femininity that it reviles, bewitched by this odorous and shoreless flesh” (98). I want to suggest an alternative reading, arguing that the coding of the abject within the poem as feminine signals an encounter not with individual women, but with the archetypal, Terrible Mother.

Eliot mentions numerous cultural and historical female figures of seemingly disparate origin in the poem. Yet, in his problematic “Notes” Eliot writes that “all the women are one woman” (23), an assertion which at first reading, seems unlikely. In the myriad references which he cites, we have characters as disparate as the Sibyl, Cleopatra, Philomel, and the cockney Lil and May – characters seemingly unrelated through origin, class, or activity. Yet Eliot’s instructions, as well as the discontinuous nature of the poem, suggest that we should consider the relationships between the female characters and to the other fragments of the poem. I want to consider each of the major feminine voices of the poem in turn to show how these fragments can be used to make a meaningful commentary on the nature of the quest.

I have already discussed the Sibyl and her failure in the epigraph to foretell the future. Similarly, we have seen that Isolde, who was originally a healer, has also come too late to heal Tristan, the Grail knight. “The Burial of the Dead” also makes mention of the clairvoyant, Madame Sosostris, “[K]nown to be the wisest woman in Europe” (I 44). Yet, we view her ability to foretell the future with suspicion. Madame Sosostris intones, “Fear death by water” (I 55) when clearly it is the restorative principle of water that is missing from the world of the poem. Lest we have any reservations about her capabilities with the Tarot cards, the line in parentheses in the middle of her dialogue -
"(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)" (I.48) - hints at prevarication. Taken from Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*, the line is spoken by the sprite, Ariel, as she lies to Ferdinand about the death of his father, the King of Naples. In these few lines we then have the failure of the Sibyl, Isolde and Madame Sosostris,

The intertextual reference with which "A Game of Chess" opens is from Shakespeare's play, *Antony and Cleopatra*. Cleopatra, the Egyptian queen is described to the Romans as regal, seductive, and exotic, with reference to Cleopatra as Venus, the goddess of love (Shakespeare II.ii). Mark Antony and Cleopatra, like Tristan and Isolde, have a passionate affair that precipitates political instability, in this case, between Rome and Egypt, as well as Antony's eventual loss of honour and suicide. Cleopatra also tragically kills herself at the end of the play. Thus, the expected metaphorical union of masculine and feminine, lance and Grail has a negative outcome.

The same section refers to the rape of Philomel and her weaving of her tragedy. But Ovid's source also describes how Philomel's sister, Procne, has just returned from the Bacchic rites to ensure the fertility of the crops (North 49). When she feeds her son to his father as a punishment for the rape of her sister, in counterpoint to the Bacchic rites Procne has undone her own fertility through the murder of her child. The regal Cleopatra and Philomel are contrasted with Lil and May, working class English women, who spend their evening at the pub discussing abortion and adultery. Where the story of Philomel is from classic mythology and Shakespeare's account of Cleopatra from the Renaissance, Lil and May clearly inhabit the contemporary world. Their encounter occurs just after Lil's husband, Albert, is released from military duty in W.W.I. Albert has sent money for Lil's false teeth. However, Lil, already too overwhelmed with five children to cope with another, has spent the money on "pills...to bring it off..." (159), terminating
her pregnancy. The druggist "said it would be all right," but as Lil confides to May, Lil has "never been the same" (161). The consequence of Lil's abortion is a future inability to reproduce.

May, meanwhile, chides Lil, for not putting Albert's pleasure above her own:

He'll want to know what you done with that money he gave you
To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.
You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,
He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you.
And no more can't I, I said, and think of poor Albert,
He's been in the army four years, he wants a good time,
And if you don't give it him, there's others will, I said.
Oh is there, she said. Something o' that, I said.
Then I'll know who to thank, she said, and give me a straight look.
(142-515)

Lil is so disinterested in her relationship with Albert that she meets the possibility of May's adultery with Albert with gratitude. From May's perspective, Lil has failed to embrace her reproductive function as a wife: "what you get married for if you don't want children?" (164). But Eliot's construction of the exchange between the women as a conversation also makes the reader party to Lil's desperation and fatigue from poverty and childbirth, too worn out to care whether she adequately serves her function. The section ends with a reference to the words of Ophelia, from Shakespeare's play, Hamlet: "Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night" (172, see also Shakespeare IV.v. 72-73). Ophelia is betrayed by Hamlet both in his murder of her father and in Hamlet's rejection of her. When Ophelia reminds Hamlet of their previous relationship, Hamlet replies:

You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it. I loved you not..... Get thee to a nunnery. Why, wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? (III. I. 117-119, 121-122).
Hamlet not only accuses Ophelia of promiscuity, but also portrays the attitude of *de contemptu mundi*, in which the bringing of children into a corrupt world was to be avoided. Where the audience might have expected the Prince and Ophelia to marry and create an heir to the throne, the whole kingdom is destroyed when Ophelia drowns herself, Hamlet kills the King and Hamlet himself is killed in a duel. In the poet’s reference to *Hamlet*, the reader is given a situation somewhat analogous to that of Tristan and Isolde, where the feminine principle is distorted and the knight fails. The result is the disintegration of the kingdom.

Similarly, in “The Fire Sermon” the poet makes reference to Mrs. Porter, a mother who is presumably not chaste. The reference to Mrs. Porter is followed by a double reference to the story of Parsifal, both in Paul Verlaine’s sonnet of the same name and in another of Wagner’s operas, *Parsifal*. The story of Parsifal is a variant of the Fisher King myth, and of the Tristan and Isolde story. Parsifal, the knight, fails the first time he tries to obtain the Grail. Kundry, the wife of the Grail King, attempts to seduce Parsifal. As Margaret Dana notes, Kundry is also responsible for “making the King vulnerable to wounding” (270). Yet this reference to Parsifal is followed by the lines recalling Philomel’s rape:

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Twit twit twit
Jug jug jug jug jug jug
So rudely forc’d
Tereu. (203-206)
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Thus, the seductive powers of Kundry are juxtaposed with the rape of Philomel.

There is also a more substantial scenario of several lines in length, involving the typist and “the young man carbuncular” (231). Like Lil, the typist is indifferent to male attention:
The time is now propitious, as he guesses,  
The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,  
Endeavours to engage her in caresses  
Which still are unreproved, if undesired.  
Flushed and decided, he assaults at once;  
Exploring hands encounter no defence;  
His vanity requires no response,  
And makes a welcome of indifference. (240-2)

From this description, the young man’s behaviour arguably verges on rape. His behaviour is described as an 'assault', which suggests the conquering of an obstacle. Certainly the typist offers no reciprocity. Her perspective, given a few lines later, reveals that not only is she indifferent to the man’s ardour, but also to the way in which her body has been used:

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,  
Hardly aware of her departed lover;  
Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:  
“Well now that’s done: and I’m glad it’s over.”  
When lovely woman stoops to folly and  
Paces about her room again, alone,  
She smoothes her hair with automatic hand,  
And puts a record on the gramophone. (249-56)

The word “automatic” is used in this passage, as if the typist is numb and mechanical in her actions. The intertextual reference to Oliver Goldsmith’s play, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (I 52), also juxtaposes the behaviour of the typist with Goldsmith’s character of Olivia. Olivia, who sings of guilt and shame following betrayal and seduction (Goldsmith in North 57) is contrasted with the typist who ignores her assault. These two references to male-female sexual relations also conjure up the references to Ophelia and Hamlet in the previous section. Ophelia goes mad, where the typist “puts a record on the gramaphone” (256).
The final reference to a female figure in this section is to Elizabeth I. Like Cleopatra, Elizabeth is a woman of considerable political power. Eliot's notes state that he had in mind James Anthony Froude's *History of England*. Froude reproduces a letter communicating that Elizabeth was less virtuous than might be supposed by her epithet of the Virgin Queen. And like Ophelia, Lil, Philomel, and Isolde, the English monarch leaves the country without an heir.

Clearly, all of the images in the poem of the feminine are fraught with negative connotations. The prophet-crone figures of the Sibyl and Madame Sosotris offer no wisdom. Lil and May, Mrs. Porter, and Cleopatra, as the mothers, have abortions or are adulterous. The virgins Philomel, Ophelia, the typist, Olivia, and Elizabeth I are raped or are seductive. If we broaden the analysis of the feminine archetype to include the earth and the sea, common images of the Great Mother, it is clear that the generative principle is absent – there is no mother and no Grail. Eliot's obsession with the abject feminine points to an unresolved conflict with the Terrible Mother. It is her devouring maw of chaos that Eliot describes in *The Waste Land* and which has been mistakenly taken to refer to Eliot's attitudes about actual women. As he confronts cyclical and eternal time, it appears to him as chaotic when viewed from the linear, patriarchal framework that desires to reach a goal. He sees the failure of the quest, but he is unable to embrace the pilgrimage because he can see only death in the archetypal form of the Terrible Mother. While it is true that the feminine energy of cyclical time will absorb him into the void, the death is temporary; in cyclical time, death is always followed by the resurrection. The archetypal mother in her generative aspect restores life each spring.

The problem for the poet is that he lacks sufficient faith to embrace resurrection. A further consideration of the title of the first section of the poem, "The Burial of the
Dead," suggests the Anglican funereal prayer service, "The Order for the Burial of the Dead." The poem's early reference to mortality is perhaps not surprising given the poem's epigraph and title. But the Anglican service does more than offer consolation in the face of inevitable death: it recognizes both linear and eternal time. Mortality is acknowledged in the prayer for the gravesite which includes the lines, "Man, that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower ...." (270). The prayer reminds us that we are all, as Ernest Becker says, 'food for worms.' But the Anglican service also speaks to what Becker has noted as our parallel need to live in eternal time, concluding with the prayer asserting the resurrection:

O Merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth, shall live, though he die; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in him, shall not die eternally...." (Book of Common Prayer 271)

The latter prayer asserts the presence of an alternative frame of reference in which humanity has eternal life by virtue of belief in Christ and his resurrection from the dead. Eliot was familiar with resurrection as an aspect of the fertility rites mentioned both in Weston's book and also in Sir James George Frazer's The Golden Bough. Frazer's book considers ancient rites and practices concerning fertility of the land and the harvest of crops. These rites are a means of acknowledging the cyclical nature of the seasons, an aspect of mythos. Eliot's subsequent intertextual reference to Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales reinforces this preoccupation with cyclical time and the possibility of resurrection. But as the poet makes clear, neither the Anglican liturgy (which, incidentally, is based on a seasonal calendar year), nor the resurrection appear to offer the poet any reassurance. While inhabitants of the medieval period might make a
pilgrimage to Canterbury for healing and consolation, such an endeavour requires faith in rebirth and an ability to move into the cyclical time of the seasons. April ought to be an occasion of hopeful possibility, ushering in spring growth, the celebration of Easter and Christ’s resurrection from the dead. Instead, the poet sees it as the “cruellest month,” “mixing/ memory and desire” which is never fulfilled (ll 1, 2-3). The phrase “memory and desire” speaks to both the past, present, and future - elements of linear time. The phrase also suggests the tension between memories of previous events and the knowledge that those events can never recur. The poet is unable to accept the loss of discrete, non-repeatable events or his own mortality. Instead of spring, the poet prefers the hibernation or oblivion of “forgetful snow.” Like the Sibyl, the poet is trapped in some form of stasis, unable to move into the eternal time of the feminine because as we have seen from the poem, the feminine represents the void to the poet.

The poet returns to this dilemma in the last stanza of the poem. There is a final reference to the ailing king in lines 423-5:

I sat upon the shore
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me
Shall I at least set my lands in order? (423-5)

The activity of fishing suggests the presence of the Fisher King, and the “arid plain” the failed quest. But line 425, “shall I at least set my lands in order?” is also suggestive of the pilgrim who is “advised to put his affairs in good order” (New Catholic Encyclopedia 367) before he embarks on a pilgrimage. The poet, like the Israelites, lacks the faith that he will reach the promised land, but he is now reluctantly committed to the journey.

Eliot bookends multiple references to the failure of the quest with two references to pilgrimage because the poet cannot accept an alternative to the quest until he is
absolutely sure that there is no other option. Only when he has convinced himself of the obsolescence of the quest can he allow himself to venture into the void that Marlow also observed, but refused to confront. The last lines of the poem reiterate the failure of the quest as well as articulate a tentative reassurance of the rightness of the alternative path:

London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down
_Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina_
_Quando fiam uti chelidon – O swallow swallow_
_Le Prince d'Aquitaine a la tour abolie_
These fragments I have shored against my ruins
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.

Shantih shantih shantih (426-433)

Lines 426-431 are an olio of sources from a nursery rhyme, Dante's _Purgatorio_, the poem _Pervigilium Veneris_, a nineteenth century sonnet by Gerard de Nerval, Thomas Kyd's _The Spanish Tragedie_, and the Upanishads delivered in a mixture of English, Latin, Italian, French and Hindi. And the time periods of the sources span the classical to the contemporary. In short, these lines reiterate the discontinuities established earlier in the poem. The subject material is diverse, but focused on ruin: the fall of the London landmark, a purifying fire, Philomel's rape and the death of the King's son, the prince's destroyed tower, and murder-suicide. The poet recapitulates what he discovered earlier in his interrogation of cultural sources — that they offer no hedge against the void. He does not relinquish them willingly, but rather because there is nothing but stasis in the desert if he holds on to them.

The last two lines of the poem are translated in Eliot's "Notes" as: "Give. Sympathise. Control" and "The Peace which passeth understanding" (_The Waste Land_
an alternative translation of line 432 is "Give. Have compassion. Control yourself" (Nikhilananda 62). It is interesting that a poem so obsessed with discontinuity, fragmentation, and the assertion of inevitable chaos should end with two lines which establish the only boundaries that exist in the poem. These lines suggest to me an ethos to be followed despite the chaos, confusion, and despair. And perhaps it is not surprising that Eliot chose a non-Western source for those lines, since the familiar sources of Western culture and reason seemed to have offered the poet no reassurance. The previous six lines of the poem acknowledge the utter failure of the quest paradigm and at the same time, the terror of relinquishing it. The last two lines provide a mantra for enduring the confusion and terror of changing paradigms.

In one frame of reference, then, the waste land is a consequence of the failure of the quest. But in another frame of reference, the waste land suggests the penance of the pilgrim, who must learn to live with uncertainty in the journey to the promised land. He cannot know the path ahead, only that the old path no longer serves his needs. While pilgrimage of The Canterbury Tales is held out as a possible antidote to the fear of incompletion, failure and perfection denied, the poet spends several hundred lines cataloguing not the success of the pilgrimage through time, but the failure of the quest. The great irony of The Waste Land, to my mind, is that it is so often read as the lament for the missing Grail knight when the Grail and hence, the poet's redemption, is so near at hand if the poet could accept the generative feminine. While the poet articulates the angst of being trapped, like the Sibyl, with the knowledge of death, he is also finally reconciled to his inability to do anything other than accept his despair and fear. He will not be able to step into pilgrimage and move into eternal time until he can bring the feminine into consciousness. By the time Eliot composes Four Quartets, over a decade
later, he is reconciled to the loss of the heroic position and the recovery of the repressed feminine.
CHAPTER 3.
"NO BEGINNING, NO MIDDLE OR END":
DOROTHY RICHARDSON'S PILGRIMAGE

Women writers, I have argued, find it easier to relinquish the quest than men since the quest has no provision for female subjectivity. Dorothy Richardson’s novel, Pilgrimage, is both a rejection of the quest and an endorsement of the pilgrimage. As we know, pilgrims undertake their journeys to be cured, to do penance and to strengthen their faith. In the case of Miriam Henderson, the protagonist of Richardson’s novel, Miriam starts out wanting to be cured of her femininity. Miriam repeatedly confronts the discrepancy between her experiences and the identity assigned to her by an androcentric culture in which the accepted female role is still shaped by Victorian notions of the domestic sphere of marriage and motherhood. She finds her interior feminine world is not accounted for in the received notions of what constitutes the feminine. While T.S. Eliot laments the absence of the Grail knight, Richardson critiques the entire patriarchal culture for having overwritten female experience in the valorizing of the quest. Richardson rejects the quest as unsuitable in two ways: through a rendering of Miriam’s immediate mental states, thereby giving Miriam subjectivity, and through the refusal of a plot line. Miriam’s recognition of her assigned role as passive object, her awareness of the penalty for failure to conform and her internalized misogyny, and finally the recovery of the repressed feminine lead her to the awareness of the pilgrimage as a replacement for the quest.

As I have noted in earlier chapters, the quest privileges a linear narrative in which the normative consciousness is male. By contrast, the pilgrimage operates in cyclical
time where the role of the generative feminine is significant. At the outset of the novel, Miriam has only a vague awareness that the quest offers no provision for female subjectivity. While the final title of Pilgrimage for the collection explicitly proclaims the death of the quest, Richardson is less cognizant initially of the failure of the quest as a narrative structure. As Richardson develops the thirteen chapter-volumes over five decades that will be ultimately collected in four volumes, she becomes convinced of the necessity of a new paradigm.¹ Her experience is reflected in Miriam’s growing awareness of the pilgrimage as means of expressing female subjectivity.

Yet, while Richardson may not be initially rejecting the quest, she is already, perhaps unconsciously, endorsing the pilgrimage stylistically. Diane F. Gillespie has noted that Richardson does away with “the traditional, usually male authorial voice....” (395). Instead, Richardson shows us Miriam’s thoughts as they occur to her, unmediated by social constraint. May Sinclair, in a review in The Egoist of April 1918, described Richardson’s technique as one in which “Nothing happens. It is just life going on and on. It is Miriam Henderson’s stream of consciousness going on and on” (58). Given the position of James Joyce within the literary canon and his notoriety for having discovered the stream of consciousness technique, it is significant to recognize that the first chapter-volume of Dorothy Richardson’s Pilgrimage, Pointed Roofs, was published in 1916, antecedent to Ulysses. It is thus Richardson, not Joyce, who is the innovator of the stream of consciousness technique in English.² Richardson, herself, disliked the term ‘stream of consciousness,’ an expression that she found lacking in its description of mental processes: “[s]tream of consciousness is a muddle-headed phrase. It is not a stream, it’s a pool, a sea, an ocean” (Brome 29). As Lynette Felber notes, Richardson rejected the term ‘stream of conscious’ “as too restrictive both in its unidirectional flow,
bounded by its banks, and in its forward-moving linearity" (25). Determined to "find a feminine equivalent of the masculine realism" (Brome 29), Richardson's intention was to render as accurately as possible the conscious and unconscious workings of the female mind which Richardson perceived as "crammed with life of which most men have no inkling" (Richardson, "Dorothy M. Richardson" 7).

Early critics of Richardson's book reacted to her stylistic innovations with both frustration and admiration. Katherine Mansfield, in a review of chapter-volume four, The Tunnel, complained that: "There is no plot, no beginning, middle or end. Things just 'happen' one after another with incredible rapidity and at break-neck speed.... But the pace kills" (4). D.H. Lawrence, in discussing the portrayal of consciousness in novels by James Joyce and Richardson wrote that

So there you have the "serious" novel, dying in a very long-drawn-out fourteen-volume death-agony, and absorbedly, childishly interested in the phenomenon. "Did I feel a twinge in my little toe, or didn't I?" asks every character of Mr. Joyce or of Miss Richardson or M. Proust. (114)

However, May Sinclair, in reviewing the first three chapter-volumes of Richardson's work, saw Richardson's style in a more positive light: "...I find it impossible to reduce to intelligible terms this satisfaction that I feel. To me these three novels have an art and method and form carried to punctilious perfection" (58). Virginia Woolf, in a 1923 review of Revolving Lights, the seventh chapter-volume of Pilgrimage, echoed Sinclair's endorsement of Richardson's technique, writing that Richardson "has invented, or, if she has not invented, developed and applied to her own uses, a sentence which we might call the psychological sentence of the feminine gender" ("Romance" 124). Richardson would seem to have anticipated Woolf's 1929 comments that a woman writer could not
avoid “altering and adapting the current sentence until she writes one that takes the natural shape of her thought without crushing or distorting it” (“Women” 145). As Woolf recognized, Richardson’s use of the pool of consciousness in Pilgrimage is instrumental in revealing to us the differences between Miriam’s conceptions of the world and those of an androcentric culture. As well, it ensures that we read Miriam as subject rather than object. And as Richardson becomes more conscious of her own endorsement of the pilgrimage, Miriam becomes able to articulate a clear rejection of the position of the object, as well as a rejection of the quest as defining cultural paradigm.

While Richardson constructs a subjectivity for Miriam, it is a subjectivity that is in flux, which is perhaps part of Mansfield’s criticism of the ‘break-neck speed’ of Pilgrimage. With “no plot, no beginning, middle or end”, there is no sense of linear time. As readers, we often cannot tell from Miriam’s thoughts whether she is thinking of the past, the present, or the future. We remain uncertain as to whether she is fantasizing or observing an actual situation. Caesar Blake has observed, that “[t]he connection of [Richardson’s] phrases is psychological, not logical or grammatical” (144); similarly, Gillian L. Hanscombe has characterized the text’s organization as “thematic, not chronological” (Art 27). Nor is there a sense of events moving to some ultimate conclusion; there are only episodes, each rendered so as to be of equal significance. As Mary Ann Gillies notes, Miriam’s narrative is a “collection of internal moments, progressing in no particular order toward no determined goal....” (158). The novel provides no traditional dénouement. Richardson’s strategy is thus to render accurately Miriam’s lived experience. But her technique also works to undermine the quest, since the quest is goal oriented. In fact, Richardson was still working on the last chapter-
volume of *Pilgrimage* at the age of 78, demonstrating how the construction of the novel enacts its premise to render the moment without moving to any conclusion.

An examination of a section of Richardson’s text will illustrate her strategy. I quote rather generously below from Chapter Five of *Pointed Roofs* to show how Richardson works to portray Miriam’s thoughts authentically while providing little in the way of plot advancement. The chapter begins *in media res*, with Miriam, recently arrived in Germany as a governess:

Miriam paid her first visit to a German church the next day, her third Sunday. Of the first Sunday, now so far off, she could remember nothing but sitting in a low-backed chair in the *saal* trying to read *Les Travailleurs de las Mer... seas...* and a sunburnt youth striding down a desolate lane in a storm... and the beginning of tea-time. They had been kept indoors all day by the rain. (70 ellipses in text)

Sitting in the pew prompts Miriam’s recollection of her first Sunday in Germany, a mere three weeks ago. Her use of the German word ‘*saal*’ reminds us that Miriam is in a foreign culture. Richardson’s use of ellipses conveys to us the breaks and pauses in Miriam’s musings, in an attempt to accurately demonstrate the thought process. We cannot be certain, in reading these few lines whether the “sunburnt youth” is imagined or real since so few details of the relevance of his presence are mentioned. And we are given only the most cursory clues as to the identity of “they,” since in Miriam’s mind, a more thorough description is not a consideration at the moment. While the reader partakes of Miriam’s memory of past events, we have no access to anything outside Miriam’s consciousness and remain blinded to the events at hand.

The second paragraph of the chapter moves to describe Miriam’s recollection of the previous Sunday’s experience in an English church and her impressions of the parishioners as “a little gathering of English people” (70). This thought then leads her to
speculate on the nature of gender differences. While she feels that “she knew all these women, the way, with little personal differences, they would talk, the way they would smile and take things for granted” (70), the men remain incomprehensible to her:

And the men, standing there in their overcoats.... Why were they there? What were they doing? What were their thoughts?
She pressed as against a barrier. Nothing came to her from these unconscious forms.

They seemed so untroubled....Probably they were all Conservatives ....That was part of their 'refinement.' They would all disapprove of Mr Gladstone .... Get up into the pulpit and say 'Gladstone' very loud ... and watch the result. Gladstone was a Radical ... pull everything up by the roots...Pater was always angry and sneery about him ...Where were the Radicals? (1 70, ellipses in text)

The focus in the second and third paragraph is on Miriam's observations both of the people that she has encountered and her own perceptions. We also see how Miriam's mind associatively skips from watching the women, to trying to intuit the men's thoughts, to a consideration of the political affiliations of the men, to her Father's political views, to her own question of "Where were the Radicals?" From Miriam's perceptions, it is clear that she is an outsider to both communities: while she feels a sense of companionship with the women, capable of predicting their behaviour as a member of their 'tribe,' she does not interact with them because she sees their behaviour as determined by social decorum and, therefore, both false and uninteresting. But where the women seem familiar, if unworthy of her interest, the men appear as foreigners about whom she can intuit little. She assumes that their behaviour, like that of her father, will be in the realm of the analytical and political. Curiously, we find that we are three paragraphs into the chapter and as yet we have no physical description of the church or the surroundings. Nor do we have an account of any of Miriam's conversations with the people whom she
observes. We do, however, have a very rich rendering of the present moment as perceived by Miriam, while she remains seated in a pew in the German church.

While the sermon "drone[s] quietly and slowly on" (72), Miriam's thoughts turn to the hypocrisy she enacts by attending church when she fails to give the service her full attention. Her mind skips to an imagined future in which, as a governess, she would be required to attend church on a regular basis:

It would be practising deception....To despise it all, to hate the minister and the choir and the congregation and yet to come – running – she could imagine herself all her life running, at least in her mind, weekly to some church – working her fingers into their gloves and pretending to take everything for granted and to be just like everybody else, and really thinking only of getting into a quiet pew and ceasing to pretend. It was wrong to use church like that. She was wrong – all wrong. (72-73)

The insincerity of the social interaction disturbs her, and Miriam envisages a life of deception should she remain a governess. The activity of "working her fingers into their gloves" becomes emblematic of an anticipated confinement of both her body and her mind. Sitting in the pew becomes a measure of repose for her, not as a spiritual retreat from the earthly, secular world, but a space where pretense may abate. Yet, she has pretended to listen to avoid jeopardizing her position and attracting social censure. Rather than provide the details of the service as observed by an omniscient narrator, Richardson instead shows us how Miriam's experience of the church service prompts a lengthy personal consideration of the tensions between personal integrity and social expectations and her alienation from the community. We observe how her anger at her own failure turns to anger at the whole conception of church:

Listening to sermons was wrong... people ought to refuse to be preached at by these men. Trying to listen to them made her more furious than anything she could think of, more base in submitting... those men's sermons were worse than women's smiles... just as insincere at any
rate... and you could get away from the smiles, make it plain you did not agree and that things were not simple and settled... but you could not stop a sermon. It was so unfair [...] Preachers knew no more than any one else... you could see by their faces... sheeps' faces.... (73).

Miriam is enraged at what she perceives as the inauthentic authority enacted by the preacher. She dismisses the content of the sermon as well as the process because it lacks an opportunity for dialogue and intellectual exchange. Moreover, she questions the minister’s authority on the basis of his lack of education and his failure to take a role of leadership. In Miriam’s eyes, he is a mere sheep, a follower, presumably like the rest of the congregation who are unable to think for themselves. While she longs to confide in someone about her frustration, she feels the lack of a kindred spirit to whom she could reveal her true thoughts and feelings: “But must she always be pretending? Would it always be that... living with exasperating women who did not understand... pretending... grimacing?” (74). We are party here to Miriam’s feelings of alienation from other women, from the church, and from authority figures, whom Miriam perceives as intellectually inferior to her. Moreover, we recall the inability she expressed at the outset of the chapter to feel at home in the company of men, showing us Miriam’s alienation from her community on many levels.

Then, somewhat inexplicably, as the congregation stands to sing the last German hymn, Miriam experiences a transcendent moment in which she suddenly feels a part of the environment and the congregation:

‘Nun danket alle Gott.’ There was nothing to object to in that. Everybody could say that. Everybody – Fraulein, Gertrude, all these little figures in the church, the whole world. ‘Now thank, all, God.’... Emma and Clara were chanting on either side of her. Immediately behind her sounded the quavering voice of an old woman. They all felt it. She must remember that.... Think of it every day. (76)
Her previous alienation forgotten, Miriam suddenly feels a kinship with the Germans and her students who are as yet strangers to her. As the chapter concludes, the reader is aware of the tension which Miriam experiences between her inner world of intellect and the external world of social convention, between her sense of isolation and her sense of momentary connection with others, her rejection of the social hypocrisy of women and her concomitant failure to feel at home in the world of men. She lacks a sense of connection to her peers and to her fellow English speaking émigrés or the German community. But the experience of the transcendent moment, however transitory, hints at the nature of Miriam's pilgrimage. Through the four volumes of the novel, she will continue to seek and enlarge such moments - a process that I will discuss in more detail later – as she aims to make the brief sense of connection encountered in the church a continual presence for her. And the search for a community is another means of undermining, if unconsciously, the solitary nature of the quest.

I have quoted extensively from Chapter Five because in a very representative way, it shows the innovation of Richardson's portrayal of Miriam's consciousness. In a conventional reading of this chapter, Miriam went to church, sang hymns, heard a sermon, and sang another hymn. Trained by conventional narrative to expect that such information about characters contributes to the later *denouement* of the plot, the reader can feel confused and even overwhelmed by what seems to be unnecessary information. Additionally, aside from Miriam's rising to stand in the pew, there is very little action in the chapter. The text is preoccupied with Miriam's fleeting thoughts.

Hanscombe has explained Richardson's technique as motivated by her desire for "an open-ended mode that has neither structural, ideological, nor psychological parameters, so that she can feel able to suggest the nature of experience itself, which is
necessarily open-ended in the real world" (Art 44). In order to portray authentically the workings of Miriam's mind, Richardson writes as Miriam thinks. Miriam does not yet know how significant an individual or circumstance will be and a realistic portrayal of her conscious processes requires that the reader see Miriam's observations unadorned by the later evaluations which hindsight might attach to them. If Miriam were to relay to the reader the significance of her observations, she would already have stepped outside the experience, no longer a participant. As Hanscombe writes, "There is, in other words, a central point rather than a starting point; there is expansion and dissolution, but not development; and there is reiteration, but not a deductively reasoned conclusion" (Art 28). Instead of telling the reader how to view a situation or assess an individual, the reader is given two thousand pages of Miriam's experiences and impressions without the drawing of any but momentary conclusions.

The problem of being in the moment, however, is how to make meaning without stepping out of the process. Critics of Pilgrimage, even those who react favourably to Richardson's project, note the problematic position of the reader when faced with a text of great length and the absence of familiar signposts that mark "beginning, middle and end." For example, Caesar Blake has suggested that the realism gained by Richardson's technique is sacrificed to tediousness; "[t]he disadvantage of the single point of view in so long a novel is the inevitable danger of monotony" (91). Rachel Blau DuPlessis, however, suggests that the tediousness of the novel be seen as a subversive strategy:

The monumental – really excessive – length of Pilgrimage may indeed be attributable to Richardson's desire for vengeance on culture, for a female alternative to the cultural bulk of "the finest literature," and for a massive mountain of narrative to be placed between the main character and the hegemonic stories and opinions that haunted her. (145)
Certainly the length of *Pilgrimage* and its lack of teleological perspective undermines the sense of progress and time as moving toward some ultimate conclusion. But it also challenges the familiar storyline for women at the turn of the twentieth century.

As DuPlessis notes, "the text protests continually against the master plot of romance" (143) in which the sole aim of the female protagonist is marriage. The novel also works against Victorian notions of the "angel in the house." This latter phrase is taken from the poem of the same name composed by Coventry Patmore but one that came to refer to a sentimentalized portrayal of the role of the dutiful and unselfish wife. That Woolf later felt compelled to critique this notion in her essay "Professions for Women" suggests that these expectations still prevailed in the early decades of the twentieth century when Richardson was writing the first volumes of *Pilgrimage*. As Woolf described her, the "angel in the house" was

... intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. If there was chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draught she sat in it – in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. Above all – I need not say it – she was pure. ("Professions" 285)

In *Pilgrimage*, Richardson subverts the mindless servility expected of the "angel in the house" on one level, by revealing Miriam's thoughts. The reader knows from sections such as those discussed from Chapter Five, that while Miriam gives the appearance of compliance with social expectations, her mind is plotting rebellion. We see evidence of Miriam's rebellion actualized in her emulation of the scandalous behaviour associated with the New Woman. Hypo admiringly describes Miriam, at one point, as "[t]ossing off her beer like a man and smoking con amore" (IV 173), actions certainly not associated
with the ‘angel in the house.’ But Miriam’s rebellion goes further. The acceptable, middle-class woman was confined to the domestic sphere, the only suitable career one of dedication to marriage and motherhood (Ardis 3). Refusal of these roles, at least in the literary domain, meant death. Just as the form of the novel undermines the traditional sense of plot, Miriam’s pool of consciousness reveals her indifference not only to a traditional outcome, but to an alternative plot line as well. While the novel could be read as a künstlerroman, such a reading is undermined by Miriam’s lack of desire or planning for such an objective. As Miriam thinks to herself: “Men weave golden things; thought, science, art, religion, upon a black background. They never are. They only make or do; unconscious of the quality of life as it passes” (III 280). In rejecting linear narrative, Richardson is also rejecting the traditional outcome of the novel in which the woman aims no higher than being chosen as wife, but she is also offering an alternative cultural paradigm that neither Richardson or her character, Miriam, are aware of at the outset of Pilgrimage.

Ann Ardis has written that the “female subject … functions as modernism’s Other” (174). Miriam experiences such marginality as she steps outside the socially sanctioned domestic sphere. She begins to struggle with the ways in which the dominant, androcentric culture either restrains her or fails to represent her. Her awareness of her objectification, while yet gestating, poignantly surfaces with the arrival of spring weather:

She breathed in the leaf-scented air and felt it playing over her breast and neck. She drew deep breaths as they went slowly along under the Waldstrasse lime-trees [.....] Every breath she drew was like a long yawning sign. She felt the easy expansion of her body under her heavy jacket .... ‘Perhaps I won’t have any more fitted bodices,’ she mused and was back for a moment in the stale little sitting-room of the Barnes dressmakers. She remembered deeply breathing in the odour of fabrics and dust and dankness and cracking her newly fitted lining at the pinholes and saying, ‘It is too tight there’ – crack-crack ‘I can’t go like that’ ... [...]

She felt her eyes grow strong and clear; a coolness flowed through her – obstructed only where she felt the heavy pad of hair pinned to the back of her head, the line of her hat, the hot line of compression round her waist and the confinement of her inflexible boots. (1 124-5)

The language of this passage demonstrates the juxtaposition between the attempted expansion of Miriam's body as she tries to breathe sensually of the scented air and the constriction imposed by her pinned hair, her hat, the "compression round her waist" and her tight boots. Like the gloves into which she forces her hands for Sunday church, her clothing is a reflection of the ways in which social convention literally squeezes the life out of her as it shapes her into an unnatural, and nearly inanimate form.

In fact, Miriam's attire reflected the economic and gender preoccupations of the period. In an era of increasing emphasis on materialistic culture, the female gender ideal was constructed to reflect that of the bourgeois male. A business man in his thirties, the successful man was affluent enough to afford servants so that his wife could turn her attention to her reproductive responsibilities. The fashionable woman of the early twentieth century was covered from just under her chin to the floor, wearing gloves in public so that even her hands didn't show. In order to achieve the "full, curved bustline, narrow waist, and smooth, round hip curve" (Tortora 255) that would emphasize her utility as a reproductive unit, Miriam is likely wearing a shift, over which she would fasten a corset made of "whalebone, steel or cane" (255). When cinched up, the corset would reduce her natural waistline by as much as two inches. Her stockings would be made of cotton lisle and held up by garters safety pinned to her corset. The corset would then be covered by a camisole on the top and she would wear a pair of drawers or ruffled pants of knee length or longer made out of cotton. Over the drawers she would add as many as five petticoats. The "boned bodice" to which Miriam refers is the upper half of her
dress that is reinforced with boning to enhance her curved appearance. The neckline of her one-piece dress is likely also boned to provide a stable, high collar. The sleeves of her dress would come all the way to her wrists and the skirt would be full. With her corset compressing her waist and rib cage and the width of her shoulders and hips accentuated by the fullness of the skirts and sleeves, the overall effect is to put the emphasis on her now “tiny” waist in comparison to her bust and hips.

It is little wonder that Miriam feels that her breathing and thinking are hampered. Her movements are restricted at the neck due to the boning in her collar, in her rib cage and waist due to the constriction of the corset and boning in her bodice. She is forced into the shape of a female ideal which emphasizes stasis and her reproductive use function. Unable to feel her own body, she is more accustomed to seeing it as it appears to others, perceiving it, as Suzette Gevirtz has noted “from the outside, as an object of desire....” (59). She is constructed to be of service to patriarchal aims. Should Miriam choose not to conform to the female ideal, she risks a heavy penalty:

Bella Lyndon had never worn stays; playing rounders so splendidly, lying the grass between the games with her arms under her head ... simply disgusting, someone had said ... who ... a disgusted face ... nearly all the girls detested Bella. (138).

Miriam cannot ignore Bella’s athletic prowess, nor her ease as she relaxes without self-consciousness on the grass. But in Miriam’s social milieu, Bella’s contravention of feminine gender roles is met with condemnation and Miriam imagines she would be similarly ostracized for joining Bella on the grass. Sometime later, Miriam decides to learn to ride the new bicycle and wears the recently designed riding costume of “knickers” – a divided skirt that allowed women to ride and still remain modestly covered to the ankle, although women were scorned for wearing them in public (Laver 208,
Miriam is so thrilled with "[t]he freedom of movement" she experiences when wearing knickers that she decides on the spot that "when I’m thirty I’m going to cut my hair short and wear divided skirts.’...’I can’t face doing my hair and brushing skirts and keeping more or less in the fashion....” (II 148, 149). When questioned as to why she would choose this radical course at the particular age of thirty, Miriam replies, “Because nobody cares what you do when you’re thirty; they’ve all given up hope [that you’ll marry] by that time” (150). In Miriam’s assessment, refusing the dress code means the possibility of scorn from her peers and rejection by eligible men – in short, a solitary life. In such scenes, Richardson subtly cues the reader of the discrepancy between masculine and feminine aims. Were Miriam to opt for the solitary life associated with the quest, she would have to relinquish her own objective to find a community.

Miriam is not unaware, however, of the social exigencies of marriage as offering both financial and physical safety. Commenting on a temporary situation when she is sleeping in a house with only a female servant for company, she remarks to herself:

The only way to feel quite secure at night would be to marry... how awful...either you marry and are never alone or you risk being alone and afraid...to marry for safety...perhaps some women did. (I 466)

And yet, Miriam is cognizant of the public censure she will face as a 'spinster.' When she returns from Germany to attend her sister, Harriett’s wedding, she is conscious that she is without either a governess position or marriage prospect:

She was going home empty handed. She had achieved nothing. Fraulein had made not the slightest effort to keep her. She was just nothing again – with her Saratoga trunk and her hand-bag. Harriett had achieved. Harriett. She was just going home with nothing to say for herself. (I 183-4)
In the linear time frame, Miriam is judged as having failed; while Harriet has "achieved." Lacking a husband, Miriam sees herself as "empty handed." The traditional plot line defines success for a woman as marriage and motherhood; not having accomplished either, Miriam then fails to exist. Yet, to assert her independence is to risk loneliness. It doesn't yet occur to her that she needn't be defined by her achievement of goals established externally. She honestly believes that she has no identity unless society assigns her one and for a woman, that means that she must become someone's wife. She undervalues her year in Germany as worthless because she can't see any alternative other than to position herself within the hierarchical, patriarchal class system. From the perspective of the quest, Miriam has failed to make herself the object of the hero's pursuit.

The discrepancy between Miriam's private experience and social expectations becomes more pronounced as Miriam moves further into the public sphere. The camaraderie and spontaneity she experiences with her sisters in private is contrasted with the duplicity and self-denigration that informs her encounters in public. She recognizes that the female gender role involves the performance of projecting what men want, or what she believes men want. She is never the active party in her early relationships. Instead, she reacts, waiting for the proscribed cue to respond in socially appropriate ways to male overtures, responding as the object which she has been trained to be. In Germany, she contemplates spending the holiday with another governess, who suggests introducing her brother to Miriam. Miriam imagines how

[s]he would laugh and pretend and flirt like the Pooles and make up to him -- and it would be lovely for a little while [.....]
There would be a garden and German springs and summers and sunsets and strong kind arms and a shoulder. She would grow so happy. No one would recognize her as the same person. She would wear a band of turquoise-blue velvet ribbon round her hair and look at the mountains .......No good. She could never get out to that. Never. She could not pretend long enough. (I 167)

For Miriam, male-female relationships develop out of a deliberate attempt on the part of the female to mould herself to culturally determined expectations of the woman and wife – the “angel in the house.” Miriam is aware that she has been trained to be “intensely sympathetic” and “immensely charming,” as another form of service to male needs. She finds this role dishonest, limiting and unrewarding:

Women who had anything whatever to do with men were not themselves. They were in noisy confusions, playing a part all the time. The only real misery in being alone was the fear of being left out of things. It was a wrong fear. (II 321)

Appropriate social interaction means that she curb her intellect or face isolation. And while Miriam desires intimacy and affiliation, neither are worth the price of her soul. She recognizes that the proscribed role as object of the quest is inadequate, but she is yet uncertain of an alternative role. Like her Biblical namesake, who was exiled from her tribe for confronting patriarchal control (Num 12), Miriam Henderson would rather suffer exile and isolation than passively accept the culturally defined roles for twentieth century women without evaluation.

The dominant culture, as I argued in Chapter 1, experiences the unconscious as feminine, and as I noted there, Neumann argues that women may experience the unconscious as “negatively feminine” (148). Miriam is not preoccupied with the Terrible Mother in the same way that the poet in *The Waste Land* is, but through her
development in a culture that is androcentric, she has come to devalue the feminine. Her internalized misogyny is evident in her approach to intellectual and spiritual life.

From an intellectual perspective, Miriam has been trained by a male-dominated culture to see women as uninteresting and ignorant, while men have facts and knowledge: “Nearly all women were like that, living in a gloom where there were no thoughts […] no room for ideas; except in smoking rooms – and- laboratories….“ (I 404). Clearly, intellectual intercourse occurs exclusively in the male domain of the smoking room and the scientific laboratory. When she fantasizes about having a conversation with her employer, Mr. Corrie, about a book, it would be to “talk to him, man to man….“ (383), as if women were incapable of serious thought. Men, in her mind, are keepers of the intellectual flame where women have no ideas and use their wiles to contrive interest in male pursuits. Feminine worldliness consists of “pretending to be interested so that pleasant things might go on. Masculine worldliness was refusing to be interested so that it might go on doing things“ (388). The sophisticated women is thus culturally constructed as passive mirror to reflect the activities of sophisticated men.

For Miriam, there exist deep dichotomies between the social lie and the desire for intellectual fulfilment, between being a vacuous woman or an intellectually interesting man, between reacting and acting. Thus, to be intellectual is to reject her own body. She begins to realize that the intellectual capability within herself that she has taken for granted is considered atypical for a woman and deems herself to have a "masculine mind“ (III 236). Confronting the definitions of women from the encyclopedia as “inferior; mentally, morally, intellectually, and physically,” Miriam is struck by an urge to strike down culture by destroying the tomes that enslave her:
If one could only burn all the volumes; stop the publication of them. But it was all books, all the literature in the world, right back to Juvenal...whatever happened, if it could all be avenged by somebody in some way, there was all that... the classics, the finest literature – 'unsurpassed.' Education would always mean coming in contact with all that. Schoolboys got their first ideas.... How could Newnham and Girton women endure it? How could they go on living and laughing and talking? (Il 219)

As Miriam attests, even if women were not welcome at Cambridge, they were allowed to attend university at Newnham and Girton, but Miriam recognizes that such an education merely perpetuates in an official venue, the indoctrination of women into the cultural misogyny of the period. Such concepts of the feminine, entrenched in the intellectual framework, conveniently protect masculinist aims. Her informal studies reveal to her the ways in which women are systematically erased from the authoritative accounts of history and biology except as inadequate men or sacred procreators:

...and those jokes – the hundred golden rules...Sacred functions...highest possibilities...sacred for what? The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world? The Future of the Race? What world? What race? Men...Nothing but men; for ever.

If, by one thought, all the men in the world could be stopped, shaken and slapped. There must, somewhere, be some power that could avenge it all... but if these men were right, there was not. Nothing but Nature and her decrees. (Il 220)

Miriam recognizes a double bind in which women are only given acknowledged power if they give birth, but since the place of mothers is exclusively the domestic sphere, the power is a sham. And since women, by definition, lack agency, they are trapped as passive objects who must await rescue through marriage by the heroic male. Miriam is outraged at an institutionalized sexism that acknowledges women's inferior position and simultaneously legitimizes it by arguing that women are not biologically capable of
altering the situation. Her frustration with the socio-cultural framework extends to the religious sphere:

...and why not say: man, it is not very graceful to say it, is the male of the woman? If women had been the recorders of things from the beginning it would all have been the other way round...Mary. Mary, the Jewess, write something about Mary the Jewess; the Frenchman's Queen of Heaven. (II 251)

The Judeo-Christian tradition, with the exception of Catholicism, is perceived by Miriam as having elided the role of the mother and religion as another aspect of institutionalized misogyny. In her conception, Miriam would reconfigure the divine pantheon to acknowledge the mother as "Queen of Heaven" as the source of generativity. The Church, by which she means the state sanctioned Anglican Church, is a "Royal Academy of Males" (III 323) and Miriam declares to herself that "All the men in the world, and their God, ought to apologize to women...." (I 459). There is no spiritual solace for her within this religious framework. Even God is seen as part of a patriarchal system. If she identifies with her gender role of female, she has no self-respect due to her internalized misogyny, and if she identifies with the male gender role, she must reject her female body. Since her body is female, she is a divided subject; she is sacred, but has no power. While she now has a tentative recognition that the generative aspect is significant and deserves a place within the public sphere, she isn't yet sure how to bring the feminine to public consciousness. Shut off from the experience of her body by her clothing and by social constraints, Miriam lacks bodily awareness. A turning point occurs in her pilgrimage to Oberland, in Switzerland, for a holiday.

Her transformation begins with her identification with the landscape as a means of recovering the repressed feminine. At her first sight of the Alps, she notes,
The leap of recognition, unknowing between the mountains and herself which was which, made the first sight of them – smooth snow and crinkled rock in unheard-of unimagined tawny light – seem, even at the moment of seeing, already long ago. (IV 21)

Miriam sees herself in a seamless identification with the land. In urban London, she is cut off from the earth, but in Switzerland, she can connect to the landscape as an archetypal manifestation of the feminine. While this is her first visit to Switzerland, she views the mountains with “recognition” and in a boundaryless moment cannot delineate between herself and the landscape. The language of her description: “unheard-of unimagined” yet “already long ago” suggests a moment of simultaneous surprise and familiarity. Awakening in Oberland, she describes her first moments “as if all her life she had traveled towards this radiance, and was now within it, clear of the past…” (IV 49). In unity with her environment, she discovers a sense of the feminine which is neither tainted nor co-opted by androcentric culture. In a foreign territory she can see the land – and her body – without the overarching patriarchal connotations.

Recovering the feminine archetype as it is manifest in her own body occurs in an experience of play. As she toboggans, she recalls a childhood experience of spontaneity and oneness with her body, “her very life sounding out into the far distances of this paradise, claiming them as long ago it had claimed the far distances surrounding outdoor games…” (IV 85). Watching people ice skating, she observes, “It was skating escaped from the niggardly opportunities of England and grown perfect. Long sweeping curves, dreaming eyes seraphic, even the sternest betrayed by the enchantment in their eyes” (86). The skaters appear to her to have “escaped” into “enchantment,” a description that contrasts with her earlier experience walking in Germany, in which she feels “obstructed,” and experiences “compression” and “confinement.” The discrepancy
between her previously lived experience and this new world leads to an epiphany for Miriam:

Gliding, as if for ever; the feeling, coming even with the first uncertain balance, of breaking through into an eternal way of being. In all games it was there, changing the aspect of life, making friends dearer, making even those actually disliked, dear, as long as they were within the rhythm of the game. (IV 87)

Here, Miriam expresses a sense of flow, of oneness with her body and environment. As she describes it, “an eternal way of being.” We see that Miriam has moved outside of linear time and now experiences the “rhythm of the game,” instead of her typical experience of alienation. And her experience of eternal time is encountered in physical activities that utilize the body: games, dancing, and skating. Oberland teaches her something, it becomes “a golden life within her life” (IV 136) that transforms her and provides her first experience of the ancient time of the pilgrimage.

When she returns to her job in the dental office, she tells her employer, Mr. Densley, that she could “see into things” (IV 149), which suggests a Wordsworthian experience of nature, that reveals her body to her for the first time. And it is an experience in which she experiences her body from within, not as prescribed by culture as a passive vessel. Where Eliot’s poet sees the waste land as a fact, Miriam’s experience seems to suggest that the waste land is a construct of patriarchal culture that occurs when the female body is repressed and devalued.

Miriam’s challenge is then how to articulate this recent experience of her body in a language that ignores or represses the female body. Julia Kristeva argues that language is composed of two aspects, the semiotic and the symbolic. The semiotic is a "pre- or translinguistic modality” (McCance 28) that precedes “spatiality and temporality”
The semiotic originates in the body of the mother, as a response or affinity for the pulsions of her body to which the foetus is exposed. The flow of pulsions is like a “vocal or kinetic rhythm” (Kristeva 26). When a child develops an awareness of its sexuality and its place in the world, what Kristeva would call entering the Oedipal phase, it develops symbolic language, “language as representation, meaning, sign” (McCance 28). The semiotic and symbolic forms of language co-exist, but from within the symbolic order, the language of the semiotic is perceived as contradictions, meaninglessness, disruption, silences and absences. For example, the large number of ellipses in Richardson’s text can be read as introjections of the semiotic. For Kristeva, the “subject in language exists in a permanent state of division between the semiotic and symbolic, a division which univocal rational discourse attempts to hide” (McCance 28-29). Women must choose between their pre-Oedipal identification with the mother, which is to be marginal to the symbolic order, or identification with the symbolic order of the father. If women choose to identify with the father, they will then censor the pre-Oedipal mother, her body and the semiotic. Like her namesake who wanders as an outcast in the desert, Miriam is separated from the dominant culture because the language of the dominant culture makes no provision for the female body. She thinks to herself:

In speech with a man, a woman is at a disadvantage – because they speak different languages. She may understand his. Hers he will never speak nor understand. In pity, or from other motives, she must therefore, stammeringly, speak his. (11 210)

Miriam is like an immigrant who learns a second language. When she envisages how she would state her dissatisfaction to men, she acknowledges “Yet it would be easier to make all this clear to a man than to a woman. The very words expressing it have been made by men” (III 280-81). She recognizes that her feminine consciousness, of which
she has only had a glimpse, is not nurtured by the culture in which she resides. She has no way of expressing her consciousness within the mainstream discourse nor of being heard and understood.

It makes sense that Miriam must wander, changing residences and jobs until she is able to claim a position of her own that includes the experience of her body. Miriam finds her “chosen way” in Oberland, in play, which probably took her back to a spontaneous part of her existence that was outside gender roles and cultural forces. To remain in her body and on her own path, she must by necessity reject the status quo. Use of the pool of consciousness technique is crucial to relaying her development. The pool of consciousness provides her with a means to acknowledge her own reality that is unaccounted for in a traditional, linear narrative.

When Miriam recovers her own body, it is apparent to her employer, Densley, who notes the transformation, telling her that she is “like a red, red rose” (IV 149), to which she responds on a physical, rather than a verbal level:

Her happy blush revealed to her the shape of her body – as if for her own contemplation, as if her attention were being called to an unknown possession that yet was neither hers nor quite herself – glowing with a radiance that was different from the radiance of the surrounding sunlight; and turning to bend and gather up the gloves on which she had been sitting she seemed to journey far away from him and from herself into the depths of her being and mingle there with an unknown creature rising to meet and take her nature and transform it to the semblance of his ideal. And in this semblance, a stranger to herself and nameless, she came upright with the retrieved gloves in her hand and turned to face him in the room’s sunlight that now seemed the light of open spaces. (149-150)

For a moment she is in total possession of herself, claiming her hitherto foreign body for herself, and then she loses it, reverting to the culturally sanctioned behaviour of
becoming what she believes him to desire. And then she regroups and reclaims the
territory of her body as her own:

Neither Guerini's nor Eadin's nor Densley's nor any man's to matter
perhaps at all, except to themselves. Thought of all together,
reverberating over the world in all its languages, they seemed just an
unpleasant noise; like the chattering of those born deaf. Yet she felt that
even now, hearing them, it would be impossible to content herself, as she
had observed so many women do, with a wise smile. Even now. (150)

Miriam believes that it is her anger “that had cured her” (150) and she is finally
able to give herself permission to experience her own thoughts and feelings without
concern for whether they match those that are culturally sanctioned:

meanwhile she must remain here, balanced between return to her
customary life and the way of being she had entered a moment ago and
that could be, she now realized with sober astonishment, her chosen way
till death.... (IV 151)

Miriam can inhabit her body and psyche without feeling like a cultural outsider. Feminist
critics such as Susan Lichtman, Sylvia Perera, and Dana Heller have argued for the
necessity of anger as intrinsic to female development, theorizing that coming to anger is
a significant moment in the development of the female autonomous self. Harriet E.
Lerner has further described the complexity of the experience of anger for women,
writing that the relational qualities which women develop out of their semi-symbiotic
interaction with their mothers may make anger a difficult experience. Since anger is a
statement of disagreement and hence, separateness, expression of anger can feel like a
rupture in the feeling of connectedness on which many women have based their identity:
"In the midst of an angry confrontation, a woman no longer feels like the wife of her
husband, the daughter of her mother, or the mother of her child. She is herself, separate
and alone" (Lerner 140). This is certainly a sacrifice of which Miriam is aware. Given the
repression of the feminine within the culture, anger is perceived as a rift or fracture in the social fabric, instead of being self-defining.

It is not long after this experience that Miriam meets Amabel, who shapes Miriam's identity. Kristen Bluemel has focused on the homoerotic qualities of this relationship, remarking that "readers schooled to think in terms of heterosexual pairs" (45) miss the expressions of female desire between Miriam and Amabel, and, one would assume, between Miriam and Jean in the last volumes of *Pilgrimage*. Bluemel argues that Miriam's "desire to create the 'real' with another person through speech that embraces a nonlinguistic reality – is a sexual dilemma" (62). I suggest, instead, that in the absence of her dead mother, Amabel functions to mirror Miriam back to herself:

> Seeing herself reflected in the perceptions of this girl, she was unable to deny, in the raw material of her disposition, an unconscious quality of the kind that was being so rapturously ascribed to her [...] For if indeed, as her own ears and the confident rejoicing that greeted every word she spoke seemed to prove, this emerging quality were the very root of her being, then she was committed for life to the role allotted to her by the kneeling girl...

> In the end, supplied bit by bit, by hints and responses, sometimes mere exclamations illuminating, by their ecstatic suddenness that which called them forth, with a portrait of herself in all its limitations, as she existed in the mind of the girl, it seemed almost as if this girl had come at just this moment to warn her, to give her the courage of herself as she was, isolated and virginal. (IV 191-192)

Amabel's reflection of Miriam affirms Miriam's newly found identity that originates not in cultural constructions of the passive female, but in Miriam's own bodily experience of herself. In psychological terms, the mirroring phase is one where the distinction is first made between I and not-I, in the entry into the symbolic world. This is Miriam's opportunity to conceive of her identity as subject rather than object as she takes her newfound sense of herself into public space. Miriam sees something in Amabel that
Miriam experiences, but feels unable to articulate. She tries to explain this to Hypo, her male friend, the author:

'I'm preoccupied,' she said. 'Perpetually, just now, with one person.'

'Unfortunate for me,' he said, unmoved. 'Is this Amabel?'

'It's treasure, beyond your power of diagnosis. Beyond anyone's power.' (IV-240)

For Miriam, Amabel represents the bodily aspects of Miriam's life that she has repressed, that led to her rejection of her body as foreign, an experience that Miriam struggles to convey to Hypo:

If by some wordless magic she could convey to him the quality of that moment, coming in the midst of a conversation lasting for the whole of a Sunday morning from the time of wakening and seeing with the same eyes at the same moment, through the large uncurtained window, the wet grey roofs across the way - the Sunday following the evening at Mrs Bellamy's gathering, where we were separated and mingling in various groups and observing the drama as one person after another 'took the floor' and expressed views, and suddenly met and were both filled with the same longing, to get away and lie side by side in the darkness describing and talking it all over until sleep should come without any interval of going off into the seclusion of our separate minds - and had been broken into by the shared events of our picnic lunch on the floor, and afterwards had gone on further and further from its origin until Amabel had sought out, to illustrate the world as it had shown itself to her in childhood, that little book of verses with coloured prints, lovely, deep in colour and simple in design, and as I looked at it, while she hunted for another, I leaned my head back and for a few seconds was asleep for the first time in broad daylight, and woke so utterly refreshed that I said without thinking: "This is the birthday of the world,' and, while she flew to fling herself down at my knees, I was back in the moment of seeing for the first time those flowerbeds and banks of flowers blazing in the morning sunlight, that smelt of the flowers and was one with them and me and the big bees crossing the path, low, on a level with my face. And I told her of it and that it must have been somewhere near my third birthday, and her falling tears of joy and sympathy promised that never again should there be in my blood an unconquerable fever. (IV-242-3)
This lengthy passage is composed of only two sentences. The lack of punctuation conveys Miriam's breathless enthusiasm and the depth of her emotion in finding a consciousness with which she shares her perceptions. Amabel also reflects Miriam's experience back to her, validating it. The two women fall asleep without, as Miriam says, the customary "going off into the seclusion" of their own minds. This experience of shared consciousness precipitates a recovery of a childhood memory of subject-object identification, in which Miriam is one with the flowers, the sunlight and the soil. This is to be herself, whole, before culture closes off her connection to the maternal and the pre-Oedipal experience of being. Miriam is seeking how to hold on to this experience in adult life, partly because it is authentic, and partly because adult life, within culture, erases this experience. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has written that for women, unlike their male counterparts, the homosocial bond extends continuously across a spectrum of female relationships: "At this particular historical moment, an intelligible continuum of aims, emotions, and valuations links lesbianism with the other forms of women's attention to women..." (2). Seen in this light, Miriam's interest in Amabel is one of mutual benefit in which it becomes less important to be able to characterize the exact placement of that attraction on the continuum than it is to understand the significance and depth of that relationship. Amabel can be seen as what Annis Pratt et al have called the "green-world lover," whose role is to summon Miriam to the unconscious world where her work is to begin; their relationship is necessarily transitory, a "phase through which she must pass" (Pratt 140). Miriam confirms this when she describes Amabel as "a sort of continuation of Oberland" (IV-241), acknowledging that in her connection to Amabel, Miriam is also reaffirming the connection to her own body. It makes sense that Miriam's development of subjectivity must come through a relationship with another woman, since the masculine
relationships that Miriam enjoys tend to position her as object. Furthermore, Miriam and Amabel’s relationship subverts the solitary aims of the quest through the emphasis on female-female interaction as a path to development.

I mentioned earlier Miriam’s momentary experience in church as indicative of broader aims to connect to a community. Previously, such behaviour was impossible for her in an authentic way, since she lacked a sense of herself as subject. Once she owns her body, she reaffirms the pilgrimage to connect to others with whom she can be herself: “It’s finding the same world in another person that moves you to your roots. The same world in two people, in twenty people, in a nation. It makes you feel that you exist and can go on” (IV 333). Hypo can’t understand this experience; in fact, he thinks it outdated:

People used to sit confronted, in a world which appeared to be standing still, and make romantic journeys into each other. That sort of attitude lingers and dies hard. But to-day we are on the move, we've got to be on the move, or things will run away with us. We're engaged in a race with catastrophe. We can win. But only in getting abreast and running ahead.'

‘Running where?’
‘Away from the wrong sort of life-illusion, Miriam.’ (IV 334)

Hypo’s vocabulary emphasizes movement, competition, achievement, and necessarily insularity. He sees Miriam’s privileging of interpersonal connections as a vestige of romantic fantasy. Miriam and Hypo’s conflicting perspectives reveal the collision between pilgrimage and quest: one values the communal interconnectedness and the other the solitary, goal-directed endeavour. From the position of the quest, the pilgrimage looks unproductive and misguided; from the perspective of the pilgrimage, the quest appears obsessively task oriented and a solitary endeavour which emphasizes autonomy rather than relational activity.
Hypo’s quest-focused perspective pervades his approach to writing, as well. When he encourages Miriam to write, it is with his idea of what writing ought to look like. She claims that she can’t write for the periodical, New Universe, because “It would mean taking sides.” Hypo replies:

“You’ll have to in the end. Even Miretta [Miriam] can’t browse all over the field for ever. It’s committing yourself you’re afraid of. Taking definite steps. You’ll miss things. And live to regret it.”

“How can one miss things?”
‘Mere existence isn’t life.’
‘Why mere?’ (237-238)

On the one hand, Hypo is trying to convince Miriam that she ought to sleep with him and that at some point she must commit one way or the other, trying to push her in the Marvel-like way into intimacy. But he is also defining a clear rupture in their philosophical perspectives. Walking her home one evening, she sees:

the powerful magic [that] came forth that separated this region from the world of the streets. Surely he must be aware of it, must feel it streaming towards him through the stillness whereinto were projected his ponderings, or the pangs of his endurance, whipped up by the promises surrounding him, of the tailing-off of a wasted evening. Under its influence, that was giving her strength to throw, across the interminable distance now separating them, a bridge upon which, as soon as he had recognized it, they might meet and greet another, he could not fail to respond. (IV 336)

Miriam desires to connect to her physical environment as well as to Hypo. In fact, she sees such connections as a simultaneous possibility that echo previous experiences of boundarylessness, both in Oberland and in her childhood memory triggered when she is with Amabel. In the world that Miriam seeks, she would be connected not temporally, but spatially to all matter - whether human or inert – and in all time, in “an eternal way of being.” In Hypo’s world, individuals and things don’t meet; they remain discrete entities.
Unfortunately, Miriam is to be disappointed as Hypo does fail to recognize and respond to the bridge that she has thrown between them:

she felt that her singing not only failed to reach him, but, by suggesting a spacious untimed wandering, was increasing his impatience in being carried out of his way.

Where are your lodgings, Miriam?' (IV 336)

Hypo, Miriam senses, is annoyed at being derailed from his linear objective for sex and bed. Gloria G. Fromm has described Hypo and Miriam's encounter as a collision between Hypo's "obsession with constant movement and clear goals" and Miriam's need to be (185). Yet Hypo is the representative she most respects from the world of the symbolic, which puts the desires of her body in collision with those of her mind. I have noted previously how Miriam internalized misogyny and her identification of the intellect as masculine, her "masculine mind" as she puts it. Approval from women for intellectual pursuits would have no value for her. Thus, Hypo's encouragement of her writing is essential, even if she disagrees with him about the correct strategy. He tells her that she needs a

'green solitude. An infant. Then you'd be able to write a book.'

...And even as she thought of a little house whose little garden should lead down into a wood, she fled from it, finding it so full of his influence that there was no space wherein her own spirit could make its home. (IV-238)

Presumably the infant that Hypo imagines fulfilling Miriam will spring from his loins. As Miriam somehow intuits, Hypo's script for her, while well-intentioned, functions as a means of control. Miriam remains his goal, the object of his quest. He will guide her to her fruition as a writer.
What Hypo fails to realize is that while Miriam does want to write, her authorial objectives are very different from his. Where Miriam believes that Hypo sees the composition of a novel as “the end and aim of a writer’s existence” (IV 239), she sees it, she claims, as leisure activity. But her perspective of writing is deeper than that:

The torment of all novels is what is left out. The moment you are aware of it, there is torment in them. Bang, bang, bang, on they go, these men’s books, like an L.C.C. tram, yet unable to make you forget them, the authors, for a moment. (IV-239)

Miriam’s image of contemporary fiction as “an L.C.C. tram” suggests plot driven action which moves forward in a linear fashion to its final destination. Her own idea of a novel is one in which the barrier between the author and the text disappears. As Gillian Hanscombe has suggested, “the pilgrimage undertaken by Miriam is not confined to the search for identity; it is also the search for style” (Art 44). Hypo reiterates to her the connection: “Middles. Criticism, which you’d do as other women do fancy-work. Infant. NOVEL” (IV-240) It seems to me that it is not surprising that the baby which Miriam conceives with Hypo results in a miscarriage – this infant that he conceives of is his idea of her writing, but it lacks her full, authentic participation. She has not yet developed a style that can support her experience, her voice, her body and her need for connection with the world. In a sense, Amabel and Hypo function as parents for the new Miriam, Amabel giving her validation for her experience and Hypo validation for her mind. Between these two deep friendships, Miriam is able to construct a union of these two aspects of herself. But that means leaving both Amabel and Hypo behind once their purpose in her psycho-drama has been fulfilled. Fromm has called Miriam’s farewell to Hypo, “one of the bravest in all of modern literature” (186) as Miriam recognizes that Hypo is unable to understand her need to ‘be’ in the world. But I’m more inclined to
suggest that Miriam chooses growth. A continuing relationship with Hypo is doomed both physically, since Hypo is married, and intellectually since Miriam cannot grow unless she rebels against the 'good-father' who encourages her but also limits her.

Miriam experiments with another attempt to find community when she moves to the countryside of Dimple Hill. Here, Miriam believes that she has found her community amongst the Quakers and their ability to live in the moment:

[...] I mean the business of minute to minute living in the spirit which gives them their perspective and their poise and security, is the best I've met. (IV 603)

What the Quaker perspective offers is the deliberateness of living “minute to minute,” a way of being that echoes her experience of Oberland. But various circumstances reveal this to be a flawed arrangement and Miriam finds herself back in London, in a boarding house, where she can write. However, her time with the Quakers has revealed to her a model for her life, their ability to live "free of space and time" (613), outside the constraints of the quest. Like a Cubist painting, in which significance is determined by the relationships of the facets to each other, Miriam finds meaning in her life through her relationships, both to others and to her writing. Once she claims her body as valued and stakes out territory for herself within the culture she finds that writing and her experience are not incompatible, as she had imagined. Writing gives Miriam's life significance, a way of producing meaning. She doesn't have to do anything else. Writing allows Miriam to find the moment of 'flow' she experience in Oberland: "While I write, everything vanishes but what I contemplate. The whole of what is called 'the past' is with me, seen anew, vividly" (657). Here is her experience of ancient time where she can meet with people and be with herself, "free of space and time." It is no longer necessary to cure
herself of her femininity since she no longer sees it as an affliction. Her pilgrimage now is to be in an ongoing state of connection and writing is a means of enactment of being rather than achieving. One could see Miriam's narrative, and hence Richardson's text, as a subversion of the dominant male realism. But that would make it more goal oriented than I believe it is. The final scene of March Moonlight is of Miriam holding Amabel's baby. Her epiphany about the parallel between writing and giving birth gives credence to Hypo's earlier equation, "Infant. Novel": "[...] finding the baby Paul lying asleep against my body, the complete stilling of every one of my competing urgencies. Freedom" (IV 658). However, in this maternal moment, Miriam frees herself from the cult of Victorian domesticity and the expected plotline. The baby represents not the end of the plot, but "Freedom." By the final chapter of the novel, Miriam sees that people can meet through being, in the eternal time of pilgrimage.
CHAPTER 4.
"ALL A WOMAN'S BODY YES": MOLLY AS THE SITE OF PILGRIMAGE IN ULYSSES

In his novel *Ulysses*, James Joyce both subverts the quest and valorizes the pilgrimage. Where the poet of T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* is unable to find the Grail, Joyce’s knight figure, Stephen Dedalus, finds the Grail in the first pages of the novel, only to refuse it as irrelevant. But his refusal of the quest and the Grail leaves him an impotent hero. Simultaneously, Joyce provides an alternative to the failed quest in the form of the pilgrimage of Leopold Bloom. Bloom’s circuitous but deliberate ramblings through Dublin work to recover a sense of eternal time as well as the repressed feminine as an antidote to the linearity of the failed quest. Together, Bloom and Stephen witness the recovery of the original meaning of the Grail as an emblem of the female body. The shrine which Bloom and Stephen seek in their pilgrimage is revealed to be the feminine generative and destructive principle, as manifest in Molly, Bloom’s wife. The presentation of her soliloquy at the end of the novel restores female subjectivity to narrative form, further destabilizing the quest.

Joyce foregrounds his contestation of the quest in the title of the novel, *Ulysses*. Our expectations of a modern *Odyssey* are confounded in the initial pages of the novel in several ways. First, when Buck Mulligan appears with a “bowl of [shaving] lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed”, uttering his offering of “Introibo ad altare Dei” [I will go up to God’s altar] (1, Gifford 13), he mocks both the communion ritual and the recovery of the Grail. By beginning at the ‘end’ of the story, with the Grail already in
evidence, Joyce further undermines the expectations of the traditional quest narrative in which the *denouement* rests on the recovery of the Grail. Second, Joyce positions Mulligan and Stephen Dedalus in Martello Tower, which resembles the castle typically inhabited by Grail knights. But rather than acting as soldiers in liege to the Fisher King, we find that Mulligan and Stephen are impoverished squatters. Third, while Mulligan refers to the tower as “the omphalos” (7), cuing us to the tower’s mythic dimensions, the tower also has colonial associations that trouble the mythic associations. As Richard Ellman points out, the Martello tower was “one of seventy-four which the British had hastily flung up along the English and Irish coasts in 1804 to forestall a French invasion. Unlike most of the others it had only recently been evacuated by the army” (xiv). Stephen and Mulligan thus inhabit the abandoned castle of the conquering forces.

Additionally, the action of Mulligan standing on the tower gunrest, which now lacks guns or ammunition as he “blesses” his chalice, functions to underline the double oppression of the Irish from the Italian pope and the English monarchy. As Stephen muses to himself, he is bound to twin masters, “an English and an Italian....The imperial British state... and the holy Roman catholic and apostolic church” (24). For Stephen, the Pope and the state stand in for the authoritative position of the mythic Fisher King in a literalization of the Grail myth. Stephen recognizes that as a colonized subject, he can never be a hero; to emulate the English is to reject his birthright as an Irishman. Given the opportunity to take up the chalice/Grail, Stephen rejects the role of the Grail knight as irrelevant:

The nickel shaving-bowl shone, forgotten, on the parapet. Why should I bring it down? Or leave there all day, forgotten friendship?
He went over to it, held it in his hands awhile, feeling its coolness, smelling the clammy slaver of the lather in which the brush was stuck. So I carried the boat of incense then at Clongowes. I am another now and yet the same. A servant too. A server of a servant. (12)

Acceptance of the chalice, for Stephen, is linked to a life of servitude, both to the British Empire and Catholicism. In such a capacity, the Grail fails to offer Stephen or his Irish community the possibility of regeneration implicit in the Grail myth and points to the myth's failure as an organizational principle.

Stephen also rejects the Grail due to its connotation with the destructive rather than the generative aspects of the feminine. Like Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, Stephen is haunted by death, in particular that of his mother, whose recent illness occasioned his return from Paris:

Silently in a dream she had come to him after her death, her wasted body within its loose brown graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood, her breath, that had bent upon him, mute, reproachful, a faint odour of wetted ashes. Across the threadbare cuffedge he saw the sea hailed as a great sweet mother by the wellfed voice beside him. The ring of bay and skyline held a dull green mass of liquid. A bowl of white china had stood beside her deathbed holding the green sluggish bile which she had torn up from her rotting liver by fits of loud groaning vomiting. (4)

Stephen finds it difficult to embrace the mythic mother when haunted by the ghost of his personal mother. Unable to "kneel down and pray for her" (4) as she asked from her deathbed, Stephen's refusal to comply with his mother's wishes is commonly believed to have killed her. Clearly the white, china bowl is another form of the mythic Grail. In this Grail scenario, Stephen has apparently found the wrong Grail: instead of restorative water, it contains the vomited bile of a dying woman, a near corpse. On a deeper level, Joyce implies that the Fisher King's subjugation of Ireland, in the guise of the English
king and the Catholic pope, has destroyed the regenerative feminine in Ireland, contributing to an Irish genocide.

Stephen's relationship to his dead mother is further troubled by his conflation of his mother with the archetypal Terrible Mother. For example, while Mulligan sees the ocean as "our great sweet mother" (3), Stephen clearly views the ocean as the Terrible Mother who devours. As he recalls a recent drowning, he links the man's death to his mother's:

The man that was drowned nine days ago off Maiden's rock [...] A drowning man. His human eyes scream to me out of horror of his death. I... With him together down ... I could not save her. Waters: bitter death: lost. (57)

As Stephen imagines the body of the man pulled into the sea, Stephen's stream of consciousness reveals his conflation of himself with the drowning man in an experience so intense as to be almost physical. The notion of his own death leads Stephen mentally back to his obsession with his mother's death and what he perceives as his own failure. Since Stephen sees the sea as an aspect of the negative feminine archetype, the water that should be restorative in the context of the Grail myth is instead perceived as destructive. His reverie leads to further associations of the feminine with death:

Across the sands of all the world, followed by the sun's flaming sword, to the west, trekking to evening lands. She trudges, schlepps, trains, drags, trascines her load. A tide westering, moondrawn, in her wake. Tides, myriadislanded, within her, blood not mind, oinopa ponton, a winedark sea. Behold the handmaid of the moon. In sleep the wet sign calls the hour, bids her rise, Bridebed, childbed, bed of death, ghostcandled. Omnis caro ad te veniel. He comes, pale vampire, through storm his eyes, his bat sails bloodying the sea, mouth to her mouth's kiss. (59-60)

In the above passage, the compound words mirror Stephen's psychological conflation of his mother, death, and sexuality in the archetype of the Terrible Mother.
Associated with the moon and the tides, the Terrible Mother inhabits cyclical time. Stephen envisages that he will experience union with the Terrible Mother through a vampire kiss in which he can suck her blood and sink into her “bed of death,” in an eroticized encounter that will provide an experience of eternal time. But in trying to understand his psychological experience and his desire for oblivion, he wrongly attributes these destructive aspects of the feminine archetype to an actual female presence:

She, she, she. What she? The virgin at Hodges Figgin’ window on Monday looking in for one of the alphabet books you were going to write. Keen glance you gave her [...]


Stephen’s repetition of the word “she” attests to his obsession with the feminine presence. The question that follows: “what she?” is indicative of his attempts to tie his psychological experience of the feminine archetype to a female figure, attempts that echo those of Marlow as he confronts the archetype of the Terrible Mother in *Heart of Darkness*. In Stephen’s mind, all forms of the feminine blur and like Marlow, Stephen flees from the feminine as overwhelming and destructive, while he perceives it as simultaneously luring him.

As he walks across the beach at Sandymount, Stephen’s view is suggestive of the mythic wasteland of the archetypal, destructive feminine with the “bloated carcass of a dog” (55), a boat “sunk in sand” (55), a “porter-bottle stood up, stogged to its waist, in the cakey sand dough [...] and on the higher beach a dryingline with two crucified shirts” (50). His perspective is that of the Grail knight who recognizes the wasteland. But having refused the Grail, Stephen has no myth with which to replace the rejected quest. Unable
to relate to the heroic myth on a national or personal level, Stephen is an impotent figure. While he openly declares his lack of identification with the role of the heroic knight, claiming, “I'm not a hero, however” (3), he persists in carrying an “ashplant” walking stick, suggestive of the knight's lance. The ashplant becomes a vestigal appendage that he is unable to discard, much as the quest itself is an anachronism which he cannot relinquish.

Colonized intellectually by western Enlightenment values, Stephen is unable to envisage an alternative to the goal-oriented, temporal focus of the quest. As we read Stephen's stream of consciousness in “Proteus,” it becomes clear that even his thoughts are 'colonized' by various philosophical perspectives:

Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes. Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust: coloured signs. Limits of the diaphane. But he adds: in bodies. Then he was aware of them bodies before of them coloured. How? By knocking his sconce against them sure. Go easy. Bald he was and a millionaire, maestro di color che sanno. Limit of the diaphane in. Why in? Diaphane, adiaphane. If you can put your five fingers through it, it is a gate, if not a door. Shut your eyes and see. (45)

In this first paragraph of “Proteus,” Stephen appears to be citing fragments from various philosophical and religious sources: Aristotle, the mystic Jakob Boehme, and Cloyne George Berkeley (Gifford 44-45). It is as if his own physical experience of his environment, the “seaspawn and seawrack,” is in conflict with his intellectual training. Stephen has difficulty allowing his own voice to penetrate through that of these authority figures. Like Hamlet, to whom he often compares himself, he finds it difficult to act because he has little sense of his own perspective.
Stephen's guide in resolving his conundrum is Leopold Bloom. Similar to the figure of the Russian in *Heart of Darkness*, who demonstrated the new paradigm of pilgrimage to Marlow, Bloom functions as a mentor to Stephen. Like the Russian, Bloom is also a cultural outsider; as a Jew, Bloom is part of neither the Protestant nor Catholic traditions, although he has been baptized in both religions. Whereas Stephen wanders the beach at Sandymount with his ashplant posing philosophical questions, Bloom has neither training nor interest in classical knowledge. Instead, he is preoccupied with the immediate experience of daily living. The "Calypso" chapter relates his stream of consciousness as he prepares breakfast, reflects on his wife's toast preference, the cat's state of mind, the potato in his pocket that he carries as a talisman and his own preference for mutton kidneys, "which gave to his palette a fine tang of faintly scented urine" (65). Where Stephen remains obsessed with the devouring and deathly aspect of the eternal feminine, Bloom is preoccupied with how he might engineer to exit the butcher shop in time to follow home the previous customer and walk "behind her moving hams" (71). The meticulous cataloguing of Bloom's prosaic activities includes a description of his visit to the outhouse and the movement of his bowels despite the previous day's constipation, an exaggerated attempt at realism that challenged the sensibility of the censors and the interest of the reader in the reporting of the scatological activities of everyman.² The depiction of such routine activities ensures that we will note not only how greatly Bloom differs from Stephen, but also the irony present in any comparison of Bloom and Odysseus.³

Unlike "godlike" Odysseus (Homer 27), who is king of Ithaca, Bloom is "the people's prince" (Gifford 70), dedicated to the profane and the prosaic. Ezra Pound described him as "the basis of democracy; he is the man on the street, the next man,
the public, ... he is also Shakespeare, Ulysses, The Wandering Jew, the Daily Mail
reader, the man who believes what he sees in the papers, Everyman...." ("Ulysses"
403). Similarly, Morton P. Levitt notes the ways in which Bloom defies the heroic
tradition, writing that "Bloom fails as a businessman, fails as a husband and father, fails
even as Jew to understand his sole heritage.... Yet somehow we sense... that Bloom
may represent one of the few remaining paths – the Promised Land in our time" (141).
Levitt recognizes that if we evaluate Bloom’s behaviour by the heroic standards of
Odysseus, Bloom will have “failed,” since he has “accomplished” nothing. Yet, Levitt
sees that Bloom’s behaviour offers us some vision of completeness. I would argue that
without naming it explicitly as such, Levitt has identified Bloom as a prototypical pilgrim.
Because we tend to read the comparison between Bloom and Odysseus as ironic, we
may overlook the several aspects of Bloom’s behaviour that pose an alternative to the
quest.

By providing an additional plot-line to the one detailing Stephen’s experiences,
Joyce further destabilizes the unified, authoritative view associated with the quest
narrative. In a traditional rendering of the quest, we anticipate an omniscient narrator
and a singular point of view that reveals the hero’s exploits. In providing Bloom’s stream
of consciousness in addition to that of Stephen (and later of Gertie and Molly), Joyce
presents intersecting episodes involving multiple characters.

Further, unlike Odysseus who consciously sets off on a quest, Bloom makes a
deliberate attempt to undertake a pilgrimage. As he muses to himself,

Makes you feel young. somewhere in the east: early morning: set off at
dawn, travel round in front of the sun, steal a day’s march on him. Keep it
up forever never grow a day older technically. (68)
By situating himself within the diurnal cycle, Bloom seeks to always be one day ahead of the sun and thus experience eternal time. His intention is to "travel round" in a circuitous path that identifies him with the cyclical nature of the feminine. He is not interested in a cumulative version of time, in which one measures ever increasing progress toward a singular goal. Where the *Odyssey* occurs over ten years, attesting to the complexity and difficulty of Odysseus's quest, Bloom's pilgrimage transpires in one day. His activities, which include purchasing a bar of lemon soap for which he owes payment, attending Paddy Dignam's funeral, masturbating in the park, lunching at the pub, visiting Mina Purefoy at the maternity hospital, and a trip to Nightown do not require the special skills or proficiencies associated with the heroic figure. Nor is Bloom interested in the fame that accompanies the successful questor.

Additionally, Bloom's value system is relational, rather than hierarchical, a perspective identified with the model of the pilgrimage that I outlined in the Introduction. Rather than emphasizing his accomplishments, Bloom's puts store in his connections to his wife, to his daughter, to Dignam, and to Stephen, whom he 'rescues' from a fight in Nightown. As Bloom says to Stephen: "All must work, have to, together" (747), a comment that reflects Bloom's paradigm of a web-like interdependence as opposed to the solitary endeavour of the quest.

Finally, Bloom brings the repressed feminine to consciousness. Where Odysseus leaves home to recover a woman – Helen of Troy – Bloom recovers and redeems the repressed feminine archetype in the aspects of Irish-Catholic Gertie MacDowell; his wife, English-Spanish Molly Tweedy Bloom; and the Jewish dominatrix, Bella Cohen. These three women, described in the chapters, "Nausicaa," "Penelope" and "Circe," can be seen as representatives of the mythological triple goddess – the
maiden, the mother and the crone. In portraying Bloom's encounter with each aspect of the goddess, Joyce returns the repressed feminine to consciousness, not as a monologic object of the quest, but as complex subjects who also function on a mythic level to represent the various aspects of the feminine archetype. I want to consider in detail Bloom's encounters with each of these representative female figures to show how Joyce destabilizes the female role in the quest and to show how Bloom is able to guide Stephen out of his stasis by directing him to the site of the feminine.

As the maiden or virgin aspect of the triple goddess, Gertie is portrayed as a victim of Catholicism and the heroic myth, both of which position her as an object rather than as a subject. Through the use of stream of consciousness, we see how unaware Gertie is of her situation, which lends her predicament an additional poignancy. Described as "in very truth as fair a specimen of winsome Irish girlhood as one could wish to see" (452), she is obsessed with the commodification of beauty. Her goal is to be one of the "leaders of fashion" (453). Her values of appropriate feminine behaviour are gleaned from advertising slogans in magazines that advocate such activities as taking "Widow Welch's female pills" (452) or following the advice of "Madame Vera Verity, directress of the Woman Beautiful page of the Princess novelette, who had first advised her to try eyebroleine which gave that haunting expression to the eyes..." (453). Gertie practices crying in front of the mirror and in a similarly studied, yet ostensibly innocent fashion, tries to get Bloom's attention in the park by showing progressively more of her legs and bloomers. Gertie imagines that should she successfully reach the apex of fashion, she will win the approbation of men and a marriage proposal from Reggy Wylie. As the object of the quest, Gertie's success is measured by her ability to attract the male
gaze. Reminiscent of Pilgrimage’s Miriam Henderson prior to her epiphany, Gertie cannot envisage a world in which she would have value as an independent subject.

The cultural conditioning that trains Gertie to position herself as object is compounded by her religious training which idolizes the feminine capacity for childbirth without acknowledging the female body. Descriptions of Gertie’s thoughts and activities in this chapter are interlaced with references to the church service in progress, and particularly the liturgy to the Virgin Mary, the Stella Maris, “Mary, star of the sea” (449). The comparison of the Virgin and Gertie is further extended by descriptions of Gertie dressed in “electric blue” (455), the Virgin’s colour; with eyes “of the bluest Irish blue;” (453) and wearing blue knickers (456). She sports a “telltale flush, delicate as the faintest rose-bloom…” (453), a description that puns on Bloom’s name, reminding us of Gertie’s physicality. The juxtaposition between Gertie and the Virgin Mary points to the ways in which Gertie’s behaviour both reinforces that of the Virgin and simultaneously contradicts it. Gertie’s youth and virginity align her with Mary, yet Gertie’s budding sexuality conflicts with the premises of the Virgin’s lack of original sin and the immaculate conception. Gertie’s solution to the conundrum posed by these conflicting positions is to eroticize religious devotion; she imagines Bloom “literally worshipping at her shrine” (471). Gertie’s stream of consciousness reveals the ways in which Catholicism undermines her subjectivity and provides an unrealistic model of sexual relationships and marriage for women. Observing Bloom’s sexual arousal and masturbation during the fireworks, Gertie, “trembling in every limb” (477) envisages a vicarious orgasm for herself:

She would fain have cried to him chokingly, held out her snowy slender arms to him to come, to feel his lips laid on her white brow the cry of a young girl’s love, a little strangled cry, wrung from her, that cry that has
rung through the ages. And then a rocket sprang and bang shot blind and 
O! then the Roman candle burst and it was like a sign of O! and everyone 
cried O! O! in raptures and it gushed out of it a stream of rain gold hair 
threads and they shed and ah! They were all greeny dewy stars falling 
with golden, O so lively! O so soft, sweet, soft! (477)

The description above, in a parody of the style of the popular, sensation fiction further 
points to the discrepancy between Gertie's imagined life and reality. The failure of 
Gertie's fantasy is intensified for the reader as Bloom's stream of consciousness reveals 
that he makes none of the connections between the venerated Virgin and Gertie that 
Gertie imagines. While the view of Gertie's bloomers provokes his sexual activity, it is 
Bloom's contemplation of his wife Molly's affair with Blazes Boylan that preoccupies 
Bloom; he doesn't even know Gertie's name (485). Instead of the mystical rose 
associated with Mary, Bloom describes the smell of Gertie's perfume as she leaves: 
"Roses, I think, She'd like scent of that kind. Sweet and cheap: soon sour" (488), in an 
assessment of their class distinctions. Unlike Homer's Nausica, who is a Princess, 
Bloom ascertains that Gertie is from Dublin's lower class.

Joyce's portrayal of Gertie points to a betrayal both of women and the poor by 
Catholicism. While Mary, we are told, never abandons anyone, the voices singing 
supplication to the Virgin overlap with Gertie's admission that her alcoholic father beats 
her (460-1). It is Gertie, lame, and the victim of familial abuse, not a beatific Mary, who 
Joyce reveals to us as the mythic maiden figure. And as Joyce portrays Gertie's 
construction of herself as an object to be admired by men and envied by women, using 
standards derived from advertising and religion, we see that just as Stephen's thoughts 
are colonized by an oppressive culture, women's bodies are also colonized, suppressing 
authentic behaviour which would threaten the masculinist, Catholic culture. Gertie's
dreams of "weddingbells ringing for Mrs Reggy Wylie T.C.D." (456), which would enable her ascend the gender and class hierarchical rungs to become Reggy Wylie's possession, is contrasted with her dismal home life. Joyce challenges the feminine role of the quest, not only enlarging it to include female subjectivity, but also revealing the ways in which the quest fails to serve women's aims and ultimately undermines Irish culture.

Bloom's pilgrimage takes him to a brothel in Nightown, Dublin's red light district. A fantastical world, Nightown is peopled with grotesque characters who are preoccupied with licentious groping, farting and snot. We know that we have entered a liminal space from the presence of the ghost-like forms of "red and green will-o'the-wisps" (561), spectres which are neither dead nor alive. We recognize Bloom's entry into a mythic underworld in which the traditional hierarchies of polite Dublin society are inverted as upper class women of position humiliate inept and impotent men. In this dreamscape, Bloom's unconscious fears and desires are played out in a carnivalesque atmosphere in which all religions and social classes mix and Bloom is promoted to the position of Lord Mayor in a further upset of social boundaries.

If we recall Victor Turner's model of the pilgrimage from chapter one, Nightown would seem to function as an example of communitas: it is marginal, on the edges of the social structure and arises out of what is considered to be inferior. Turner also claims that communitas "is almost everywhere held to be sacred or 'holy,' possibly because it transgresses or dissolves the norms that govern structured and institutionalized relationships and is accompanied by experiences of unprecedented potency" (128). Clearly, in Catholic Dublin, Nightown is not considered to be a holy place. But Bloom's experience there is certainly one of liminality in which all of the social and sexual
relationships are transgressed to produce the "unprecedented potency" Turner identifies. Just as he has demonstrated the detrimental qualities of the quest for the maiden figure, Joyce now deliberately locates Bloom and Stephen in the part of Dublin that is the least sacred to reveal how the repression of the feminine and the bawdy body have created a sterile Irish culture. In this way, Joyce challenges the governing paradigms about the feminine.

If we consider Bloom as an analogue to the Russian, then Bloom journeys to Nightown as the trickster figure. As I have shown in Chapter 1, the trickster is a marginalized, humble figure of lower rank, one who is "neither-this-nor-that," who appears in the liminal phase of rituals to regenerate the dominant culture by releasing the traditional elements in favour of new structures. In the liminal space of Nightown, Bloom subverts gender norms by becoming androgynous and declaring, "O, I so want to be a mother" (614). He takes on the creative potential of the feminine archetype, giving birth to "eight male yellow and white children" (614).

Following this final transgression of cultural norms, the "new womanly" Bloom (614) is confronted with the figure of Bella Cohen, the crone. The crone is another aspect of the triple goddess, who passes on her life experience to enhance the community often in the guise of the wise old woman. However, Bella is described as a "massive whoremistress" with a "sprouting mustache" and "olive face [which] is heavy, slightly sweated and fullnosed, with orangetainted nostrils" and "falcon eyes" (641). Joyce has painted a portrait here of the predatory and masculinized hag as frightening dominatrix. Catriona Moloney has noted how the crone or hag figure includes for Joyce "a disturbing yet enabling power" typically associated with "poetry, prophecy and war" (104). But Bella, to my mind, is more compelling when seen as another aspect of the
crone archetype, the companion to the old woman with "[o]ld shrunken paps" (Joyce 15), the "wandering crone" (15) who delivers milk to Martello tower. The juxtaposition of Bella's name with her un-feminine visage, her control of access to female sexuality, and implied castration of Bloom taps into the dark side of the power of the crone. Joyce's portrayal of the destructive side of the feminine archetype suggests that Joyce is once again trying to recuperate the archetype to allow us to view it in its completeness.

Bloom's encounter with Bella is a means by which Bloom can confront his anxieties about taking the feminine archetype into himself. In the sado-masochistic sex role exchange with Bloom, in which Bella becomes the male Bello, Bloom is made to experience the feminine gender position through the domination exercised by Bella/Bello over Bloom. With the assistance of the female prostitutes and the female brothel cook, Bella/Bello declares to Bloom: "What you longed for has come to pass. Henceforth you are unmanned and mine in earnest, a thing under the yoke" (647); the feminine condition is shown to be the subordinate and enslaved position. Bloom's punishment is to be wigged, singed, perfumesprayed, rice powdered, with smooth shaven armpits. Tape measurements will be taken next your skin. You will be laced with cruel force into vicelike corsets of soft dove coutille, with whalebone busk, to the diamond trimmed pelvis.... (647-48)

Made into a woman of fashion, Bloom is also objectified, made over to meet socio-culture standards of passive womanhood. This passage reveals Bloom's guilt at his past behaviour of trying on Molly's underwear, his anxiety about being cuckolded, as well as his desire to access the feminine within himself. Coupled with the portrayal of women's fashion as punitive, Bloom's cross dressing feels to him like a sadistic emasculation. Eventually he is "broken, closely veiled for the sacrifice" (655) and turned into a pig.
As a Jew, Bloom's porcine transformation is an additional humiliation. Joseph Valente provides an exegesis to show how the swine transformation in "Circe" is linked both to Bloom's breakfast of a pork kidney and his incestuous thoughts of his daughter, whose absence he mourns. I would reframe this in a mythological perspective in which Bloom's impending sacrifice as a pig is suggestive of the sacrifice of swine for the Eleusinian mysteries. These ceremonies reenacted the abduction of Persephone, at which time a swineherd and his swine were swallowed up when Hades opened the earth. Joyce has situated Bloom in the mythic underworld, in which the repressed feminine is located. Rather than staying above ground in the waste land with mourning Demeter, Stephen and Bloom have journeyed to Hades to seek Persephone. And just as Stephen conflates the young woman at Hodges Figgin' window with the feminine archetype, so, too, has Bloom melded Molly, Gertie and Persephone into a generic fertility principle, the loss of which he mourns. He recognizes how the feminine has been forced 'underground', causing a waste land.

Susan Lichtman sees the role of the crone as twofold: to provide wisdom and history to the community and to reconnect to the virgin to sustain the circle of maiden-mother-crone (64-66). In terms of providing wisdom and history to the community, Bella reveals the ways in which Bloom has internalized the cultural devaluation of the feminine. His anxiety about being "[h]enpecked" (668) and under the thumb of his wife where "the missus is master. Petticoat government" (642) shows a core fear of his own feminine side, is coded as negative in Western culture. As a result, he is unable to see the feminine in its entirety; it is always a madonna/whore dichotomy. The arguments we see represented by the characters in Nightown are Bloom's own conflicts about the
feminine. Bella's lessons provide Bloom with vicarious experiences of womanly life and an understanding of the feminine position he previously lacked.

In terms of the crone’s role to connect to the virgin, Bella's only accomplishment in this regard appears to be to recruit them as prostitutes. But there occurs another subversion of the feminine archetype seen in "Nausicaa," where the virgin is revealed also to be a young woman of sexual desire. Bloom's encounter in "Circe" with the Nymph, who originates in the picture over his bed, speaks to this further enrichment of the feminine archetype. The Nymph educates Bloom, explaining how contemporary culture has commercialized and trivialized the mythic figure of the Virgin:

Mortal! You found me in evil company, highkickers, coster picnic makers, pugilists, popular generals, immoral panto boys in flesh tights and the nifty shimmy dancers, La Aurora and Karini, musical act, the hit of the century. I was hidden in cheap pink paper that smelt of rock oil. (655-656)

Her image is so sanitized that she is completely desexed:

We immortals, as you saw today, have not such a place and no hair there either. We are stonecold and pure. We eat electric light....

Tranquilla convent. Sister Agatha. Mount Caramel, the apparitions of Knock and Lourdes. No more desire. (She reclines her head, sighing) Only the ethereal. (660-1)

As Sheldon Brivic notes, "[w]hile Stephen tends to view women with loathing throughout Ulysses, Bloom tends to adore and deify them" (137). When the Nymph tells Bloom that he has fantasized about a woman so ethereal that she is no longer anatomically female, lacking a vagina and pubic hair, he utters, "You have broken the spell. The last straw. If there were only ethereal where would you all be, postulants and novices?" (661).

Bloom’s remarks suggest that he now sees himself as having been in thrall to a beatific
version of the feminine, not unlike the one that proscribes Gertie's behaviour. Bloom's revelation allows him to confront both the Nymph and Bella.

While Bloom demystifies the "madonna", it remains for Stephen to confront the whore and corpse as embodying his core anxieties about the feminine. Stephen confronts his mother, following a dance macabre. She appears in "leper grey with a wreath of faded orange blossoms and a torn bridal veil, her face worn and noseless, green with grave mould" (681-2). Here, the mother is both bride and contagious corpse, again the image of the feminine that both lures and repulses Stephen. When she calls for Stephen to repent, he finally recognizes the spectre as the Terrible Mother, "The corpsechewer!" (682). He is able to defy her with his cry of "Non serviam! ... No! No! No! Break my spirit all of you if you can! I'll bring you all to hell!," throwing down his ashplant, after smashing the chandelier (682-683). Brivic interprets Stephen's discarding of the ashplant as "symbolically destroying the world.... destroying that which the father has erected" (132). I would take this line of thought a bit further to argue that Stephen is destroying the logos aspects of Western culture that have proscribed his behaviour: the "light" of reason and goal oriented thinking. Stephen acknowledges his own complicity in his colonization, remarking as he taps his forehead, "But in here it is I must kill the priest and the king" (688). Those voices of intellect that colonized Stephen's mind and suppressed his own perspective are now dismissed.

Stephen's destruction of the lamp prepares him to move willingly into the darkness of the Terrible Mother and explore the devouring feminine that lures and repels him. Where Marlow refused to get off the boat of reason, Stephen, aided by Bloom, allows himself to experience the underworld in the form of a Black mass where Dublin
burns and chaos reigns. In a scene suggestive of both Armageddon and the 1916 rebellion:


As the chasm opens, old values are released, and a new paradigm takes place in this site of *communitas*. Stephen and Bloom find themselves witnessing the rising altar of Saint Barbara, patron saint of artillery, where

(On the altarstone Mrs Mina Purefoy, goddess of unreason, lies naked, fettered, a chalice resting on her swollen belly, with the mass celebrated by Father Malachi O'Flynn, in a long petticoat and reversed chasuble, his two left feet back to front....) (695)

Mina Purefoy, whose lengthy, three day labour is the topic of "Oxen of the Sun," now appears in bondage. With the chalice balanced on her pregnant womb, the connection between the chalice and the feminine generative principle is symbolically restored and Bloom and Stephen are witness to a ritual recovery of the potency of the feminine principle. In the traditional Catholic service, the chalice is handled only by male clerics. The invocation of Saint Barbara, which seems particularly apt since she is often portrayed with the chalice, suggests that we are not meant to see this as a complete rejection of Christian principles, but rather a feminization of them. Father Malachi O'Flynn, his name connoting both Jewish and Catholic ancestry, wears a petticoat, suggesting his feminization. His priestly uniform, the chasuble, is reversed, undermining old hierarchies. His two left feet, positioned "back to front" signal to the reader the upsetting of traditional patterns and hierarchies.
When Bloom tries to return Stephen's ashplant to him in the midst of the Black mass, Stephen refuses it, declaring "Stick no. Reason. This feast of pure reason" (696). The return of the chalice to its origins redeems the chalice as the feminine tomb/womb that the logos-centred culture often interprets as chaos or "unreason." I read Stephen's rejection of his ashplant/lance as his epiphany that the ashplant/lance is a vestige of a mythic system that is no longer of use to him. He can now fully reject the heroic position as one that is detrimental to him and to Ireland. Through his association with Bloom, Stephen is able to confront the repressed feminine in the form of the Terrible Mother. The restoration of the Grail to its feminine origins that Stephen and Bloom witness allows Stephen to relinquish the quest myth and overcome his impotence.

Having newly negotiated their relationship to the feminine, Stephen and Bloom continue their pilgrimage to Bloom's home and Molly, as the embodiment of the mother aspect of the triple goddess. This final chapter of Ulysses provides the final evidence of the failure of the quest both in the structure and the content of Molly's stream of consciousness. Her soliloquy epitomizes the aspects of a spatial reality. In a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, Joyce described the "Penelope" section as having "no beginning middle or end" (17 Oct 1921). Joyce's description of Molly's soliloquy reveals his deliberate construction of the kind of discontinuity seen in Dorothy Richardson's Pilgrimage and T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land – a discontinuity that I have associated with the modernist project to emphasize spatial considerations over temporal ones. In her musings, Molly easily moves not back and forth through time in a linear manner, but spatially, in a web-like fashion through the past, present and future:

that was a relief wherever you be let your wind go free who knows if that pork chop I took with my cup of tea after was quite good with the heat I couldn't smell anything off it Im sure that queerlooking man in the
porkbutchers is a great rogue I hope that lamp I not smoking fill my nose up with smuts better than having him leaving the gas on all night I couldn't rest easy in my bed in Gibralter even getting up to see why am I so damned nervous about that though I like it in the winter its more company O Lord it was rotten cold too that winter when I was only about ten was I yes I had the big doll with all the funny clothes dressing her up and undressing that icy wind sketing across from those mountains the something Nevada sierra Nevada standing at the fire with the little bit of a short shift I had up to heat myself ...I hope hes not going to get in with those medicals leading him astray to imagine hes young again coming in at 4 in the morning it must be if not more still he had the manners not to wake me what do they find to gabber about all night squandering money and getting drunker and drunker couldn’t they drink water then he starts giving us his orders for eggs and tea Findon haddy and hot buttered toast I suppose well have him sitting up like the king of the country pumping the wrong end of the spoon up and down in his egg wherever he learned that from and I love to hear him falling up the stairs of a morning....I think I'll get a bit of fish tomorrow or today is it Friday yes I will with some blancmange with black currant jam like long ago not those 2 lb pots of mixed plum and apple from the London and Newcastle Williams and Woods goes twice as far only for the bones I hate those eels cod yes Ill get a nice piece of cod Im always getting enough for 3 forgetting anyway I'm sick of that everlasting butchers meat from Buckleys loin chops and leg beef and rib steak and scrag mutton and calves pluck the very name is enough or a picnic suppose we all gave 5/- each and or let him pay and invite some other woman for him .... (906-7)

I've quoted rather substantially from the text to show how Molly moves mentally through time. Her pleasure at passing gas leads her to wonder whether the pork chop she consumed at tea was fresh which leads her by association to the butcher. Presumably the association of the butcher with smoked meat leads her to speculate on the safety of a smoking gas lamp to a consideration of winter temperatures to intercourse in winter as a means of socializing to the doll she had as a ten year old. She recalls the pleasure she took in her own body which leads her to consider Bloom's early morning arrival and his habits which alternately annoy and delight her. She then goes on to planning of the next day's meal, the quality of jam and the relative economy of fish over red meat with bones and her desire for a break with routine meal fare. Joyce writes as Molly thinks, omitting
punctuation and including verbal conventions that would normally be excluded from written accounts. For example, Joyce maintains the abbreviation “lb” and Arabic numbers in “2 lb” as well as Molly’s equivocal “and or” which while not grammatically correct, accurately reflects her actual thought processes. Her spatial rather than linear approach to time creates a sense of time as eternity, where all time is present simultaneously. Such a conclusion is supported by Diane Tolemeo’s mapping of the “Penelope” chapter in which she shows how the eight sentence composition of Molly’s soliloquy is linked to algebraic representations of infinity, the number eight on its side (449-451). Joyce thus constructs Molly’s thought processes as a performance of the reality that her soliloquy endorses.

Joyce further challenges the conventions of the quest in his construction of Molly’s character. Molly’s behaviour contradicts the cultural expectations of the nurturing – but asexual – mother. Unlike chaste Penelope, who waits ten years for the return of Odysseus, Molly has been unfaithful to Bloom in his eight hour absence. Feigning sleep upstairs while Stephen and Bloom drink hot chocolate, Molly is laying in bed mentally replaying her adulterous encounter with Blazes Boylan. As Bonnie Kime Scott points out, Molly’s soliloquy “topples the masonry of sentimental, proper, polite interpretations of women’s lives” (169). In her stream of consciousness, Molly reveals a sexual desire not accounted for in the cultural construction of “mother”, noting how “a woman wants to be embraced 20 times a day almost to make her look young no matter by who so long as to be in love” (925). She muses to herself that “in the spring Id like a new fellow every year” (923). However, we also see from her inner thoughts the conflict between her sexuality and the cultural expectations of how that sexuality can be expressed. Her sexual behaviour is far more constrained than her husband’s by social and religious dicta. While
Bloom can openly fetishize women’s bodies, especially their feet, as he walks down a public street, similar reflections on Molly’s part are carried out in a dark bedroom, where she can only think, not even state, her own desire for

those fine young men I could see down in Margate strand bathing place from the side of the rock standing up in the sun naked like a God or something and then plunging into the sea with them why aren’t all men like that there’d be some consolation for a woman…. (923)

But she also recognizes that the woman’s role is to worry about how she “appears” to men, rather than to indulge her own feelings. For example, during sex with Boylan, she curtails her impulse to

shout out all sorts of things fuck or shit or anything only not to look ugly or those lines from the strain who knows the way hed take it you want to feel your way with a man theyre not all like him thank God some of them want you to be so nice about it…. (894)

Her consideration of her dilemma of how to be herself without causing offence to men demonstrates the cultural expectations. We see from her thoughts how gender role expectations of female passivity are enforced by women’s fashion:

clothes we have to wear whoever invented them expecting you to walk up Killiney hill then for example at that picnic all staysed up you cant do a blessed thing in them in a crowd run or jump out of the way…. (895)

Like Miriam Henderson in Richardson’s Pilgrimage, Molly is aware of the ways in which the wearing of a corset prohibits her full participation, both in physical activities and in society. It is not surprising that Molly finds it difficult to walk up Killiney hill since the boning in her corset would impair not only her breathing, but any articulation of her torso. Wearing of the corset reinforces the ways in which she is constructed as a static object who “cant do a blessed thing” (895).
Despite these cultural constraints, Molly maintains an awareness of her body in all of its manifestations: farting, menstruation, urination and orgasm. Yet, she also feels compelled simultaneously to repress her natural functions to align herself with social expectations of the feminine in which the female body must be repressed. In reflecting on her recent tryst with Boylan, she declares to herself: “I hope my breath was sweet after those kissing comfits” (915), revealing her concern about the acceptability of her breath, rather than the experience of the kiss itself. Not only her breath, but her other bodily functions are similarly curtailed by social custom. While Stephen and Bloom unselfconsciously urinate outside after a night of imbibition, Molly is preoccupied with how much noise she is making while urinating in the chamber pot. To herself she thinks: “O Lord what a row youre making like the jersey lily easy O how the waters come down at Lahore” (915), for fear that Stephen or Bloom might hear her and thus make evident what she hopes to hide – that her body emits urine.

The onset of menstruation leads her to ruminate on the cultural expectations for female virginity and other gender role inequities:

> they always want to see a stain on the bed to know youre a virgin for them all that’s troubling them theyre such fools too you could be a widow or divorced 40 times over a daub of red ink would do or blackberry juice no that’s to purply O Jamesy let me up out of this pooh sweets of sin whoever suggested that business for women what between clothes and cooking and children this damned old bed too jingling like the dickens I suppose they could hear us away over the other side of the park till I suggested to put the quilt on the floor…. (914)

In this passage, her consideration of male expectations of female virginity lead by association to the nuisance of the passing of menstrual blood and the concern that the “jingling” bed springs may have betrayed her infidelity. The linking of menstruation, virginity, and adultery by the common factor of blood functions to highlight the perverse
ways in which blood on the sheets reveal male control of female sexuality. Following a sexual encounter, blood on the sheets can be evidence of female virginity and lack of prior sexual activity, but it can also be due to the onset of menstruation, signalling the absence of pregnancy and therefore the lack of sexual activity of a wife during a husband's absence.

Yet, as the reader bears witness to Molly's thoughts, we undermine society's construction of her as passive possession. And just as Dorothy Richardson persuaded us of the subjectivity of Miriam Henderson through Miriam's stream of consciousness, so, too, has Joyce demonstrated Molly's subjectivity and undermined the quest's construction of women as object. Joyce shows how the culture colonizes or overwrites Molly's reality just as it has colonized Stephen's and Gertie's. And in giving Molly the last word of the novel, in a soliloquy that is not intrinsic to the plot, Joyce undermines the quest motif even further. While only the reader knows Molly's thoughts, their very presence on the page confounds traditional plot expectations by foregrounding female experience rather than the triumphant return of the hero and the restoration of the kingdom.

Christine Froula, in a provocative reading of Molly as the fulfillment of the artist quest, sees "Molly (her chamber pot flowing with the blood of the womb) as the symbolic trophy at the end of Stephen's quest...." (92). While the chamber pot certainly recalls the chalice, it is problematic to ignore the fact that the chamber pot is also likely full of urine, if not feces, which mitigates against a reading of Molly as solely artist muse/mother. Richard Ellman reads the menstruation blood in the chalice as a link between Molly and the divine, noting that the blood in the chamber pot suggests that
...the body of God and the body of woman share blood in common. In allowing Molly to menstruate at the end Joyce consecrates the blood in the chamberpot rather than the blood in the chalice, mentioned by Mulligan at the beginning of the book. (171)

The readings of both Froula and Ellman sanctify Molly and the chalice without acknowledging the ways in which Molly's behaviour also includes the darker side of the feminine archetype. Just as the Black Mass in "Circe" restored the connection between the chalice/Grail and the female body, so, too, has Molly's soliloquy linked the mother as chalice/Grail to excremental and sexual functions normally omitted from the archetype. Joyce deliberately undermines a one-dimensional reading of the mother archetype as exclusively nurturing or generative. Instead, he reveals how women's bodies are seen as chaotic and thus as a potential threat to the linear, patriarchal culture. As Paul Delany notes,

> It is by woman's flesh, and especially her secret inner parts, that a world fallen into negation can be redeemed. At the same time, Joyce is fascinated by woman's double nature, combining the carnal with the transcendent. (79)

Bloom's commentary on Molly in which he associates her with the moon in her "waxing and waning" (824) partakes of the double nature of which Delany suggests. Such an image includes both the generative and the destructive aspect of the feminine archetype, allowing for the presence of both the Terrible and Generative mother archetypes. But Bloom's description of his wife also accurately describes her vacillating perspectives on gender relations. On the one hand, Molly shows how the culture fails to represent her subjectivity and on the other, participates in the subterfuge that curtails her full representation. While she opines that "it'd be much better for the world to be governed by the women in it you wouldn't see women going and killing one another and slaughtering"
(926) she also identifies with the male perspective, decrying the stereotypical portrayal of women as fickle: “I hate that in women no wonder they treat us the way they do we are all a dreadful lot of bitches” (927). Lisa Sternlieb has linked Molly’s ambiguity to a “textual performance of Penelope’s back-stage activity of weaving in order to unweave, of doing in order to undo…” (758). Seen from this perspective, Molly’s behaviour is antithetical to the linear progress associated with the quest. Such a disruption of linearity is perceived as chaotic when viewed from the position of logos. The confusion with which Molly’s vacillating behaviour is received is evidenced by the moral labels her behaviour accrues. For example, D.H. Lawrence thought Molly’s soliloquy “the dirtiest, most indecent, obscene thing ever written” (in Delany 78). Richard Pearce has examined previous critical treatments of Molly and notes that such assessments circulate around the question of whether Molly herself is “earth goddess or shrewish whore” (3). Surely the answer to this unnecessary dichotomy is found in Molly’s resounding “all a woman’s body yes” (932). As Diane Tolemeo has demonstrated, the mutli-faceted construction of Molly’s character is suggestive of cubist painting (446), further supporting Joyce’s deliberate attempts to thwart linear notions of time.

Where the traditional hero leaves home and his mother in order to find the Grail and conquer the dragon, Bloom’s prosaic behaviour undermines any notion of heroic undertakings. The recovery of the repressed feminine as maiden-mother-crone with both the positive and negative aspects redeems the Western Enlightenment culture from its preoccupation with logos. In a sense, Molly’s soliloquy does demonstrate the restoration of the kingdom that is predicted by the quest, but in a version that includes those normally marginalized from the quest. Bloom’s initial intention to “travel round in front of the sun” and locate eternal time is manifest in his return to Molly and the “plump mellow
yellow smell melons of her rump....” (867). As the site to which Bloom makes his pilgrimage, Molly provides the reader with the knowledge of both the generative and destructive aspects of the feminine and her final lines are an assertion of the transformative potential of spring and sexuality in the union of the masculine and feminine principle. Joyce’s choice to end the novel with Molly’s soliloquy takes the reader where Marlow was afraid to go – into the heart of darkness of the feminine body.
CHAPTER 5.
“IN MY END IS MY BEGINNING”:
THE PILGRIMAGE OF FOUR QUARTETS

In the two decades between the publication of T.S. Eliot’s poems *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets*, Eliot becomes reconciled to the failure of the heroic quest and committed to the alternative mythic form of the pilgrimage. Each of the four quartets -- “Burnt Norton,” “East Coker,” “The Dry Salvages” and “Little Gidding” – function as a site of pilgrimage. In “Burnt Norton,” the poet experiences the cyclical time that eluded him in *The Waste Land*. “East Coker” functions as the point of departure as he begins the wilderness portion of his pilgrimage. Once he enters the ‘new world’ of “The Dry Salvages” he recovers the feminine archetype and brings it into consciousness. He is then able to approach the shrine of “Little Gidding,” enabling him to relinquish fully the heroic position and find meaning in the timeless moment.

*Four Quartets* opens in the garden of Burnt Norton, a vacant manor house near Chipping Campden that Eliot visited in the mid-thirties. The garden locale is significant and shows a substantial shift from *The Waste Land*’s preoccupation with the corpse, announced in the title of “The Burial of the Dead.” “Burnt Norton” portrays instead an encounter with Gaia, the archetypal mother in her generative aspect. While the poet of “The Burial of the Dead” is preoccupied with the “stony rubbish” and the “dead tree [that] gives no shelter” (I 20, 23), in “Burnt Norton” he portrays a “rose-garden” inhabited by birds and children. The feminine presence encountered upon entrance into the garden of
Burnt Norton is no longer envisioned as the Terrible Mother of death of *The Waste Land*, but in her life-giving capacity.

Although the poet of *The Waste Land* recognized the inadequacy of relying solely on linear time, he could not step into eternal and cyclical time since it appeared as death to him. But in the garden of "Burnt Norton," the poet encounters the cyclical and ancient time associated with the archetypal feminine. Here, in this "first world" (23, 24), the stagnant world of *The Waste Land* is put aside for an Edenic space, outside linear time, where all time periods are present simultaneously:

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Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past. (l 1-3)
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However, such a return to a pre-lapsarian space is a theological and chronological impossibility, at least in Christian theology. Yet the poet asserts that "If all time is eternally present/ All time is unredeemable" (5). Choices made in the past need not interfere with the moment where "What might have been and what has been/ Point to one end which is always present" (9-10). It is possible to return to that experience of subject-object identification, where we lose consciousness of our ego in a unity with the environment. If all time is "unredeemable," then the lapse into original sin exists simultaneously with the pre-lapsarian state. Such an awareness frees the poet to enter "the passage which we did not take/ Towards the door we never opened" (12-13).³

Yet this pre-lapsarian vision is not exclusively Christian. David Tracy makes the point that "the central imagery of the entire passage in the rose garden is, through and through, Buddhist, not Christian" (273).⁴ Eliot's syncretic approach here reinforces the universality of eternal time. The poet's vision in which the lotos [sic] rose quietly,
quietly....” (ll. 38) represents a Jungian notion of wholeness and infinity (Archetypes 187).

In section two of “Burnt Norton,” the alienation of The Waste Land is replaced with the poet's sense of connection between his body and the earth. Through “[t]he dance along the artery/ The circulation of the lymph/” (6-7) he experiences feminine time. The flow of blood and lymph within his body are now seen as part of a larger pattern of nature, “figured in the drift of start”(8). While the chaos and uncertainty that the poet feared in The Waste Land still exist, the poet finds assurance in the consideration of the “still point of the turning world” (16), an image that includes both movement and fixity. As the axel of a spinning wheel appears immobile, the axis of the earth can be envisaged as fixed. At this centre point, the poet imagines a liminal state which is “[n]either flesh nor fleshless,” “[n]either from nor towards.... neither arrest nor movement” (16, 17, 18). In this place is the timeless movement which is a physical as well as an intellectual experience.

Such a liminal state defies definition; as the poet writes, “...I cannot say where / And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time” (22-23). Ole Bay Peterson has noted how “Eliot's idea of eternity as forming a kind of pattern or design where all times co-exist is remarkably similar to Einstein's space-time” (153). Certainly, the poet's declaration that he cannot give position and duration echoes the theories of quantum mechanics and the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. Werner Heisenberg's theory predicts that it is not possible to measure both the momentum and the position of a moving particle at the same time. As soon as you measure the momentum, you have altered the position and if you define the position, the momentum of the particle has changed. Heisenberg's theory provides a commentary on the nature of reality as
determined by the observer, rather than as fixed. As Zukav notes, "the primary significance of the uncertainty principle" is that "we cannot observe something without changing it. There is no such thing as the independent observer who can stand on the sidelines watching nature run its course without influencing it" (112). The poet recognizes that the categorization of the moment is less significant than the realization that the moment is one of grace, a "release from action and suffering" (25). Nothing is required of him because the pattern has already been cast.

In the re-experience of the prelapsarian moment, the poet has found the reassurance to exist within the moment. But as Mary Ann Gillies has pointed out, to be in the moment is to be devoid of meaning (102). This is the central dilemma of "Burnt Norton": relinquishing the goal-oriented focus of linear time leaves the poet without memory and significance. As if to reassure himself of the rightness of the pilgrimage, the poet recalls that to be in time, "involved with past and future" is to find the "place of disaffection" (42, 44). The world of linear time can only offer him the stagnant and death-ridden landscape of The Waste Land. He sees his only viable alternative as a descent into "[i]nternal darkness, deprivation/ And destitution of all property" (71-2), where he relinquishes all boundaries and markers of the known world. In such an activity, he also relinquishes the heroic position, letting go of ego and his own identity.

Yet, the poet remains governed by old paradigms. He acknowledges the diurnal time associated with the evening bell, but is troubled by the presence of the yew tree, common to grave yards and thus, a marker of linear time and mortality. The poet tries to ground the awareness of cyclical time that he lacked in The Waste Land by reminding himself of tangible, biological evidence in the observed heliotropism of the sunflower and clematis. He recognizes that his descent into the void of the archetypal feminine leaves
him without familiar markers, and he finds solace by reassuring himself of the presence of the "still point" – a pattern within the perceived chaos of the darkness.

Language, for the poet, is identified with linear time and the conscious world. Language fails to adequately describe the timeless experience; instead, words "strain/
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden" (13, 14). However, he distinguishes the prosaic "word" from the capitalized "Word," which is eternal and linked by association to Christ's temptation in the desert (II19-20). And just as Christ and the Israelites were able to move from the chaos of the waste land into redemption and order, the poet, through emulation, is able to effect the same transformation. Such a process, however, involves acceptance that the pattern is neither discernible nor within human control.

As the poet speculates on the nature of the pattern, he realizes that while he perceived the pattern as fixed, it is, in fact, in movement (23). If he were to look at the pattern in the Chinese jar, for example, at the molecular level, he would see the movement of molecules and atoms. Such a realization leads the poet to remark, "Ridiculous the waste..." (V 38). In this context, then, the abjection of The Waste Land can be seen as a necessary aspect of the suffering that precedes his transformation. Perhaps he is now able to discern that the only recompense for the loss of certainty, the grieving and the rage of The Waste Land, is to move into the eternal time associated with the pilgrimage.

The second quartet, "East Coker," marks the poet's departure into the unknown. Geographically, East Coker is the Somerset village from which Eliot's ancestor, Andrew Eliot, set out for the New World in the 1600s. The Puritan voyage to the New World was seen as mirroring the experience of the Israelites in the desert, the Puritan crossing of the Atlantic Ocean analogous to the Israelites escaping through the Red Sea. By
recalling the dissident Puritans who escape from religious persecution in England through their escape to freedom in the American colonies, Eliot evokes the early American association of the wilderness pilgrimage. The static, waste land is re-envisioned as the wilderness that leads to the Promised Land. While the pilgrim’s path may be uncertain, as it was for the Israelites in the desert, the expectation of spiritual rebirth at the end of the pilgrimage sustains the pilgrim. While he seeks healing for himself, he recognizes that he must leave the waste land, - and the heroic paradigm - behind him.

The first lines of "East Coker" evoke the cyclical and eternal aspects of time associated with pilgrimage:

   In my beginning is my end. In succession
   Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended,
   Are removed, destroyed, restored, or in their place
   Is an open field, or a factory, or a by-pass. (1-4)

The poet recognizes that his physical environment will eventually crumble, only to be reincorporated in some other form. At the same time, the passage suggests the subsuming of cyclical time into a modern, industrial reality that is product-oriented and thus, tied to linear time. Yet, even in our mortality there is evidence of the existence of cyclical time in the poet's references to "Old fires to ashes, and ashes to the earth/
Which is already flesh, fur and faeces" (6-7).

The reference to ashes suggests the Christian holiday of Ash Wednesday in which the faces of celebrants are smeared with ashes as an act of penance. Such penance is intended to turn attention away from the prosaic concerns of linear time and refocus the penitent’s attention on God and the eternal realm. Ash Wednesday signals the beginning of Lent and forty days of fasting in preparation for the commemoration of
the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Through the title of the poem and the first lines, the poet has established the intentions of the pilgrimage to leave behind the waste land.

Envisaging the re-enactment of an ancient fertility ritual, the poet reinforces his connection to cyclical time. In an "open field" (24) at dusk, the sound of a "weak pipe and the little drum" (27) accompany the

... dancing around the bonfire
The association of man and woman
In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie –
A dignified and commodious sacrament.
Two and two, necessarie coniunction,
Holding ech other by the hand or arm
whiche betokeneth concorde. (28-34)

Where "A Game of Chess" in The Waste Land focuses on abortion, lack of fulfillment, and the mundane "Jug jug to dirty ears", "East Coker" is concerned with the fertile harvest, both agricultural and human. Presented here in medieval vocabulary that attests to its archaic origins, the "daunsinge" and "necessarie conjunction" demonstrate a ritual connection to seasonal cycles rather than the arbitrary chronology of clock time. The poet's experience is an homage to chthonic power that reiterates the importance of the cyclical celebration of the seasons.

The Dionysian moment is juxtaposed with the apocalyptic time of Christianity, the

vortex that shall bring
The world to that destructive fire
                      
    That was a way of putting it – not very satisfactory" (15-16, 18).

He asks:

What was to be the value of the long looked forward to,
Long hoped for calm, the autumnal serenity
And the wisdom of age? Had they deceived us?
Or deceived themselves, the quiet-voiced elders,  
Bequeathing us merely a receipt for deceit? (ll 23-27)

The poetic is suddenly personalized here, the critique of linear time and the reliance on  
the heroic quest now extended as an evaluation of the illusory permanence of a familial  
or literary lineage, mirrored in economic and social success of the individual. The only  
truth that the poet now accepts is that "the pattern is new in every moment" (ll 35).

The heroic quest is critiqued and goal-driven accomplishment portrayed as  
transient, as are those that pursue the quest. He catalogues "The captains, merchant  
bankers, eminent men of letters./ The generous patrons of art, the statesmen and the  
rulers..." (3-4). He notes that they "all go into the dark" and "we all go with them into the  
silent funeral" (1, 10). All hierarchies, whether financial, political, economic or scholarly  
will prove to be worthless when viewed from outside linear time. The structures that the  
poet has valued are suddenly seen to be fraudulent, revealed as a "bold imposing  
façade" (17).

In the Introduction, I noted Ernest Becker's description of culture, and thus myth,  
as a means of repressing our knowledge of death. When Eliot relinquishes the heroic  
endeavour, he faces the darkness without such defences. Emptying himself completely,  
he chooses to "wait without hope.... without love....without thought" (23, 24, 27) because  
to hold onto the possibility of a particular outcome would be to remain in linear time and  
the quest motif. Instead he relies on the faith that "the darkness shall be the light" (28)  
and will show him the way back into the garden explored in "Burnt Norton." The memory  
of that timeless moment, he reassures himself, is  

[n]ot lost, but requiring, pointing to the agony  
Of death and birth (31-33).
But in order to return to that “echoed ecstasy,” he must let go of all the old patterns, all
the familiar hierarchies that he has used to shore himself up against the knowledge of
death:

And what you do not know is the only thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own
And where you are is where you are not. (45-47)

Knowledge is incomplete and human suffering is a reminder of our humble state.
Section four of “East Coker” shifts into an ababb rhyming pattern for five stanzas.
The introduction of rhymed lines has the effect of making the content of the lines sound
clichéd and trite:

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. (6-10)

We mistrust the pat solution offered the diseased patient, given the facile delivery. As
the poet demonstrates, the entire system is diseased; even the nurse is sick. Our
ailment cannot be cured with simple, physical ministrations. Rather, given Adam’s curse
and our state of original sin, we must return to the sense of eternal time encountered in
the rose garden of “Burnt Norton.” Through the experience of the Eucharist, that we can
restore our right relationship to God and the world of mythos:

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 that, we call this Friday good. (21-25).
Commemorating the Last Supper of Christ that preceded his crucifixion on Good Friday returns us to the cyclical time of the spiritual world, manifest in the death and rebirth of Christ.

In section five, the familiar is no longer of value to the poet. The years between the wars are seen as "largely wasted" (2). Evaluated from the perspective of linear time, he has accomplished little in his life:

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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. (3-7)
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Language, which he located within linear time in "Burnt Norton," is incapable of rendering the moment. It can only represent what has already passed. He recalls that as he learned in "Burnt Norton," the pattern that he previously believed to be static is now seen to be in flux. And that leads him to the further recognition that his attempts to say something new are in vain:

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...what there is to conquer
By strength and submission, has already been discovered
Once or twice, or several times.... (11-13)
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Instead of positioning himself as a competitor whose goal is to win the unique trophy, he now sees that "[f]or us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business" (18). To attempt to discern the pattern or to control the process is within the realm of the divine.

The pattern is

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[n]ot the intense moment
Isolated, with no before and after,
But a lifetime burning in every moment
And not the lifetime of one man only
But of old stones that cannot be deciphered. (21-25)
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To have "a lifetime burning in every moment" is to experience the timeless moment. The poet is quite specific that he is not speaking of individual moments plucked out of the linear continuum, but the sense of ancient time that enfolds all time and all people. This realization leads him to a "further union, a deeper communion/ Through the dark cold and the empty desolation..." (35-36). The word 'communion' suggests sharing or holding in common, a communal experience that may be spiritual in nature. While he feared the loss of himself in the relinquishment of the heroic position, he now finds an unexpected form of consolation in pilgrimage. In giving up the heroic role with the emphasis on competition and achievement, the poet has found, instead, a sense of community. Through the pilgrimage in the wilderness, the poet is reborn into an altered relationship to time and to humanity. "East Coker" ends with the phrase, "In my end is my beginning" (38) suggesting both that through the death of his ego he has found a way out of the despair of The Waste Land, and also that in death, he will be reborn into eternal time. The final line also refers the reader back to the opening line of "In my beginning is my end." The inversion within the lines suggest the poet's conception of the pre-eminence of cyclical time.

The poet next journeys to "The Dry Salvages," the location of childhood summer vacations on the coast of Massachusetts. His pilgrimage in the wilderness takes him, like his Puritan ancestors, from the Old World to the New. Contemplation of his personal past puts him in contact with the "strong brown god" of the river whose rhythm infuses space and organic matter: "the nursery bedroom", "the rank ailanthus", and "the smell of grapes" (11, 12, 13). Just as "East Coker" emphasized the presence of cyclical time amidst the reality of industry and techne, "The Dry Salvages" similarly begins by asserting the existence of an earthly rhythm that can exist despite the "worshippers of
the machine" (10). While there may be those to attempt to control and master the organic time of the river by building bridges and boats for transportation and commerce, the rhythm of the river remains untouched, if obscured.

The river would seem to represent non-repeatable time, flowing only in one direction towards its source, the sea. As the poet claims, "[t]he river is within us, the sea all about us" (15). Where the rhythm of the river is linear, the sea is governed by another rhythm as it "tosses/ Its hints of earlier and other creation" onto the beach with a tidal motion (17-18). Gillies has read the movement of the river into the sea as a merging of personal time into eternal time (100-101). I would reframe this somewhat as linear clock time subsumed by the power of the Great Mother. The tolling bell of the buoy is rung by the rhythm of the waves, controlled by the moon. This is a time

Older than the time of chronometers, older Than time counted by anxious worried women Lying awake, calculating the future, Trying to unweave, unwind, unravel And piece together the past and future.... (I 40-44)

Instead of envisaging the earth as the source of cyclical and ancient time, the poet locates such time in the sea god. Where the "Fire Sermon" of The Waste Land eulogizes the river as the end of time, where "at my back in a cold blast I hear/ The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear" (13-14), the "Dry Salvages" reveals the time of the Great Mother as manifest in the sea and the paradox in which "time stops and time is never ending" (I 47). The feminine archetype is brought to conscious in this quartet. As the feminine 'returns' from the underworld, the arid landscape of The Waste Land is now exchanged for images of the sea.
Those years he described in “East Coker” as “largely wasted” are here referred to as “Years of living among the breakage/ Of what was believed in as the most reliable –...” (10-11). It is not only the stillness of the Chinese jar that he described in “Burnt Norton” which “[m]oves perpetually in its stillness.” The pattern of flux is now seen to include even the belief systems he previously perceived as static and unassailable. The crisis of modernism is described metaphorically as the experience of being

In a drifting boat with a slow leakage
The silent listening to the undeniable
Clamour of the bell of the last annunciation. (16-18)

The poet is reminded once again that if he holds on to old paradigms or if he remains in linear time, there is only death.

The problem of “Burnt Norton” recurs here – how to live in the moment without meaning:

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

We have to think of them as forever bailing
Setting and hauling,...

..........................
Not as making a trip that will be unpayable
For a haul that will not bear examination. (II. 21-26, 29-30)

To contemplate a trip that will be goalless, to engage in activity for its own sake is to undertake the pilgrimage. Yet, while the poet can now embrace the timelessness of the pilgrimage, he cannot yet envisage a life without meaning. To remain in ancient time without purpose is anathema and so he must reassure himself of the necessity of “bailing/ Setting and hauling” (25-6). In the midst of the “voiceless wailing,” he can only
hang on to the thought of the "...hardly, barely prayable/ Prayer of the one Annunciation" (31, 35-36).

The capitalized Annunciation refers to the announcement of Mary's impregnation by the Holy Spirit, leading to the birth of Christ. Instead of focusing on the crucifixion and death of Christ, the poet is now mindful of the resurrection and the possibility of life in death, as well as the miracle of conception. The poet speculates that "It seems, as one becomes older, /That the past has another pattern, and ceases to be a mere sequence - " (37-38). In age, he can see more than teleology. Rather than seeing life as a series of events that build to some peak accomplishment, he recognizes now that life is episodic. Instead of seeing pain as an aberration that interrupts an otherwise happy sequence, he now perceives that "agony abides" (62). The Annunciation teaches him that as death is followed by resurrection, so, too, is the agony interspersed with "moments of happiness" (42). However, he cautions us that this is not happiness as we commonly define it,

... -- not the sense of well-being,
Fruition, fulfilment, security or affection
Or even a very good dinner, but the sudden illumination --
We had the experience but missed the meaning... (42-5)

Happiness is to be found in the moment. "And do not," he admonishes, "think of the fruit of the action" (III 38). He evokes the Hindu Bhagavad Gita, in which Lord Krishna guides the warrior Arjuna to an idea of eternal time. Narsingh Srivastava explains that Arjuna's worry about the consequences of war in the future which thwarts his will completely is produced by his temporal vision of life in time. He is on the circumference -- far away from the 'still center,' and hence bound to be trapped in illusion. (103)
The poet admonishes Arjuna to step outside the delusion of the goal-oriented perspective of temporal time into eternal time in which all time is present. His focus should be “Not fare well,/ But fare foreward” (III 46-7). The Hindu intertextual references parallel the Christian references which Eliot uses to reinforce the notion of a timeless moment which exists outside of culture or religion.8

In section four of this section, Eliot summons the female figure from the statue that stands guard over the sometime perilous entrance to the Dry Salvages in Massachusetts. She is called to “pray for those who were in the ships, and/ Ended their voyage on the sand in the sea’s lips” (I 11-12). Gardner identifies the female figure as the Stella Maris, “the handmaid of the Lord,” “the Mother of Christ” and “the Mater Dolorosa” (174). But if we take her as the archetype of the Virgin, in all her guises, then her role is that of transformer, which signals a new way of thinking. Where the dead Phoenician from “Death by Water” has his bones picked clean by the sea currents, the poet here uses the power of the generative female as a talisman as he experiences the annihilation of the “sea’s lips” (12). The latter phrase suggests the presence of the Great Mother in her devouring aspect. Through the presence of the Virgin, the poet can submit to the feminine presence as void knowing that rebirth will follow. Instead of solely destructive, the feminine is now perceived as the vessel of the Incarnation. Her presence heralds the birth of the Son, the Word Incarnate, and the “impossible union” of opposites where “past and future/Are conquered and reconciled...” (I 48, 50-51).

In his birth from a human mother, Christ links the divine and human world. The Incarnation of Christ is now revealed to the poet to be “the point of intersection of the timeless/ With time” (33-34). Contemplation of the Incarnation remains “the gift half understood,” and the occupation for the saint” (47, 34). For us, inhabiting the profane
world, "there is only the unattended/ Moment, the moment in and out of time" (38-9).

Instead, we will experience the Incarnation as

[the wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightening
Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply
that it is not heard at all, but you are the music
while the music lasts. (41-44)

The Incarnation will be manifest to us in a processive, experiential moment, not through
abstract consideration. In that timeless moment we will once again have the pre-
lapsarian experience of subject-object identification in which we are not playing the
music, but "are the music" (43)

However, the poet is quick to note that even his descriptions of the timeless
moment are in flux, "only hints and guesses" (44). We can never know the paradox of
the Incarnation because as Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle reminds us, to measure
or categorize the Incarnation would be to fix it and in doing so, to change it. The purpose
of the pilgrimage is to seek that timeless moment. But it is a moment most of us
approach, but never reach:

For most of us, this is the aim
Never here to be realised;
Who are only undefeated
Because we have gone on trying... (58-61)

Within the paradigm of the quest, such an unrealized aim is seen as a failure. Within the
pilgrimage, however, the "trying," the being in the moment, is sufficient.

The final quartet, "Little Gidding," is the shrine to which the poet has been
travelling all along, perhaps unaware of his destination. The site of a religious community
from the seventeenth century, critics have seen Little Gidding both as a place of defeat
and restoration. Helen Gardner reads the site in the former context noting that the
chapel was destroyed and the community scattered during religious dissension (177). Hugh Kenner, however, notes that this last section of the poem marks the return of the poet to England and the shift into the present (318-319). Perhaps the poem is representative of the intersection of the present and the past, exit and return. As John D. Boyd points out, the poem partakes of the “essentially paradoxical” nature of the death and rebirth of Christ, which is manifest in “the coexistence of two realities, of the divine and human, of nature and grace ... wherein a new vitality issues from death” (179).

The first section of “Little Gidding” persistently dwells on what might be called intermediate states: “midwinter spring,” “frost and fire,” “[b]etween melting and freezing,” “neither budding nor fading” (II1, 4, 11, 17). Emblems of the “intersection of the timeless moment,” these particulars herald the presence of the Holy Ghost, the intermediary between Heaven and Earth. The focus on this intermediary or liminal state is the ultimate reconciliation and gesturing back to the turmoil of The Waste Land, which began with the unproductive spring. “What the Thunder Said” bitterly mourns

The shouting and the crying
Prison and palace and reverberation
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains
He who was living is now dead
We who were living are now dying
With a little patience. (II 4-9)

But in “Little Gidding,” the poet can now accept the “transitory blossom” because of his experience of the presence of cyclical time, which is the path of the feminine. He is confident about the utter futility of the heroic stance:

It would be the same at the end of the journey,
If you came at night like a broken king,
If you came by day not knowing what you came for,
It would be the same, when you leave the rough road
And turn behind the pig-sty to the dull façade
And the tombstone. And what you thought you came for
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning... (l. 23-29)

The poet is aware that if he sets out as either the ailing Fisher King or the Grail knight, he would still encounter the tombstone and the pigsty. The restoration of the dying land and the healing of the king comes not in the achievement of the successful quest, or in immortality, or in the focus on the dead Christ in the tomb. The goal is trivial, in itself transient and impermanent. Our focus should be to "put off sense and notion" (45), to let go of ego and consciousness of ourselves. The purpose lacking in *The Waste Land* is now kindled in this sacred site as the poet admonishes us "to kneel, Where prayer has been valid" (l. 47-8). In doing so, he can re-enact and confirm the communal experience of the past. We are not, he claims, to "verify," "instruct", "inform" or "carry report" – activities of abstraction. Instead, in the physical activity of prayer, like the dancing celebrated in "Burnt Norton," "East Coker," and "The Dry Salvages," we can be both participatory and receptive, in "England and nowhere. Never and always" (55). Through prayer we can experience the paradox of the timeless moment.

Section two of "The Dry Salvages" returns to a rhymed meter. Using three stanzas of four couplets each, the poet reminds himself of the cyclical nature of decay. The roses are burnt and the suspended ash lands on "an old man's sleeve" or "[t]he wall, the wainscot and the mouse" (1, 6). Cyrena Pondrom reads these lines as descriptive of London in the aftermath of the bombing (157). In such a context, the repetition of the simple rhyming serves as a bulwark, however inadequate, against the chaos of ongoing destruction.

The ash also resonates associatively with the Christian holy day of Ash Wednesday. As the poet tries to reconcile his newfound approach to Christianity with the
suffering and death of W.W. II, he recalls the concerns addressed in “East Coker” to remind himself that within the cyclical time frame, death and destruction precede rebirth.

Reminiscent of the intermediary states that are described at the outset of “Little Gidding,” the poet now contemplates “the uncertain hour before the morning,” “[b]etween two worlds become much like each other” (25, 69). In this liminal space, the poet confronts the dead patroller, a figure perceived as bearing “[t]he eyes of a familiar compound ghost” (42). Bearing the “look of some dead master/ Whom I had known, forgotten, half recalled” (39-40), the dead patroller offers a further condemnation of the quest. Offering a glimpse of the world of the spirit, the dead patroller reminds the poet of the inevitability of human mortality, “the impotence of rage/ At human folly” and the fallibility of human deeds (82-83). The mortal world is seen to be transient and the poet contemplates his unworthiness for the one of the spirit.

The poet applies his personal awareness to the impermanence of the political positions.

We cannot revive old factions  
We cannot restore old policies  
Or follow an antique drum. (36-8)

The alliances and nationalism of the war are now passé, or as the poet writes, “antique” (38). Nor is there any valour in celebrating the victory of the War, since “Whatever we inherit from the fortunate/ We have taken from the defeated” (44-5). As the poet tries to make meaning not only out of his personal history, but also out of the greater history of W.W. II, he confronts his guilt at having survived and notes the necessity for “the purification of the motive” (50). Only through the prayer of “beseeching” (51) can we be reconciled to the cost of the present.
In section four, the diving planes are now envisioned as the "dove descending" as the poet refigures the intrusion of the enemy as the presence of the Holy Spirit (1). Instead of fearing the destruction of the bombing, the "flame of incandescent terror" of dropping bombs is now re-envisioned as the Pentecostal fire that accompanies the Ascension of Christ (Acts 2: 2-5). In such a context, the bombing becomes a necessary destruction, part of the Christian process that heralds Christ's departure from earth into heaven.

In the last section of "Little Gidding," the poet dismisses the heroic motif with the lines: "What we call the beginning is often the end/ And to make an end is to make a beginning" (1-2). The poet reminds us that in the cyclical time associated with the archetypal feminine, death and destruction always lead to birth. The poet also affirms his own project, writing that "[e]very phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning" (11). His writing of the poem we read is linked to the Word in the desert and the intersection of time with the timeless moment. The torment reflected in the line from The Waste Land, "fragments I have shored against my ruins" (I 430) is answered by the last poem of "Four Quartets." In "Little Gidding", the poet endorses the pilgrimage with the lines: "the end of all our exploring/ Will be to arrive where we started/ And know the place for the first time" (V. II 27-30). The cyclical perspective articulated in these lines is unlike the linear time frame associated with the quest. The poet of "Little Gidding" is able to accept the paradox of birth in death; he recognizes that his experience of the spiritual waste land has brought him to the self-less love of God and spiritual awareness.

As the poet affirms the significance of cyclical time, the poem performs its own circularity, returning to its origins in the garden. The "children in the apple tree" (35) suggests the "leaves … full of children" in "Burnt Norton" (42). The phrase "Quick now,
here, now, always – from part IV of “Burnt Norton” (37) is repeated in “Little Gidding” (39) as the end is indeed the beginning. The poem’s final image is of the “crowned knot of fire” in which “the fire and the rose are one” (45-6). These last lines unite the rose of the prelapsarian garden with the purifying fire of the Ascension so that the poem enacts its message of “all time [as] eternally present” (BN 4). The events of the Old Testament and New Testament are simultaneous. The image of the fire and rose as one also suggests the destruction of fire linked with the creative potential of the rose that reinforces the paradox of the birth-death-resurrection cycle.

It seems appropriate, given the cyclical nature of the poem, to consider now the epigraphs of Four Quartets. Originating with Heraclitus, the epigraphs lay out the modernist dilemmas associated with the relinquishing the quest. The first epigraph has been translated by Denis Donoghue as “although the Word is common to all, most people live as if each had a private intelligence of his own” (2). Grover Smith has translated the line somewhat differently: “Although there is but one Center, most men live in centers of their own” (255). I prefer Donoghue’s use of the capitalized “Word” rather than Smith’s “Centre” since “Word” better encapsulates the Christian basis of Eliot’s framing of the intersection of the divine and the human. However, both translations speak to the tension between community and the individual which is manifest in the pilgrimage and the quest. The heroic position is one of solitary endeavour in which success ultimately depends on reaching the goal alone. At the outset of the poem, the poet recognizes the futility of the heroic position, but he cannot yet imagine an alternative to the role of the hero, other than the despair articulated in The Waste Land. Heraclitus offers the notion that a community that includes the poet already exists. Heraclitus’ perspective is suggestive of that of the cubist painters or quantum
mechanics, which argue that meaning is determined not through hierarchal positioning, but rather through relationships between facets, frames of reference.

The second epigraph takes up issues of the nature of time. Translated similarly by Donoghue and Smith as “the way up and the way down are one and the same” (2), the phrase embodies the seeming paradox of ancient time. If all time is present simultaneously, directionality disappears. While the second epigraph appears absurd viewed from the heroic position, it describes very well the experience of time within the pilgrimage as well as the notion of time as presented in *Four Quartets*. The acceptance of cyclical time that makes it possible for the poet to endure the destruction of the war, as well as personal despair, was lacking in the poet of *The Waste Land*.

Both of the epigraphs from Heraclitus address the central modernist crises surrounding changing notions of space and time which *Four Quartets* explicitly addresses. Through the pilgrimage to the four sites of Burnt Norton, East Coker, the Dry Salvages and Little Gidding, the poet is able to reconcile himself to the loss of the heroic position. His experience also provides a model for pilgrimage that is based on a cyclical path in which the pilgrim reaffirms the knowledge of the timeless moment in the garden, the necessity of penance and suffering in the desert, the promise of the resurrection that follows death, and the ritual of prayer as an opportunity to experience the timeless moment.

But the poem need not necessarily be necessarily framed as an exclusively religious experience. It is possible to see *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets* as linked aspects of a mythic journey of descent into the chaos of the Terrible Mother, the rejection of the ego and relinquishing of the heroic path for the pilgrimage. By the time the poet reaches the shrine of “Little Gidding,” he understands that meaning comes not
in accomplishing the goal, or solving the problem, but in the intersection of body and spirit, masculine and feminine, the fire and the rose, the timeless moment.
CHAPTER 6.
"A FACE LIKE A CHRISTMAS-ROSE":
THE PILGRIMAGE IN TRILOGY

In the long poem, Trilogy, H.D. presents a fully formed pilgrimage as the poet asserts her intention to "reach haven, heaven" [WDNF 43]. Writing in the midst of W.W.II, she desires to heal both herself and the world by recovering the repressed feminine archetype. Her pilgrimage is one through time and the world of mythos as she seeks the sacred feminine presence. In asserting a spatial sense of time, she legitimizes the use of Greek and Egyptian myth, Hermeticism, and non-canonical Biblical texts to retrieve the feminine aspects of the deity pushed aside by the patriarchal influences of Judeo-Christianity. Re-envisioning the Grail as the archetypal feminine, she also refigures the destructive lance as a pilgrim's staff, transformative wand and even the writer's pen. Her final vision is of the union of lance and Grail to produce the flowering of the rod, leading to the creation of the archetype of the child. This latter image of wholeness, gleaned through the process of pilgrimage, is her offering to her community to heal a world at war.

In the first of the three poems of Trilogy, "The Walls Do Not Fall," H.D. contextualizes the destruction of London in 1942 as a metaphorical and literal wasteland. Having personally experienced nine months of nightly German air raids between September 1940 and May 1941, she evokes the ruins of London and compares them to those of Luxor in Egypt:
[T]here, as here, ruin opens
the tomb, the temple; enter,
there as here, there are no doors:

the shrine lies open to the sky,
the rain falls, here, there
sand drifts; eternity endures:

ruin everywhere... [1]

Luxor and London are seen to exist simultaneously in the poet's mind, their time periods and locations conflated. In this wilderness of destruction in London during World War II, linear time is destroyed, exposing the reality of a time frame in which "eternity endures."

As the "ruin opens the tomb, the temple" in Luxor, exposing the shrine, so too, the poet argues, can the ruins of the war expose the sacred, the 'runes' of London:

...yet as the fallen roof
leaves the sealed room
open to the air,

so, through our desolation,
thoughts stir, inspiration stalks us
through gloom:

unaware, Spirit announces the Presence;
shivering overtakes us,
as of old, Samuel:

trembling at a known street-corner,
we know not nor are known;
the Pythian pronounces -- we pass on. [1]

A bombed street corner in London becomes a sacred space, akin to the temple at Luxor, where the Spirit is revealed to the poet. H.D.'s poet inhabits some inner, mental space in which the sacred, prophetic worlds of ancient Greece, Egypt, and the Middle East simultaneous penetrate into the present, physical reality of London.
It would seem that H.D., building on T.S. Eliot's description in "Little Gidding" of the bombing of London in 1942 as purifying Pentecostal fire, had also chosen to frame the endless destruction in terms of a spiritual opportunity. However, as Cyrena Pondrom notes, this first poem of Trilogy preceded the publication of "Little Gidding" by some six months (156). Additionally, it bears noting that although Eliot invokes Hindu and Buddhist theology to reinforce his notion of a timeless moment, H.D. is more explicitly syncretic. She envisages the spirit both as the Christian Old Testament God who speaks to Samuel in the temple and calls him to be a prophet (Sam 3:4-21) and the pre-Christian oracle, Pythia, the priestess who prophesied from a tripod at the threshold to the cavern at Delphi (New Larousse 113).

Initially, the poet and those with her, ignore this call from the spiritual world. The poet writes that "inspiration stalks us;" the word "stalk" suggests pursuit, as if they feel the hunted quarry. Indeed, they "pass on" without acknowledging the Presence. The avoidance is due, in part, to the preoccupation of trauma. In the midst of the "Apocryphal fire" and destruction of the war, everything seems pointless: "we wonder / what saved us? what for?" [1]. But to spurn the 'voice' is to remain in the destruction; "hungry / for the nourishment, God," the poet chooses to:

...search the old highways
for the true-rune, the right-spell,
recover old values;

nor listen if they shout out,
your beauty, Isis, Aset, or Astarte,

is a harlot, you are retrogressive,
zealot, hankering after old flesh-pots. [2]
The poet seeks to recover God, not as God is manifest in the present, but as it was in the past of the "old highways." Like the Israelites, with whom she identifies, she makes clear her allegiance to the pre-Christian feminine creation deities of Isis, Aset and Astarte. But the poet is hindered by an authoritative voice - "they" - who would deride the goddess as "harlot" and the poet's intentions as blasphemous. This imagined voice mocks the task of writing in the mention of the "stylus... dipped in corrosive sublimate" [2]. The stylus is the utensil used to draw the sacred hieroglyphs at Luxor, and can refer both to the divine writing of the goddess, and to the poet's own, as yet, unspoken urge to write her way back to the source. The "corrosive sublimate" is the acid that would dissolve the existing androcentric myths which have been written as a palimpsest, over the top of the pre-Christian, matriarchal myths. However, the poet asserts her own values, admonishing:

Let us, however, recover the Sceptre,
the rod of power:

it is crowned with the lily-head
or the lily-bud:

it is Caduceus; among the dying
it bears healing:

or evoking the dead,
it brings life to the living.  [3]

The sceptre can be a symbol of authority, privilege and office, but the imagery of this passage points to the sceptre as transformative and healing. Crowned with the "lily head" or "lily bud," it evokes the goddesses of Astarte, Venus and Lilith, who like Isis and Aset of the previous passage, are forms of the earth mother.² The sceptre is linked to the Christian myth as the lily-topped staff that the angel Gabriel holds out to the Virgin Mary
in the artistic renderings of the Annunciation, connecting it to resurrection mythology. In the archetypal psychology of Carl G. Jung, the lily is associated with wholeness and unity achieved through a union of opposites and the process of individuation (Archetypes 187), and is suggestive of Eliot’s “lotos” [sic] in “Burnt Norton” which arose from the dry pond. As the Caduceus, wrapped with two entwined snakes, the sceptre is the sign of Asclepius, the physician, healer, and raiser of the dead (New Larousse 170). It is also the wand carried by Hermes Psychopompous as he led the dead to new life in the underworld, the twinned snakes a symbol of the labyrinthine journey to rebirth. It hints at the stylus used to draw the sacred hieroglyphs at Luxor. It is the staff of Moses, which the Christian God turns into a serpent to convince the Israelites to follow Moses into the desert (Ex 4:1-5). It is Aaron’s rod, which flowered spontaneously in the desert in the Old Testament story, to show his suitability to be priest (Num 17:8) and which turned into a serpent, a symbol of transformation (Exodus 7:10).

In these first few lines, the poet has challenged the traditional associations of the lance or sword as the weapon of the hero by recalling mythological and Biblical sources which link the sceptre of power to a pilgrim’s staff. By choosing to step out of linear time into a time frame in which the past is transparent to the present, where women are more than objects of the male quest, and where healing and transformation rather than conquest and accomplishment are paramount, H.D. has asserted the qualities of the pilgrimage.

But the image of the sceptre also hearkens back to H.D.’s famous encounter with Sigmund Freud, in which he presented her with a statue of the goddess Pallas Athene from the collection of Egyptian and Greco-Roman figures on his desk:
'This is my favorite,' he said. He held the object toward me. I took it in my hand. It was a little bronze statue, helmeted, clothed to the foot in carved robe with the upper incised chiton or peplum. One hand was extended as if holding a staff or rod. 'She is perfect,' he said, 'only she has lost her spear.' I did not say anything. (H.D. Tribute 68-69)

Freud is baiting H.D. here, expecting that she will manifest the penis envy his Oedipal theory predicts. But H.D. rejects the materialist, goal-centred approach for one that is receptive, a notion Freud, with his focus on the quest-motif, cannot ‘see.’ Where she mentally describes the missing item as “a staff or rod,” Freud labels it as “spear,” a weapon. Additionally, received notions of gender, as portrayed by the poet, construct women as the object of the quest and the object of ridicule – the “harlot.” Poetic and spiritual pursuits are transgressive for women and absurd. Yet, to align herself with the masculine role, which offers intellectual recognition, is also to partake of an androcentric, materialist culture at war, which is to betray her values. Seen in this light, the female poet’s desire to take up the pen is more complex than that of Stephen Dedalus. While Stephen had to relinquish the role of the hero and step outside the quest, the female poet must confront gender expectations that reserve both roles for men.

But H.D.’s poet takes further issue with the dominant culture, critiquing the voices that privilege the Sword of action and destruction over the inner, spiritual realm in which the poet locates reality:

Without thought, invention,  
you would not have been, O Sword,  
without idea and the Word’s mediation,  
you would have remained  
unmanifest in the dim dimension  
where thought dwells.... [11]
By establishing the primacy of the Word over the deed, the poet is able to dismiss those voices that trivialize her process. She identifies a company of "initiates" who are "companions of the flame" [13] and [15]

... keepers of the secret, the carriers, the spinners of the rare intangible thread that binds all humanity to ancient wisdom, to antiquity. [15]

Their values are dream, vision, and word, which, like the hieroglyphs at Luxor, endure through time. They have primacy over the Sword, whose

Triumph, however exultant, must one day be over,
in the beginning was the Word. [10].

The poet believes that just as Christ mediates between the divine and the earthly realm, between God and humanity, so the Word mediates between the spiritual or unconscious realm and poetic vision. Much as Eliot sees the Incarnation as the intersection of the divine with the human, of time with timelessness, H.D. conceives of a similar experience. She makes this more explicit in poem [20], when she writes that:

Now it appears very clear that the Holy Ghost,
childhood's mysterious enigma, is the Dream... [20]

In the poet's philosophical system, the past and the future are accessed through the dream. Writing, "inspired" by the divine, is the bridge conveying the eternal and the divine into the temporal world. But the bridge runs both ways - writing is also a means of
connecting to the divine through the creative act, where she can find the "nourishment, God" that she seeks. Her pilgrimage is clearly one of the mind in which she seeks solace and healing for herself, but also for the world. Just as Eliot envisages a timeless moment in which the past and the future have no meaning, H.D. sees an eternal moment as accessible through the Word. But Eliot perceives the experience of that moment as one of grace, whereas H.D.'s vision is more equitable:

that way of inspiration
is always open,

and open to everyone.... [20]

The effectiveness of her pilgrimage hinges upon the ability to establish links between all people in all times. She first links the apocalyptic vision of Biblical Revelations with the diaspora of Exodus:

In no wise is the pillar-of-fire
that went before
different from the pillar-of-fire
that comes after;

chasm, schism in consciousness
must be bridged over.... [36]

Here, she nods to the pillar of fire that guided the Israelites through the wilderness by night and the pillar of fire which is part of the vision of Revelations and the creation of the New Jerusalem (Rev 10:1) to show us how our thinking in terms of linear time in which past and future events in the Bible must be isolated limits our access to the spirit. She then goes further, linking ancient and Judeo-Christian time:

... my thought
would cover deplorable gaps

in time, reveal the regrettable chasm,
bridge that before-and-after schism,

(before Abraham was I am)
uncover cankerous growths

in present-day philosophy,
in an endeavour to make ready,

as it were, the patient for the Healer;
correlate faith with faith

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

in the beginning, Creator,
Fosterer, Begetter, the Same-forever

in the papyrus-swamp
in the Judean meadow. [40]

The purpose of the poet’s pilgrimage is now made more explicit – it is to heal the world by breaching the “before-and-after-schism” of A.D. and B.C. that is determined by the birth of Christ. Such a project links the poet to pilgrimage in two ways. The first is that she seeks healing, an enterprise associated with the pilgrimage. The second is that she seeks to heal a rift in time. Resurrection is a cyclical phenomena and the healing that H.D. envisions would be a cross-cultural recognition of the existence of the ‘resurrection reality’ as it exists throughout time. However, Susan Acheson has noted that the rendering of time offered by H.D. in Trilogy is not “merely cyclic repetition” (192). Instead, H.D. offers a more complex “vision of time as constantly open to the past but moving forward... time as both shaped and as open” (192), which suggests the spatialized time of the pilgrimage. In “Little Gidding,” Eliot’s poet suggests a similar healing of the breach in time, portraying the time of the Biblical Old Testament as simultaneous with that of the New, but H.D.’s vision is more radical. She seeks to bridge
the gap between Judeo-Christian and pre-Christian religions in order to recover the
sacred feminine presence elided by the Judeo-Christian tradition.

In Trilogy's second poem, "Tribute to the Angels," the poet invokes Hermes, now explicitly "patron of alchemists" [1]. She would have him

take what the old-church
found in Mithra's tomb,
candle and script and bell,
take what the new-church spat upon
and broke and shattered;
collect the fragments of the splintered glass
and of your fire and breath,
melt down and integrate,
re-invoke, recreate... [1]

Mithra is the god associated with Mithraism, one of the competing religions to Christianity. His ritual elements of candle, script and bell, have been despoiled by the new-church – Christianity - and the poet would have them recovered in an alchemical process of transformation, presided over by Hermes.³ While contemporary culture, and Christianity, repress the archetypal feminine presence, alchemy acknowledges the role of the generative feminine. The alchemical crucible was the vas hermeticum, or Womb of Hermes, in which Hermes fertilized the Holy Vase of the Great Mother (Walker 19-20, 1043).

The poet's argument with the new-church is made more explicit in poem [2] with her challenge to the New Testament vision of the Apocalypse found in the book of Revelation and attributed to St. John. She quotes from a passage which is concerned
with the measurement of the city of God, the heavenly paradise which will supplant the
chaos of the Apocalypse:

And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the
names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.
And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city,
and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.
And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the
breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand
furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

.............................................................................

and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.
(Revelations 21: 14-16, 21)

The poet takes issue with this vision and challenges it:

but not four-square, I thought,
another shape (octahedron?)

slipped into the place
reserved by rule and rite

for the twelve foundations,
for the transparent glass,

for no need of the sun
nor moon to shine;

for the vision as we see
or have seen or imagined it

or in the past invoked
or conjured up or had conjured

by another, was usurped;
I saw the shape

which might have been of jasper,
but it was not four-square. [2]

The poet, speaking for an unidentified "we", feels that the original vision was
appropriated by St. John's prophecy, which is "reserved by rule and rite" [2]. Read aloud,
one hears, 'rule and right' and 'rule and write'; the issue is one of authority to speak and
write, and the legitimacy of the vision which is rendered. According to St. John's prophecy, the penalty assigned for changing the text of Revelation - his vision - is that "...God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book...." (Rev 22:18).

The problem with this dogmatic assertion of legitimacy is that the book of Revelation itself was not admitted to the Biblical canon until sometime in the sixth century. Various competing religions, such as Mithrasim and the Eleusinian Mystery cults, as well as Gnosticism, which was essentially Christian, provided numerous alternative texts, and gospels. Unlike Christianity, Gnosticism and Mithraism both envisaged the deity as a unified "One" which was both male and female, and the Gnostics admitted women on an equal basis with men. Elaine Pagels, in her book *The Gnostic Gospels*, writes that "We now begin to see that what we call Christianity - and what we identify as Christian tradition - actually represents only a small selection of specific sources, chosen from among dozens of others" (xxxviii). There was a concerted effort by the 'orthodox' Christian church to declare the writings of these competing religions as heretical and the apocryphal writings of the Gnostics were particularly targeted. These include, for example, "The Gospel of the Birth of Mary" and the *Pistis Sophia*. The decline of Gnosticism and other religions branded as heretical coincides with the period in which the majority of the Biblical canon was decided by the church, about the fourth century. Interestingly, the word 'canon', from the Greek *kanon* or the Hebrew *kaneh*, "referred originally to a rule or measuring rod but in time came to be used of standards, precedents, and guidelines...." (*Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* 169). The measuring rod or rule, which serves as a standard by which all other visions are determined legitimate, emphasizes the punitive and exclusionary aspects of
Christianity in contrast to the transformative qualities associated with the sceptre imagery and the notion of pilgrimage presented in "The Walls Do Not Fall."

There are several points of contention at stake here. The poet questions the right of the "new church" to decide canon, a canon which often excluded not only the female aspects of the deity, but also the participation of women from positions of authority and authorship. At issue is the daughter's right to speak, to challenge male authoritative versions of history, psychology, mythology and religion, but also the right to present her own vision. There is also an argument with the linear focus of Christianity. Unlike the twice-born gods Hermes, or Christ, or the poet seeking "haven/heaven," St. John focuses on the rules of procedure. H.D. challenges the materialist, "heroic" vision that she associates with hierarchy, sexism, and exclusionary orthodoxy and envisions instead a time frame capable of straddling the past and the present to include all sources and all voices. Her mingling of canonical and non-canonical and heterodox and orthodox forms of myth and theology, both here and throughout Trilogy, also works as a deliberate strategy to create a polyphony of voices which undermine traditional, monovocal, male-centred narratives and ideologies. Her strategy is also an attempt to counteract the linear, apocalyptic vision of time associated with modern Christianity. Like Eliot, H.D. rejects the notion of a linear, non-repeatable time ending in a cataclysm.

H.D.'s poet then directs a lexicographical transformation in the crucible of alchemy, calling on Hermes to "...polish the crucible / and in the bowl distill // a word most bitter, marah, / a word bitterer still, mar" [8]. Marah and mar are the feminine and masculine forms, respectively, of the Hebrew word for bitter (OED IX), but marah also refers to the site of the first water found by the Israelites after three days in the wilderness. The water was bitter and undrinkable until God transformed it. (Ex 15:23).
The bitter, or alkaline, water commonly found in deserts has an excessively high concentration of chemical salts, and in alchemy, "salt is a cosmic principle," associated with the feminine and bitterness (Jung Mysterium 188, 193). The mixing of marah/mar occurs in the crucible of the "sea", which is also the unconscious. As "brine, breaker, seducer, / giver of life, giver of tears," marah/mar manifests creative potential as the saline of body fluids, of the amniotic sac of pregnancy, of the sea from which all life is said to originate, as well as destructive potential as tears. The poet has provided the optimum ingredients for the alchemical union of the opposites of construction and destruction and masculine and feminine. Marah/mar will "...fuse and join // and change and alter / mer, mere, mère, mater, Maia, Mary, // Star of the Sea, / Mother" [8]. The words in this alliterative sequence are all related etymologically or through aural puns. Mer and mere refer to the sea in English and mere, as a verb, can mean to purify (OED IX). Mère and mater are French and Latin, respectively, for mother. Maia is the mother of Hermes, who like Christ and Osiris dies and is restored to life, linking Maia to Mary as the mother of a resurrection god (Walker 572). The Star of the Sea is the Stella Maris, the evening star, or the planet Venus. It shows a cyclical pattern in the sky, disappearing for approximately 100 days of the year and then reappearing. In ancient cultures, it was associated with the descent of the generative feminine into the underworld and the mythical figures of Isis, Aphrodite, Venus and Mary (Perera 13). Through the linking of condensed images the poet has shown how the secrets of the gods are "stored/ in man's very speech" [8 WDNF]. In the vas hermeticum, the poet has found the philosopher's stone which is the Mother archetype. The Mother is found to be both the process and product; her womb is the crucible in which the purifying reaction occurs, the union of the
opposites. Where Eliot’s poet in *Four Quartets* invokes the Stella Maris as talisman, H.D. sees her as the *prima (mater)ia* from which all constituents are made.

H.D.’s answer to Eliot’s Dionysian dance is the experience of “a half-burnt-out-apple-tree/ blossoming” after the bombing [TA 23]. It is tangible evidence of the existence of the resurrection cycle. This experience is followed by the poet’s vision of the Lady, who appears, not in the “minute by minute” of linear time, but in the dream time of the eternal world. Incorporating multiple images of the Virgin Mary, the Lady is neither mother [32] nor the wife [39]. In fact, any previous terminology used to describe the Lady is inadequate, as the poet states that “none of these, none of these/ suggest her as I saw her” [TA 31].

Eliot’s poet also invokes the presence of the feminine in his reference to the statue that guards the entrance to the bay in “The Dry Salvages.” Like the identity of H.D.’s Lady, the identity of Eliot’s statue is also indeterminate. Her presence is linked to the awareness of the Annunciation and the feminine role within the resurrection cycle. But H.D. explores the role of the feminine within that cycle in much greater depth than Eliot. As Cyrena Pondrom has argued

> The view of the Lady in this section is a sustained argument with the patriarchal religious tradition – with the intertexts of the iconography of Christianity and the mythology of woman as wholly other. It is a rejection both of the woman as an object of adoration and of religion as self-abnegation... her appearance overturns the purgatorial world of wandering and penance in which Eliot’s narrator walked. (162-3)

H.D.’s Lady is clearly associated with transformation and her presence heralds “a new phase, a new distinction of colour” [40]. The vision of the Lady leads the poet to record a final transformation in the alchemical bowl, in which the contents melt to yield
...not ashes, not ash-of-rose,  
not a tall vase and a staff of lilies,  

not vas spirituale,  
not rosa mystica even... [43]

The jewel of the alchemical separation is not represented through the familiar images of the vas spirituale nor the rosa mystica, epithets sometimes used to describe the Virgin Mary as mother and as virgin (Walker 19, 867). Nor is it the static image of the staff of Easter lilies, the contemporary symbol of the death and resurrection of Christ, but also as the poet has reminded us, originally the symbol of the mother of the resurrected god. Instead, from the lap of the Great Mother comes the alchemical product of:

...a cluster of garden-pinks  
or a face like a Christmas-rose. [43]

Having re-envisaged the feminine as processive, H.D.‘s figure of the Lady embodies the principle of transformation and resurrection. Through the Lady, H.D. redeems the role of the feminine within the resurrection cycle by positing a view of the feminine that is explicitly outside of our experience.

The vision of the feminine as the resurrection principle leads the poet to a still more radical project, in the third poem of Trilogy, "The Flowering of the Rod." Here, the poet rewrites the Gospels of the New Testament. The title of the third poem is also an intertextual reference to "The Gospel of the Birth of Mary." This apocryphal version of the Christian birth focuses on the life of Mary, rather than on that of Christ. It describes how the rod or staff of Joseph was said to flower in the temple as a sign that Mary was to be his betrothed. I focus my discussion here for several reasons: the poet returns again to the symbol of the lily topped sceptre or flowering rod, which is transformative rather than punitive; second, this intertextual source focuses our attention on the mother rather than
the son in the resurrection story; third, the very title of this third poem from *Trilogy*—"The Flowering of the Rod"—suggests by its intertextual reference, the union of masculine and feminine to produce a child; and last, the inclusion of the apocryphal text challenges the primacy of the authorized version of the birth of Christ, which tends to diminish the importance of his mother, Mary.

Much of the narrative of "The Flowering of the Rod" concerns the attempts of a figure named Mary, who is a composite of Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene, to purchase myrrh from Kaspar, the Arab merchant. Like Mary, Kaspar is also a composite figure, identified at various parts in the poem as the "Wise Man," one of the Magi, a "Magician," "an old lover," "an Angel in disguise," "Abraham," and "God" [29], [20]. It is said "that he was not an ordinary merchant... he was an ambassador" who inherited "the secret of the sacred processes of distillation" of myrrh and whose "attar/ lasted literally forever..." [14]. Jung might describe this mysterious male figure as the archetype of the Wise Old Man, "the superior master and teacher, the archetype of the spirit, who symbolizes the pre-existent meaning hidden in the chaos of life" (*Archetypes* 35). His impending attendance at "a coronation and a funeral -- a double affair" [13] also links him to institutionalized, patriarchal power, marking him as an ambiguous figure that partakes both of *mythos* and *logos*.

Kaspar refuses to sell Mary the myrrh, because she is "un-maidenly," "unpredictable," and because "no secret was safe with a woman" [13, 14]. Mary, however, refuses to accept Kaspar's dismissal of her, asserting her entitlement to the myrrh:
I am Mary, she said, of a tower-town,  
or once it must have been towered  
for Magdala is a tower;  
Magdala stands on the shore;  

I am Mary, she said, of Magdala,  
I am Mary, a great tower;  
through my will and my power,  
Mary shall be myrrh;  

I am Mary -- O, there are Marys a-plenty,  
(though I am Mara, bitter) I shall be Mary-myrrh;  

I am that myrrh-tree of the gentiles,  
the heathen; there are idolaters,  
even in Phrygia and Cappadocia,  
who kneel before mutilated images  
and burn incense to the Mother of Mutilations,  
to Attis-Adonis-Tammuz and his mother who was myrrh;  

I am Mary, I will weep bitterly,  
bitterly...bitterly.  [16] (ellipses in text)

It is worthwhile taking the time to unpack some of these images of Mary, myrrh, and  
Magdala. The name Mary is derived from the Hebrew miryam, which means obstinacy or  
rebellion, which might explain why Kasper refers to her as “un-maidenly” and  
“unpredictable” (Unger 702). Miryam is also suggestive of Moses’s sister Miriam, who is  
a prophetess (Ex 15:20) and also of H.D.’s dream of the Princess, which Freud helped  
er her to analyze as a desire to found a new religion (H.D. Tribute 37).5 Mary Magdala  
means “of Magdala” or “she of the temple tower” (Unger 702-703; Walker 614).  

Historically, the tower in Magdala was one of three which formed part of a Jerusalem  
temple to the triple deity - the virgin, the mother and the crone. One tower was known to
bear the name of the queen, Mariamne, "an earthly incarnation of the Goddess Mari" (Walker 614). Mari is the goddess also known as Marina, Marian, Marah or Myrrha, depending on her origins (Walker 602-603, 585). Myrrha, in turn, is the goddess who gives birth to Adonis/Tammuz, who like Osiris, Hermes and Christ dies and is resurrected (Walker 702). Myrrh appears in the Bible both at Christ's birth and death (Matt 2:11, Mark 15:23), and as in pre-Christian rituals, "myrrh meant the death and rebirth of a god and was identified with his holy mother" (Walker 703). Mara, who is bitter, is linked through sound to the words marah and mar, which remind us of the bitter saline distilled in the crucible of "Tribute to the Angels" and the product of the distillation: the Great Mother. A consideration of all these images and their relationships reveals how H.D. has condensed meaning into the repeated word, 'Mary.' When H.D. writes that there are "Marys a-plenty," it is not simply a conflation of Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene to which she refers, but to the numerous female deities associated with fertility and the birth of a resurrection god. H.D. uncovers the palimpsest of time to locate a legacy of spiritual mothers whose role is not merely to watch the crucifixion and weep, or wait at the closed tomb. Since Mary is myrrh, the secret which Kaspar wants to keep from her was always hers, but has been 'outlawed' by the fathers of the "new-church."

The poet's pilgrimage has located the divine source of the resurrection principle: the Mother archetype. And the poet's recovery makes clear the "resurrection reality": without the womb, there is no tomb.

Despite his refusal to sell Mary the myrrh, Kaspar seems to recognize Mary's divinity, calling the seven devils cast out of her "daemons." Here H.D. uses the archaic spelling to draw our attention to the word's Greek etymology and its original meaning
which is to be filled with a "divinity, genius, or tutelary deity" (OED IV). The poet writes that Kaspar

... might whisper tenderly, those names
without fear of eternal damnation,

Isis, Astarte, Cyprus
and the other four;

he might re-name them,
Ge-meter, De-meter, earth-mother

or Venus
in a star. [25]

Kaspar names the seven daemons as those female deities that existed in numerous cultures antecedent to Christianity when the source of the cosmos was believed to be feminine. And Kaspar sees that in the casting out of the seven demons, Mary has been dispossessed not of evil, but of her divinity. The sacred has been made profane, the spirit separated from the body, so that the body, and hence the female divine, can be dismissed.

A critique of Christianity's devaluing of the feminine role is reinforced in the scene in which Mary's scarf falls to the floor, revealing her hair. As Cassandra Laity notes, Mary's hair has a "revised Medusan affect [that] inspires rather than stymies vision...." (180). Kaspar's glimpse of Mary's uncovered hair prompts an ecstatic vision of the divine as both feminine and multiple. This is Mary as the triple goddess with her sexuality and female body fully restored. Kaspar sees:

one head uncrowned and then one with a plain head-band
and then one with a circlet of gems of an inimitable colour

As he stooped for the scarf, he saw this,
and as he straightened, in that half-second,
he saw the fleck of light

and in that point or shadow,
was the whole secret of the mystery;

literally, as his hand just did-not touch her hand, and as she drew the scarf toward her,

the speck, fleck, grain or seed
opened like a flower.

And the flower, thus contained
in the infinitely tiny grain or seed,

opened petal by petal, a circle, and each petal was separate

yet still held, as it were, by some force of attraction

to its dynamic centre; and the circle went on widening

and would go on opening
he knew, to infinity. [28, 30, 31]

Kaspar has seen not only the triple goddess, but the flowering of the rod. In looking at Mary's hair, Kaspar has glimpsed the triple goddess who is one. The opening flower, each petal a circle, together with the two crowns of the goddesses, form a mandala, the symbol of wholeness which follows transformation or integration (Jung *Archetypes* 187). Because the unconscious is both non-spatial and non-temporal, an encounter with it may feel like a brush with immortality (*Archetypes* 142). Kaspar has just had a glimpse of the source, a numinous encounter with the divine, and it is female. But Kaspar's vision is quickly supplanted as:
his mind prompted him,
even as if his mind
must sharply differentiate,
clearly define the boundaries of beauty;
hedges and fences and fortresses
must defend the innermost secret,
even the hedges and fortresses of the mind;
so his mind thought,

\[
\text{it is unseemly that a woman}
\text{appear disordered, dishevelled,}
\text{it is unseemly that a woman}
\text{appear at all. [34]}
\]

Kaspar's need to "sharply differentiate, / clearly define the boundaries of beauty" causes him to construct "hedges and fences and fortresses" around the "innermost secret."

Kaspar's experience, like that of St. John, is limited by his need to contain, delineate, and label the experience from the position of the detached observer. Intellectually, he resists his physical experience: "What he thought was the direct contradiction / of what he apprehended" [35]. Kaspar rejects the direct experience of mythos, of seeing reality as imaginative, subjective and internal, for the safety of logos, in which reality is that which is rational, objective and reproducible and he becomes an emblem for a patriarchal, materialistic mindset that devalues the spiritual and the feminine.

Yet, despite the shortcoming of his own disbelief, Kaspar makes a gift of a jar of myrrh to Mary, who, in this final scene of the poem is now a mother. This further conflates the Marys already encountered with the Virgin Mary. Her child is identified only as the Holy-Presence-Manifest. From a Jungian point of view, Mary's child represents the puer archetype, the child which symbolizes the potential future and the synthesis of
opposites. Since the conscious mind can't grasp the notion of two opposites which are held in tension without cancelling one another, Jung argues that the unconscious mind posits a third possibility, what he calls the "transcendent function" (Archetypes 289). This is the literal and figurative union of opposites, masculine and feminine, transcendent and immanent, material and spiritual, manifest as the child.

The final scene of Trilogy is a contentious one. Susan Schweik describes it as "an elusive, even a devious scenario" (267) and Susan Edmunds calls it "a comic moment of baby swapping" (84) where Mary Magdalene becomes "the divine mother, daughter, and lover of the Virgin...." (85). Susan Stanford Friedman has commented that in this tableau, "Kaspar worships Mary in the stable – not as mother of God, but as God the Mother" (303). Certainly the identities of Mary and the child are indeterminate. But it seems to me that the point is not whether Mary, as Virgin or other avatar, is God. What is significant are the efforts of the "new-church" to confine the images of the divine, which is unknowable and mysterious, to a masculine Father, Son and Holy Ghost when such a trinity is not well defined in the New Testament and was still being debated some 300 years after Christ's birth. Such a vision is limited and one which is ultimately debilitating for our culture. In God the child, the masculine and feminine are not only united, they are the same thing. This is more in keeping with Susan Acheson's notion that "Mary and Kaspar are a conjunction of opposites, a bi-sexual entity in which difference is not elided" (201). But I want to go a bit further.

On a personal level, the child represents for the poet the attainment of wholeness through the integration of the fragmentary parts of the psyche. The poet writes that
...Kaspar knew the seal of the jar was unbroken. he did not know whether [Mary] knew
the fragrance came from the bundle of myrrh she held in her arms. [43]

Kaspar returns to Mary something which was always hers, but which she had lost. In his
guise as the Wise Old Man, Kaspar reveals Mary’s power to her. Mary is the generative
feminine principle and as myrrh, she embodies the resurrection principle. What has been
recovered is the repressed archetypal feminine in the guise of Mary. Additionally, the
myrrh with which Mary washed Christ’s feet retroactively becomes the gift of myrrh at
Christ’s birth, providing a spatial organization of time rather than a linear one. In this
way, H.D. undoes the linear, apocalyptic time frame of Christianity, by emphasizing the
cyclical and spatial nature of time. And Kaspar’s recognition that the resurrection
principle is linked to the feminine is to return the feminine to consciousness.

The child is also the poem we read and the healing vision which the poet wishes
to share with her community. That vision challenges the patriarchal and hierarchical
assumptions or distortions perpetuated in Christianity. H.D. is not arguing for a
supplanting of the tyranny of patriarchy with the tyranny of matriarchy, or supplanting
logos with mythos, or quest with pilgrimage, but rather for a balance to be established.
Eliot concludes Four Quartets with the images of the destructive fire and creative rose as
a unity that embodies the poem’s discussion of the cyclical nature of time. H.D.’s final
vision of the unity of the masculine and feminine is the conscious gift she makes to us,
and as Stephen Collis has noted, “[g]ift giving is generative of community” (160).

Adelaide Morris has called the “hau” of the gift, “its increase” (515). Morris has noted that
in many of H.D.’s texts the hau of the gift is manifest as a child born out of a union of the
feminine creative principle with "masters and "inseminating lovers" (516). Although Morris does not include Trilogy in the group of writings that she considers, I think that the child of "The Flowering of the Rod" can also be read in this way.

H.D.'s Trilogy thus works to re-envision both the lance and the grail of myth. The lance becomes the pilgrim's staff, but H.D. also sees it as a principle of transformation, in all its myriad forms, including the writer's pen. The Grail functions on several levels. H.D. moves beyond the Judeo-Christian tradition to Gnostic alchemy and the crucible as the vas hermeticum of transformation. The crucible is then used to distill language to recover the feminine presence, erased from history and language. Her vision is of a deity that is immanent and processive. The crucible of transformation is symbolic of the Great Mother, without whom there could be no resurrection principle. The flowering of the rod is then the product of the balance between the masculine and feminine, the lance and the chalice.
In Chapter one, I made the claim that Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* identifies the inadequacies of the quest for the modernist writer, and that while his text hints at the pilgrimage as a replacement myth, Marlow can’t accept it because, as a man of the nineteenth century, he finds it too frightening to lose the means by which he organizes his personal and cultural identity. Marlow, the “anachronism,” is left to ponder a diseased and dying world that he lacks the knowledge and experience to transform. In this chapter, I want to suggest that Michael Ondaatje’s *The English Patient* is a self-conscious retelling of *Heart of Darkness* that reflects Ondaatje’s homage to and subversion of Conrad’s novella and completes the work Conrad began one hundred years earlier to find a replacement for the heroic myth. While *The English Patient* is usually considered a postmodern novel, a closer examination of the concerns of Ondaatje’s text will show that the characteristics of postmodernism are, in fact, those of modernism.

First, let me make my case for the influence of *Heart of Darkness* on *The English Patient*. Intertextual references abound in *The English Patient*, but those that refer specifically to *Heart of Darkness* are so plentiful as to suggest a deliberate dialogue with Conrad’s text. For example, both novels include the journey of a male character to a foreign location to seek out a man of mystery and in both cases, the seeker is warned that the journey is perilous. When Marlow and his shipmates reach the Russian’s hut,
"[s]ome fifty miles below the Inner Station", they find a note warning them, "Approach cautiously" (70). Similarly, in *The English Patient*, Caravaggio, while hospitalized in Rome, hears of the nameless, burned patient who is under Hana’s care in an old nunnery. The doctors caution Caravaggio about trying to reach the nunnery, which is north of Florence:

> You will need a pass, of course. We can probably get someone to drive you up. It is still terrible out there. Dead cattle. Horses shot dead, half eaten. People hanging upside down from bridges. The last vices of the war. Completely unsafe (29).

Both Marlow and Caravaggio make a trek of considerable length and intensity into a chaotic situation to apprehend the mystery man. Caravaggio takes the train to Florence, walking four miles from the village to the villa, telling himself that "[h]e needs to know who this Englishman from the desert is, and reveal him for Hana’s sake" (117). As with Marlow’s obsession with Kurtz’s identity, Caravaggio has a fascination with that of the Englishman even before Caravaggio meets him.

Both Marlow and Caravaggio arrive at their destination to find the mystery man living in a building that is derelict and half-destroyed with holes in the roof. In *Heart of Darkness*, the building is described as: "A long decaying building ... half-buried in the high grass; the large holes in the peaked roof gaped black from afar...." (89), showing “no signs of life” (96). More exceptional is the fence that surrounds it, each fence post topped by a decapitated head, “black, dried, sunken, with closed eyelids” (97). The villa in *The English Patient* is described as similarly devoid of life: “From outside, the place seemed devastated" (14). Bombed in a mortar-shell attack, it is a fragmented space:

> Some rooms faced onto the valley with no walls at all. ... Doors opened into landscape. Some rooms had become an open aviary. The staircase had lost its lower steps.... (13)
The narrator describes the villa as having an exposed "wound", with the "look of a besieged fortress, the limbs of most of the statues blown off " (43) in the "half-bombed gardens" (86). The headless figures are a curious echo of the heads without bodies observed by Marlow at the Inner Station in the Congo.

The man of mystery in both texts is a foreigner, of mixed nationality and partly educated in England (HD 86, EP 165). While Conrad tells us that Kurtz's "mother was half-English, his father was half-French. All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz...." (86), Ondaatje's Englishman speaks of himself as "an international bastard" (176). Both Kurtz and the Englishman are described as exceptional individuals, gifted intellectually, but of uncertain morality. Marlow notes Kurtz's ambiguous reputation:

Hadn't I been told in all the tones of jealousy and admiration that he had collected, bartered, swindled, or stolen more ivory than all the other agents together? That was not the point. The point was in his being a gifted creature, and that of all his gifts the one that stood out pre-eminently, that carried with it a sense of real presence, was his ability to talk, his words -- the gift of expression.... (83)

The Russian confirms Kurtz's pre-eminent verbal ability, telling Marlow, "'You don't talk with that man -- you listen to him'".... (91), an observation that is proven by Marlow's own experience of Kurtz as a man who "discoursed. A voice! A voice! It rang deep to the very last" (110). The doctors in Rome make a similar observation to Caravaggio about the Englishman: "...he talks, he talks all the time...." (28). In the villa, under Hana's care, the Englishman "speaks in fragments about oasis towns, the later Medicis, the prose style of Kipling, the woman who bit into his flesh" (96). Additionally, both men are skilled writers. When Marlow reaches the Inner Station, he finds Kurtz is composing a report for the "International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs" which Marlow characterizes as "eloquent, vibrating with eloquence...." (86), while the Englishman, we
are told, writes papers for the Geographical Society in London and is working on his treatise, *Récèntes Explorations dans le Désert Libyque* (133-4, 235). Both men possess a compendium of knowledge; the Russian's testimonial is that Kurtz "enlarged my mind" (104), while the English Patient is able to discourse on themes as diverse as weaponry, Renaissance art and history, geography, and literature which he demonstrates to Kip, Hana and Caravaggio at various turns.

Kurtz and the Englishman are also both portrayed as having "gone native," Kurtz, whose "nerves went wrong, and caused him to preside at certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites..." (86) and the Englishman who had lived among the Bedouin, "nameless," where "it was easy for me to slip across borders, not to belong to anyone, to any nation" (139). In their woundings - Kurtz as a result of some unnamed jungle ailment and the Englishman in the plane crash - the two men are similarly described as sharing the likeness of a carving of death. Marlow observes that Kurtz resembles "an animated image of death carved out of old ivory " (99). The Englishman similarly "reposes like the sculpture of the dead knight in Ravenna," (96), echoing the observations of the narrator in *Heart of Darkness* who comments on the Roman knights from Ravenna who invaded England and from whom the narrator traces England's colonial ancestry. Both men are nursed in their infirmity by foreigners, Kurtz by the Russian, and the Englishman by Hana, who is Canadian.

Each text features a prominent guidebook in which the text is annotated with personal reflections, so that the authorized account is challenged by personal experience. In *Heart of Darkness*, it is Towson's *An Inquiry into Some Points of Seamanship*, which Marlow finds at the Russian's shack:
It lost its covers, and the pages had been thumbed into a state of extremely dirty softness; but the back had been lovingly stitched afresh with white cotton thread, which looked clean yet. It was an extraordinary find. I handled this amazing antiquity with the greatest possible tenderness, lest it should dissolve in my hands. Such a book being there was wonderful enough; but still more astounding were the notes penciled in the margin, and plainly referring to the text. (71)

It is, of course, one of the ironies of Heart of Darkness that Towson's illuminations of seamanship are of no use to the Russian, who is travelling inland, nor to Marlow in his journey into the unknown. Towson's manual is, like Marlow, an anachronism from the period of sea exploration. It is the ciphers "penciled in the margin," not the text itself that make the text meaningful to the Russian. The English patient also has a book which he embellishes with marginalia: an 1890 edition of Herodotus' The Histories, which functions as his "commonplace book," personalized with "fragments — maps, diary entries, writings in many languages, paragraphs cut out of other books" (96). Written circa 400 B.C., The Histories deals overtly with the historical events of war and the construction of national boundaries, but the English patient claims that Herodotus "clarified all societies" (150), and "has from the beginning sought out the supplementary to the main argument." What you find in him are cul-de-sacs within the sweep of history...." (119). Mark Simpson notes that the use of the Herodotus as an intertextual reference suggests that "the desert cannot be fixed, set, solved through textual excursions" (4), but I would argue that the supposed inadequacies of Herodotus's text are dependent on whether one reads the main or the supplementary argument, a point I will take up in a later discussion.

Many of the events in both texts transpire on the African continent, but they occur in two very different geographies - one on a river boat in the jungle and the other in the
desert. But Ondaatje again gestures to *Heart of Darkness* in his description of the
desert. While Marlow cautions his auditors that "you lost your way on that river as you
would in a desert...." (66), comparing the river to a desert that lacks visual boundaries,
Ondaatje has the English patient reverse the metaphor, comparing the desert to a river
when discussing his plane accident:

> In the desert it is easy to lose a sense of demarcation. When I
came out of the air and crashed into the desert, into those troughs of
yellow, all I kept thinking was, I must build a raft...I must build a raft.
[...] These were water people. Even today caravans look like a
river. (18-19)

In both texts, the mystery man and the men who seek him have characteristics in
common. Marlow, we are told, is of the same "new gang" as Kurtz, "[t]he same people
who sent him [Kurtz] specially also recommended you" (55), while in *The English
Patient*, the Englishman is the Hungarian born Almasy, a spy, like Caravaggio, a spy,
who "worked with intelligence out of Cairo and Italy for a while. Till he was captured"
(169). Such comparisons make Marlow and Caravaggio's morality as questionable as
that of Kurtz and the English patient. While these similarities of plot, theme and
character construction are too extensive not to be deliberate, Ondaatje problematizes
such neat parallels between the two texts to subvert Conrad's text, as well.

Consider the character of Caravaggio: it runs parallel, in many respects, to
Marlow's as the Grail knight, but in a twist on Conrad's text, Caravaggio's behaviour also
mirrors that of Conrad's Russian as trickster figure. As a thief who moves between light
and darkness, Caravaggio is literally a liminal figure. Caravaggio's occupation is
terminated, of course, by the violence inflicted upon him by the Germans, but he retains
the court jester aspect of his role, both mocking the status quo and revealing the
underlying truths in his attempts to persuade both Hana and Kip to leave the villa. As the Russian tried to get Kurtz to leave “while there was time” (95), Caravaggio questions the duty of colonial subjects to the colonizer’s aims to subdue another culture: “‘The trouble with all of us is we are where we shouldn’t be. What are we doing in Africa, in Italy? What is Kip doing dismantling bombs in orchards, for God’s sake? What is he doing fighting English wars’” (122). Ultimately, he identifies the war as perpetuated not by nations, but by the capitalists: “‘No one is meaner than the rich. Trust me. But they have to follow the rules of their shitty civilised world. They declare war, they have honour, and they can’t leave’” (123). Like his namesake, the Italian painter whose canvases focus sudden light in the darkness with the technique of chiaroscuro (Oxford Dictionary of Art), it is Caravaggio who illuminates the absurdity of Kip and Hana’s misplaced loyalty, advising them instead to “get on a train, go and have babies together” (EP 122) As a liminal figure, Caravaggio undermines the colonial enterprise, releasing the old, heroic myth to make space for the pilgrimage.

Ondaatje’s construction of Hana’s character also shows parallels to Conrad’s figure of the Russian. As the only woman with “[t]oo many men in the house” (90), not part of the fighting because of her gender, but not part of the female domestic sphere because of her occupation, Hana is also a liminal character. Like the Russian in Heart of Darkness, she is nurse to the fisher king figure and she is also in thrall to him as the Russian was to Kurtz, because of her refusal to leave the English patient. Like the Russian she is cut off, willingly, from the community of other nurses. She also dresses in other people’s clothes like the motley Russian.

However, Ondaatje reverses Conrad’s sexist portrayal of largely silent women in Heart of Darkness by creating Hana as a central character. While Bill Fledderus has
criticized Ondaatje for a “female character palette [which] seems limited to either madonna or whore, nurturing saint or temptress” (9), I see Hana as fully fleshed.

Ondaatje avoids the easy binary; she is neither the seductive and terrifying archetype on the beach staring at Marlow, nor the virginal, but nameless Intended. Hana has lovers, conceives a child, grieves her father’s death, the loss of her baby and the death of the young soldiers. The force of the trauma she suffers after witnessing so much death and maiming of bodies compels her to relinquish her former identity. She hacks off her hair after three days of continuous nursing of bodies so that “[s]he would have nothing to link her, to lock her, to death” (50). She refuses to look at herself in a mirror for a year after that episode, disowning the person who witnessed the “destroyed bodies” (49) and when by chance she sees her reflection in a mirror, “[s]he watched the little portrait of herself as if within a clasped brooch” (52), echoing the viewing by Marlow of Kurtz’s miniature of the Intended. But unlike the women of Heart of Darkness, whom Marlow believes “should be out of it” (80), Hana is in the middle of it. Her character thus challenges the quest, both in terms of its objectives, which are seen to be corrupt, and in its objectification of women.

On the most superficial level, Kip can be seen as an analogue to Marlow’s loyal helmsman, the silent pilot of the ship, whose death Marlow thinks an unworthy exchange for Kurtz’s life (HD 87). But where the helmsman was silent, Kip’s character speaks. Fledderus sees Kip as Percival in the Grail myth who heals the land by defusing bombs, which would make him analogous in my schema to the character of Marlow, a designation with which I disagree. It is true that Hana constructs Kip as a heroic figure, noting that “[e]ach morning he would step from the painted scene towards dark bluffs of chaos. The knight. The warrior saint” (273). The narrator suggests here the way that art,
in the shape of the mural in Siena, provides order in the midst of chaos. In this picture of an imaginary world, culture is constructed in the form of the heroic myth as a hedge against mortality. But Kip, as a liminal figure, also works to undermine the heroic image. Having successfully diffused a difficult bomb in the garden of the villa, he notes that

> If he were a hero in a painting, he could claim a just sleep [...].
> The successful defusing of a bomb ended novels. Wise white fatherly men shook hands, were acknowledged, and limped away, having been coaxed out of solitude for this special occasion. But he was a professional. And he remained the foreigner, the Sikh. (104-5)

In part, Kip rejects the heroic role because he feels the model does not include the "brown" races. But he also senses the inadequacy of the myth, recognizing that as the hero, he would no longer serve a useful purpose once the war was over. Further, as he muses to himself, novels have predictable plot lines that fail to account for the complexity of the war and Kip's life. In the midst of the uncertainty and chaos of the war, we can see how Hana constructs Kip as hero as a means of establishing order – a predictable ending offers reassurance. But Kip sees the order as too illusory to be useful to him. In the same way that Caravaggio encourages Hana and Kip to define themselves by their own values rather than demonstrating their loyalty to the values of the colonizer, Kip sees that attempting to prove to the 'white fathers' his ability to be a hero continues to make him a colonial 'son' in a reification of the values of the colonizer. Like Miriam Henderson, Kip's recognition of the limits of the heroic quest is instrumental in his construction of himself as a complete subject. He chooses the parameters of his values rather than trying to conform to those of the dominant culture. In a world in which he can no longer "trust even this circle of elastic on the sleeve of the girl's frock that gripped her arm" (105), the heroic myth offers him no comfort.
The art that does soothe Kip is largely late medieval in form and Christian in theme. In Arezzo, Kip observes the frescoes in the Chiesa de San Francisco, by Piero della Francesco, who, as I noted in the Introduction, was one of the first Renaissance painters to use single point perspective. The frescoes illustrate a medieval tale called *The Golden Legend*, which concerns the history of the wood used for Christ’s crucifixion. The tale begins with the tree of original sin from the Garden of Eden, which is later chopped down by King Solomon to build a bridge. The Queen of Sheba, about to cross the bridge, learns miraculously of the wood’s origin and refuses to cross. King Solomon orders the bridge removed and the wood buried, but the wood is later found and used for Christ’s crucifixion. Some 600 years later, it is returned to Jerusalem by Heraclius, who defeats the Persian King (Kren, See Figures 4 and 5). For Kip, this medieval universe provides a cushion against the destruction of war:

It was always raining and cold, and there was no order but for the great maps of art that showed judgment, piety, and sacrifice. The Eighth Army came upon river after river of destroyed bridges, and their sapper units clambered down banks on ladders of rope within enemy gunfire and swam or waded across. Food and tents were washed away. Men who were tied to equipment disappeared. Once across the river they tried to ascend out of the water. They sank their hands and wrists into the mud wall of the cliff face and hung there. They wanted the mud to harden and hold them.

The young Sikh sapper put his cheek against the mud and thought of the Queen of Sheba’s face, the texture of her skin. There was no comfort in this river except for his desire for her, which somehow kept him warm. He would pull the veil off her hair. He would put his right hand between her neck and olive blouse. [...]  

[...] He leaned forward to rest on the skin of her frail neck. He fell in love with her downcast eye. This woman who would someday know the sacredness of bridges. (70)

Hanging on the cliff, his hands and wrists in the mud to avoid being washed away with the river flow, to lay his cheek in the mud is to lay his head in the lap of the Great
Mother. The association that he makes of his physical sensation with the painting of the Queen of Sheba suggests that he sees her as an equally nurturing figure. On one level, the fresco offers the security of a plot in which the themes of the miraculous, the resurrection, and the sacred are figured in juxtaposition to the perilous conditions and total destruction encountered by the military personnel. Where the Eighth Army encounters “river after river of destroyed bridges,” the Queen of Sheba experiences a miracle on a bridge that links her to the central themes of Christianity. In a literal sense, the bridge is an engineering device used to connect two geographical locations, to allow individuals to move from one area to another; in a metaphorical sense, the bridge functions as the antithesis to the bombs - where the bridges connect space, people, histories, races - the bombs destroy, collapse, and separate. On another level, the fresco with its medieval figures reflects a world view that privileges relational qualities that Kip associates with the nurturing qualities of family. In Naples, while trying to defuse a massive bomb linked to the city’s electrical generators, Kip finds comfort in the Church of San Giovanni a Carbonara amongst the terracotta figures of a woman in conversation with an angel:

... if he is going to explode he will do so in the company of these two. They will die or be secure. There is nothing more he can do, anyway. He has been up all night on a final search for caches of dynamite and time cartridges. Walls will crumble around him or he will walk through a city of light. At least he has found these parental figures. He can relax in the midst of this mime of conversation. (280)

In this passage, the woman and the angel act as family for Kip, their larger-than-life figures providing imaginary succour. Kip is also taken with the Piero painting of the Madonna del parto, or the pregnant Madonna. Here we have a Medieval image of Eliot’s Gaia figure of regeneration. In the painting, the Madonna is flanked by two angels who
are drawing back the parted curtains to reveal a similar part in her dress, so that the Madonna is framed in the curtains as her bulging stomach is framed in the folds of the dress (see Figure 6). The image is suggestive of a seed pod about to burst or a woman’s vulva with all the connotations of fertility. Like the angels, the Madonna has a halo over her head, showing her sacred status.

Kip has a glimpse of another regenerative Madonna figure in Gabicce, in which he inadvertently witnesses the Marine Festival of the Virgin Mary. When the Eighth Army detects unusual movements in the sea at night, they suspect German soldiers are advancing on the beach. A warning shell is fired and as Kip watches through the rifle scope, he sees a “halo [that was suddenly illuminated] around the head of the Virgin Mary. She was coming out of the sea...,” a “blue and cream plaster figure” (78-79). Unlike Marlow’s observation of the dark woman, the Terrible mother who emerges from the darkness to devour, the re-enactment of the emergence of the Virgin allows for the bringing forward of the feminine principle from the sea of the unconscious into communal consciousness. The ritual mixes the pagan celebration of Stella Maris with the Christian reverence for the mother of Christ, reminiscent of H.D.’s conflation of the mothers of the resurrection gods in Trilogy. Not insignificantly however, the ‘Virgin’ is nearly shot by the Eighth Army, and Kip views her solely through his rifle sight, lining her up in the cross-hairs: “He raised his rifle and picked up her face in the gun sight – ageless, without sexuality...” (79). When she emerges from the sea, he also comes out of the darkness, “the mortar tube strapped to his back, carrying the rifle in his hands. In his turban and with the weapons he was a shock to them(79). And although Kip notes that he would like to leave an offering for the Virgin, recognizing her sacred status, in the end, he declines as “he had his own faith after all” (80). The violence he embodies with his weapon is a
direct contrast to the communal witnessing of the ritual embrace of the feminine in which the figure "was placed in a grape truck full of flowers, while the band marched ahead of her in silence" (79). The Grail for Kip is manifest both in art and ritual as the nurturing mother and in themes of resurrection and birth that function as the only antidote to the bombing. As in Heart of Darkness, the heroic aspect of the quest, in which the lance is joined to the grail, is perverted here, not because the grail is missing, as in Heart of Darkness, but because the destructive aspects of the lance threaten the Grail.

Figure 4. Adoration of the Holy Wood and the Meeting of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, Piero della Francesca.

Source. c. 1452, Fresco, 336 x 747 cm, San Francesco, Arezzo; reprinted by permission from Dr. Emil Kren, from Web Gallery of Art, 21 May 2004 <http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>. 
Figure 5. Detail from *The Meeting of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, Piero della Francesca.

Source. c. 1452, Fresco, 336 x 747 cm, San Francesco, Arezzo; reprinted by permission from Dr. Emil Kren, from Web Gallery of Art, 21 May 2004 <http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>.
Figure 6. *Madonna del parto*, 1467, Piero della Francesca.

Source. Detached fresco, 260 x 203 cm, Chapel of the cemetery, Monterchi (Arezzo); reprinted by permission from Dr. Emil Kren, from Web Gallery of Art, 21 May 2004 <http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>.

Visual art figures prominently in *The English Patient*, and not solely on the basis of the locale. As I have noted in the *Introduction* to this thesis, visual art as a cultural artifact can be taken as representative of a world view. The interart references discussed
here show Kip’s nostalgia for the order and hierarchy of the Renaissance, the last vestiges of which are destroyed by the war. The Villa can only be a temporary and illusory haven, but as I will show later, an important one.

Ondaatje’s repeated allusions to the *Heart of Darkness* cue the reader to the overarching thematic concern of individuals coping with shifting world views. In Ondaatje’s only overt reference to *Heart of Darkness*, he pays homage to the exploratory impulse:

The nineteenth century was an age of river seekers. And then in the 1920s there is a sweet postscript history on this pocket of earth, made mostly by privately funded expeditions and followed by modest lectures given at the Geographical Society in London at Kensington Gore. These lectures are given by sunburned, exhausted men who, like Conrad’s sailors, are not too comfortable with the etiquette of taxis, the quick, flat wit of bus conductors. (133)

This explicit reference to the “sweet postscript history” (133) portrayed by Conrad exalts the spirit of the explorers and adventurers who went to Africa not to claim it for a nation, but to investigate the “blank spaces on the earth” (HD 33). The English Patient identifies himself as part of this tradition, establishing himself as a pilgrim of a pre-modern world. Both novels celebrate the discovery as opposed to dominion, as the English patient makes clear:

The desert could not be claimed or owned – it was a piece of cloth carried by winds, never held down by stones, and given a hundred shifting names long before Canterbury existed, long before battles and treaties quilted Europe and the East. Its caravans, those strange rambling feasts and cultures left nothing behind, not an ember. All of us, even those with European homes and children in the distance, wished to remove the clothing of our countries. It was a place of faith. We disappeared into the landscape. (138-9)

While Marlow can only observe the Russian’s pilgrimage with wonder and amusement, the English patient and his fellow nomads make the transition from hero to
pilgrim, seeking the opportunity to join the people of the desert who understood the nature of the pilgrimage "before Canterbury existed." For them, the desert is "a place of faith" into which the pilgrims disappear. Like Miriam Henderson, these pilgrims seek to be one with the landscape in a subject-object identification. Their destination holds a sense of ancient time that predates linear history, and by inference, the organized religion that gave name to ‘Canterbury.’

Susan Ellis argues that Ondaatje eliminates the hero in his novel by showing us its folly in the English patient:

his charred and blackened body as he lies drugged and sinking into death, without identity, can be seen as Ondaatje's recognition of the failure of that particular form of literary hero... (3).

I think her argument is partially true, but her analysis elides some of the subtlety of what Ondaatje is trying to accomplish. The English patient clearly disavows the heroic myth in the initial stages of his experience. It is only later, when he meets Katherine Clifton, that he makes a shift into the heroic mode, as I will discuss later. Victor Provencal, in a nuanced article, argues that the English Patient's Herodotus, with both its main and supplemental explanations, functions as a bifurcated text that is both the official version of history and its subversion, revealing two impulses, one of the essentialist, imperial history of progress and achievement and the other of the existentialist, postcolonial history of process enacted by the explorers. I would take this one step further and argue that this is the tension between the quest and the pilgrimage. Like Marlow, the English patient is an anachronism. The Herodotus is useful to him not solely as an historical account, but also as a source of actual historical locations. The English patient tries to find the sites that Herodotus mentions in the landscape, embracing the sense of time
and spatiality that links the English patient to the pilgrim tradition, not the heroic one. The narrator tells us this explicitly, revealing that the English Patient "would never think about Cairo or the music or the streets or the women; by then he was moving in ancient time ...." (246).

The English patient wants to inhabit all history, all times, a spatial history not unlike H.D.'s palimpsest or Linklater's description of kiyahs mentioned in Chapter one. Linklater further notes that "[t]he stories of kiyahs were acted out over the extent of the landscape and the totality of the landscape is required for a telling or deciphering of the past. A loss of land, therefore, becomes analogous to the removal of individual chapters from a temporally ordered history book" (60). While discussing the specific colonization of western Canada by Euro-Canadians, Linklater identifies the disconnection of land and history with the colonizing impulse, arguing that "[i]t has been documented as a feature of colonialist regimes throughout the world" (59):

As recent "colonizers" of western Canada, Euro-Canadians are disconnected from the land, viewing it as a wilderness that is to be controlled, exploited, commodified or feared.... To the Euro-Canadian, it is the mastery of culture over nature that is the essence of civilization. Consequently it is the culturally constructed environment that forms the critical symbols of "place" and "history." (58-59)

This is the impulse that the English patient works against. While the station manager in Heart of Darkness prides himself on wearing a freshly starched collar everyday, emblematic of his ability to maintain European culture amid the "primitive" jungle (46), the pilgrims want to remove the clothing that both identifies them and imprisons them in a mindset that defines identity through differences:

Looking for the lost army of Cambyses. Looking for Zerzura. 1932 and 1933 and 1934. Not seeing each other for months. Just the Bedouin and us, crisscrossing the Forty Days Road. There were rivers of desert tribes.
the most beautiful humans I've met in my life. We were German, English, Hungarian, African – all of us insignificant to them. Gradually we became nationless. I came to hate nations. We are deformed by nation-states. (138)

When the English Patient is in the desert, he is without a national identity, but he is not identity-less. His desire to “remove the clothing of all countries” is shared by others, a multi-national, multi-ethnic group which finds its identity in relationship. And the English patient is not under the illusion that he is the first to ‘discover’ a site in Africa, rather he is interested in being in history,

a place where there were sudden, brief populations over the centuries – a fourteenth-century army, a Tebu caravan, the Senussi raiders of 1915. And in between these times – nothing was there. (141)

Unlike the men of “imbecile rapacity” (52) in Heart of Darkness who identified themselves in reference to the colonized “savage” who is always the speechless form gesticulating on the beach, the English patient and the other explorers now see themselves as “insignificant” to the inhabitants of the land, who are not viewed as primitive, but rather as possessing knowledge that the Westerners lack. It is the desert healer, after all, who has the unguent made from peacock bones that soothes the burns of the English patient. The desert, in its endless shifting and blurring of boundaries, undermines the linear time and space emphasized by goal-oriented Western culture. It becomes not the text or landscape to be written into, but the source of knowledge.

Where Marlow claims that one needed faith in one’s ability to “breathe dead hippo, so to speak, and not be contaminated” by the chaos of the jungle and the “other” (86), the English patient sees the desert as “a place of faith”, the only place where God is (250), and Cairo as the source of chaos.
Both novels are critical of the politicization of the quest and the impulse to use the exploitation of another country as a means of advancing one’s own ego, but Ondaatje’s novel recognizes the subject position of the African or the ‘other’ in a way that Marlow can only hint at. Conrad problematizes the Western cultural construction of its identity as an opposition to the darkness of Africa, but suggests that his culture is not yet ready to let go of such a binary construct. In Heart of Darkness, the Europeans define themselves by projecting the dark side of their own characters onto the ‘other.’ And yet that darkness can never be integrated into European society. It is not just that the Europeans define themselves as “not savage” or “not African.” It is also that the sexual, the chaotic – everything that doesn’t fit into what Kip calls the “precise behaviour” that is emblematic of English customs (283) is pushed onto the darkness of Africa, the women and the local inhabitants. To encounter the darkness would be to find the body missing from the severed heads that line the perimeter of the Inner Station. For Marlow to participate in the drumming of the locals would be to lose himself to oblivion, as Kurtz has. Marlow says that Kurtz “had kicked himself loose of the earth” (107), suggesting that Kurtz’s attempts to integrate the binaries of chaos and order, mind and body have resulted in “‘The horror!, The horror!’” (111). Where Marlow constructs the African jungle in opposition to European civilization, the savage versus the English speaker, the impenetrable oblivion of the darkness versus the knowable order of the world or reason, in The English Patient, the darkness is no longer in the centre of the earth, but has now been brought to the surface, literally manifest on the English patient who is “pure carbon” (109), “burned into the colour of aubergine” (4).

Ellis suggests that the English patient recognizes on his deathbed “his own complicity in the war – his map making” (3), but I think this judgement narrow in scope.
The pilgrims were victims, not perpetrators of the conflict, their "oasis society" dissolved into "teams" when war broke out: "[t]he Bermans, the Bagnolds, the Slatin Pashas – who had at various times saved each other's lives – had now split up into camps" (168). In fact, the dissolution into competitive factions begins before the war starts when Geoffrey Clifton joins their group under the pretence of exploratory interest. Clifton is sent out from England as an aerial photographer, "keeping an eye on [the] strange group in the Egyptian-Libyan desert" (252), who are an enigma to the "deal makers" (284) who cannot conceive of a nationless identity. While the English patient remarks that "[w]e knew power and great finance were temporary things" (142), it is "[t]he deal makers. The contract makers. The map drawers" (284), who, immersed in a linear view of history, are under the illusion that they can control the landscape indefinitely through power and domination. The English patient's intentions were very different from the "deal makers" who, like Conrad's Eldorado Exploring Expedition, were determined "[t]o tear treasure out of the bowels of the land... with no more moral purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars breaking into a safe" (HD 61). As The English patient tells Caravaggio, "All I desired was to walk upon such an earth that had no maps" (261), sounding very much like Conrad's Russian, who "wanted nothing from the wilderness but space to breathe in and to push on through" (93 HD).

However, the English patient steps into the heroic myth when he meets Katherine Clifton, Geoffrey Clifton's wife. The union of the English patient and Katherine is one of mythic proportions as he becomes Lancelot to Katherine's Guenevere, trying to rescue her from an unappreciative King Arthur, or as Katherine signals the English patient in her reading aloud of a chapter from Herodotus, from Candaules, who betrays his wife for his own vanity. Their relationship is also highly suggestive of the doomed
tryst between the Queen and the Grail Knight that Eliot uses to show the failure of the quest. Instead of Isolde and Tristan or Cleopatra and Mark Antony who betray their respective Kings, Katherine and the English patient betray Geoffrey Clifton.

In a sense, Katherine brings the English patient to consciousness, so that he steps out of his ego-less state of pilgrimage into one of attempted heroism. When he stops to view a recent scar, acquired in one of their passionate and violent encounters, he notes that "[he] had not looked at himself like this in a mirror for years" (153). He suddenly becomes curious "about the shape of his face"... his "long eyebrows"... "the beginning of grey in his sandy hair" (152). Like Kurtz, who declared, "'My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river...'" (85), the Englishman, who initially wished to be in a nameless identification with the land, becomes proprietary and jealous of his lover, referring to Katherine's body part as "my shoulder" (156), fragmenting her.

The English patient makes the error of confusing the Katherine with the feminine archetype, just as Marlow and Stephen have confused the women they encounter with the archetype of the Terrible Mother. The Cave of Swimmers, into which he takes her broken body, can be seen in the mythic realm as "the uterus of the Great Mother" (Neumann 189), the unconscious realm. It is here, in the mythic world, that the hero is to experience his initiation with the Terrible Mother, to emerge transformed, having acknowledged the feminine within himself. This enables him, in turn, to transform the world, and as Neumann argues, the "man who transforms the earth and so transforms himself, becomes the point at which earth and heaven come together again...." (Neumann 221). But the English patient is unsuccessful in rescuing Katherine from the Cave of Swimmers because, unlike the more successful Grail knight who must ask the correct question, when the English patient is captured by the English en route to get help
for Katherine, he "didn't give them a right name" (250). Instead of giving Clifton's name, which would have been easily identifiable to the British, the English patient gives them his own name, which is foreign and therefore suspect, resulting in his imprisonment and Katherine's eventual wasting death in the cave. I would argue that it is not his map making that makes him complicit, but rather that when he steps into the heroic myth, he begins to see Katherine as a piece of land to colonize, mimicking the "deal makers". His failure within the heroic paradigm reveals no transformation of himself or the world. And as in The Waste Land, the failure of the Grail knight demonstrates the failure of the quest motif.

When the English patient falls, on fire, from the plane into the desert, he lands in a radically changed world, one with which he is as ill equipped to deal as Marlow or the poet of The Waste Land. The partial destruction of the Renaissance trompe l'oeil mural at the villa reveals the inadequacy of this world view, which culminates in the dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, whose burn victims parallel the English patient's own charred state. Instead of the transformative vision of the Madonna del parto that Kip saw emerging from the sea, the earth is an even greater wasteland than Eliot imagined.

A simple post-colonial reading would have us now align ourselves with Kip in his identification with the Japanese victims of the bomb, and by extension, the "savages" from Heart of Darkness and blame the new imperialists:

When you start bombing the brown races of the world, you're an Englishman. You had King Leopold of Belgium and now you have fucking Harry Truman of the USA. You all learned if from the English. (286).
Kip's enraged accusations make explicit the connection between the colonization of the Congo in *Heart of Darkness* and the "deal makers" of *The English Patient*. Ondaatje, however, forces an interrogation of this association. After all, the faceless "English" patient begs the question: 'who are the English?' The great irony of the novel is that the English patient, who represents everything that Kip once revered — "customs and manners and books and prefects and reason" (283), is not actually English. Why is it that the most convincing Englishman in the book is probably the Hungarian, Almasy? Ondaatje problematizes the easy binaries of "us" and "them"; instead, we have patriots versus spies, traitors versus nomads versus explorers versus nurses. Instead of providing us with an quickly identifiable perpetrator, the novel asks the question, "who was the enemy?" (19), and by inference, who are we? How do we know? What is home?

Ondaatje's tentative answers to these questions surrounding identity, I contend, lie in the community of individuals holed up at the Villa San Girolamo. Here, the bombed and limbless statues in the Villa garden are emblematic of the occupants inside who are wounded psychologically and physically; as Hana says, "I think we are all mad" (266). Everyone has been forced through sheer trauma to relinquish the identity of their former self. The English patient either can't, or chooses not to remember his name. Caravaggio "still prefers to eat alone" (39), unable to use a knife or fork with his severed thumbs, the morphine he uses regularly now not so much for pain but so that he can imagine his thumbs are still attached (116). Where Marlow fights off the frightening darkness of oblivion by focusing on order and reason, the characters in *The English Patient* are called back from chaos, not by order and English civility, but by the love of human relationships. Kip says to himself of his fellow sapper, "Only Hardy, he realized, keeps me human now" (216) and when Hardy is killed, he thinks of Hana, "If he could walk
across the room and touch her he would be sane” (113). Caravaggio wants to save Hana, believing that “[s]he needed an uncle” (85), and while Hana thinks that she is nursing the English patient, his strategy is to combat her shell shock, which he recognized in her at the hospital, by having her read to him. In an extension of the relational purpose Marlow derives from looking after the helmsman, the inhabitants of the villa find purpose and meaning in looking after one another. But instead of a single, wounded Fisher king as occurs in *Heart of Darkness*, we have four traumatized individuals. Where Conrad’s women and the helmsman never speak, Ondaatje provides us with multiple perspectives that problematize notions of gender, race, and nation.

The Villa itself operates as a liminal space. In its fragmented state, partaking as it does of the exterior and interior world, both as a sanctuary and a bomb site, it provides a physical location in which to challenge existing categories and world views. It is, in other words, a site of pilgrimage. Where Almasy’s pre-war nomads were pilgrims seeking a glimpse of eternal time, Hana, Kip, Caravaggio and the English patient are pilgrims in search of healing for their physical and emotional wounds.

In an interview with Eleanor Wachtel, Ondaatje remarks that the villa “was an Eden, an escape, a little cul-de-sac during the war, and this was where healing began. Then with the news of other bombs, suddenly this became, perhaps, the Last Eden” (252). It is in the villa that the heroic myth is finally exposed as inadequate to solve modern problems. Marked by its single point perspective, in its inherited form the heroic quest would leave out the stories of Kip and Hana. The quest’s focus on the goal, when taken to the extreme, is shown to be destructive, rather than transformative. Instead, Ondaatje suggests that the alternative is to be found in a communal, relational orientation. As he tells Wachtel, the book “primarily concerns situation, as opposed to
theme. That's how I imagined the book, and how I see the book. They're barely spoken relationships" (256). The English patient states it more lyrically:

We die containing a richness of lovers and tribes, tastes we have swallowed, bodies we have plunged into and swum up as if rivers of wisdom, characters we have climbed into as if trees, fears we have hidden in as if caves. I wish for all this to be marked on my body when I am dead. I believe in such cartography – to be marked by nature, not just to label ourselves on a map like the names of rich men and women on buildings. We are communal histories, communal books. We are not owned or monogamous in our taste or experience. (261)

Where T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* and H.D.'s *Trilogy* both provide visions of fully formed pilgrimages, the pilgrimages which are revealed are solitary endeavours. Ondaatje takes the notion of pilgrimage further in *The English Patient*, showing us a view of pilgrimage as a communal activity.

The question remains whether *The English Patient* is a postmodern text as has been claimed by critics. The novel is fragmented, multi-referential, and rejects a totalizing narrative. In terms of concerns of time and space, it looks toward the mythic view. And its concern is to recover the feminine, generative principle to transform the world. These are not unlike the concerns of *The Waste Land* or a Cubist painting. While *The English Patient* pays far more attention to the interrogation of notions of gender, identity, and nationality than *Heart of Darkness*, such issues are not absent in the latter.

In an interview with Catherine Bush in 1990, which predates the publication of *The English Patient*, Ondaatje acknowledges his desire to go beyond Conrad’s narrative structure; he is “drawn instead to a form that can have a more cubist or mural voice to capture the variousness of things” (248), referring to “360-degree form” of the murals of Diego Rivera (245). A “360-degree form” suggests a spatial rather than a temporal
orientation. The sequential outcome and unified, authoritative view of the quest cannot
be accommodated in Ondaatje’s "360-degree form."

Instead, Ondaatje’s intentions point to his novel as a pilgrimage and force a
reconsideration of the novel’s purported postmodernist characteristics as more in
keeping with those of modernism. The expansion of Marlow’s singular vision to include
the stories of Kip and Hana is not unlike Joyce’s efforts to include the stories of Leopold
Bloom, Stephen and Molly that would be omitted from traditional accounts of the hero on
the basis of race, ethnicity and gender. The exposure of the goal as destructive rather
than transformative carries forward the project begun by Joseph Conrad in Heart of
Darkness and expounded upon in the long poems of T.S. Eliot and H.D. that reveals
goal oriented activity as emblematic of the waste land. Ondaatje’s insistence on
establishing meaning through relational rather than exclusionary activity and the lack of
closure in The English Patient are techniques shared by Dorothy Richardson’s novel,
Pilgrimage; Eliot’s long poem, Four Quartets; and H.D.’s Trilogy in their lack of a
teleological perspective and their positing of relational activity as the way of making
meaning in the absence of the quest.

In A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction, Linda Hutcheon notes
that what is typically seen to mark James Joyce and T.S. Eliot as modernists is “their
paradoxical desire for stable aesthetic and moral values, even in the face of their
realization of the inevitable absence of such universals” (6). What I have shown in this
thesis is that Joyce and Eliot, and other modernists, were, in fact, involved in a project
not to fix aesthetic and moral values, but rather to replace an anachronistic mythic
system with one more suited to the changing notions of time and space at the beginning
of the twentieth century. Rather than manifesting nostalgia for an illusory past, modernist
writers were working out an alternative to a system which no longer accurately defined their experience. Some of the defining qualities of postmodernism, such as parody, pastiche, the purported death of history, and the loss of subjectivity are stalking horses for a much larger issue: how to recover order in a world which undermines all systems of order. As Kevin Hart writes:

The statement ‘God is dead’ means that absolute transcendence has lost all its authority and mystique. There are no metaphysical ends or ideals to which we can point that can satisfy and sustain us. We cannot determine a ground outside the immanence of ordinary human experience: not in divinity and not even in a special region of humanity, such as consciousness. (35)

Such sentiments sound very like those expressed by Eliot’s poet in The Waste Land. But where modernists responded with grief and despair to the loss of their central paradigm, postmodernists mock such grief while smugly asserting that all systems will inevitably fail.

However, while postmodernists may view an overriding system of truth as confining and illusory, not all members of contemporary society so easily embrace such a view. Other factions within society resist the postmodernist assertion of the lack of totalizing narrative, associating the absence of a singular truth with a loss of order, reacting with the same “horror” manifest in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness some hundred years ago at the collapse of familiar boundaries. And as observed in the characters of Conrad’s novella, that “horror” is played out in a projection of the unnerving chaos onto the ‘other.’

I would argue that the “horror” is a failure to understand the underpinnings of modernism that arose with cubism and quantum mechanics. As Ondaatje shows in his novel, the artificiality of the chaos/order binary is dissolved by cubism and the “360
degree form." Similarly, it is a mistake to assume that quantum mechanics proves that 'everything is relative,' or that there is no truth. Rather, as I have shown, quantum mechanics demonstrates the lack of a "privileged or 'objective' viewpoint" (Vargish and Mook, *Inside Relativity* 85) from which to determine a singular truth.

In the Introduction, I made the claim that the changing temporal and spatial orientations of the twentieth century were accompanied by a change in the dominant cultural myth. As time is shown to be neither objective nor constant and notions of a single, unified perspective are revealed as illusory, the sequential outcome of the quest is jeopardized and writers turn to the pilgrimage as an alternative paradigm. Many contemporary writers treat the quest with irony, yet continue to perpetuate the quest as a cultural trope, suggesting our inability to comfortably locate an alternative paradigm.
NOTES

Introduction

1 While Vargish and Mook use this term to describe the conditions resulting from what they characterize as simultaneous developments in physics, literature and art, I appropriate their term, “epistemic trauma”, to refer to the multiplicity of conditions which contribute to the upheaval in many areas of society in the modernist period.

2 Before the *The Waste Land* was published in *The Criterion* in Britain and in *The Dial* in The United States in 1922, Ezra Pound had already sung the poem’s praises in various letters to the editor of *The Dial*, Scofield Thayer. Hired “as a foreign agent, talent scout, and regular contributor” (Walter Sutton, Introduction, *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and The Dial: A Story in Letters*, ed. Walter Sutton (Gainesville, UP of Florida, 1994) xxi,) Pound was marketing Eliot’s latest work before it was even completed, describing the poem on various occasions to Thayer as “very important, almost enough to make everyone else shut up shop” (8 February 1922) and “as good in its way as *Ulysses* in its way....” (9 & 10 March 22); see letters of Ezra Pound, “To Scofield Thayer,” 8 February 1922, *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and The Dial*, ed. Walter Sutton (Gainesville, UP of Florida, 1994) 227 and “To Scofield Thayer,” 9 and 10 March 1922, 237). When the poem was finally published, not all critics were as enthusiastic about the poem’s merits as Pound. Aiken admitted his suspicions that his February consideration of the poem was “the first full-length favourable review the poem had then received;” see Prefatory Note, “An Anatomy of Melancholy,” *T.S. Eliot: The Man and His Work*, ed. Allen Tate (New York: Delacorte P, 1966) 194. The review of *The Waste Land* in *Time*, of March 3, 1923 notes “There is a new kind of literature abroad in the land, whose only obvious fault is that no one can understand it;” see T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land: Authoritative Text, Contexts, Criticism*, ed. Michael North (Los Angeles: U of California P, 2001)153. Perplexed by *The Dial’s* award of its $2000 poetry prize to Eliot, another move by Pound to consolidate Eliot’s reputation (see “To Scofield Thayer,” 9 & 10 March 1922), the *Time* review went on to state “It is rumoured that *The Waste Land* was written as a hoax. Several of its supporters explain that that is immaterial, literature being concerned not with intentions but results” (Eliot, *The Waste Land* 153). And Harriet Monroe, in a comparison of Eliot’s poem with what she saw as the more manly work of Lew Sarett, wrote disparagingly that “Mr. Eliot lives with specialists – poets of idle hands and legs and supersensitized brains; varied by a bank clerk routine with second-rate minds. One cannot imagine him consorting

Hugh Kenner recognized the difficulty of the notes, writing in 1959, "In fact, we shall do well to discard the notes as much as possible; they have bedevilled discussion for decades" (*Invisible Poet* 150).


The pilgrimage tradition is common to many cultures (see Webb 1, Finnucane 39), although this thesis will confine itself to a discussion of the pilgrimage as it appears in Anglo-American literature.

Christian pilgrimage appears to be undergoing a resurgence: an analysis of attendance of the number of pilgrims reaching the shrine of Santiago de Compostella in Spain from 1986 to 2002 shows an increase from 2,491 individuals in 1986 to 68,952 in 2002; see "The Confraternity of St James," 10 July 2003 [http://www.csj.org.uk/present.htm].


An example may make this clearer: suppose that you are standing on the side of the road, near a traffic light and you have a clock. When the light turns red, you note the time on the clock; the clock and the appearance of the red light are considered to be simultaneous. Now imagine that while you remain in your position, your friend, Joanne, gets into a car moving at constant speed away from the traffic light. Joanne also has a clock. Your clock and that of Joanne are synchronized. This time, when the traffic light turns red, both you and Joanne note the time on your clocks. Joanne will measure a different time than you will because it will take longer for the light to reach her than it does for the light to reach you.

While I agree with this analysis of modernist aesthetics, I differ with Vargish and Mook in the conclusions that they draw. They argue that as multiple perspectives challenge the single, authoritative view, meaning and significance are now determined through the practice of observation. They propose the notion of a field, "a spatial and/or temporal model or representation in which all constituents are interdependent and in which all constituents participate and interrelate without privilege" (105). I see meaning as developed through interactions rather than observations, for example, in the relationship between the facets in a Cubist painting or the words on a page, or the interactions between light and objects.
Most properly, epic is defined as "a long narrative poem, on a grand scale, about the deeds of warriors and heroes," although it is often used to refer to the same elements in other genres, such as the novel; see The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory, ed. A. Cuddon (1977; London: Penguin, 1992). The epic may contain elements of the quest in the epic's focus on the hero and the use of myth.

Kenner also omits the work of William Faulkner and Wallace Stevens from the modernist canon, finding them 'provincial'. However, Kenner deserves credit for establishing a canon, even if it is limited. As he writes, there was no modernist canon in 1931 and "The Pound of Mauberly was (barely) part of the canon" in 1947 (Making of the Modernist Canon 30, 38).

Chapter 1

As Neumann points out, Western culture, with its patriarchal bias, experiences the conscious mind as masculine and unconscious as feminine. It should be noted that while the unconscious contains both feminine and masculine aspects and archetypes, the consciousness sees itself as masculine and the unconscious as feminine and maternal. Neumann argues that the recovery of the feminine unconscious should not be confused as an exclusively male endeavour:

Since the liberation of the male consciousness from the feminine-maternal unconscious is a hard and painful struggle for all mankind, it is clear that the negative elementary character of the Feminine does not spring from an anxiety complex of the 'men,' but expresses an archetypal experience of the whole species, male and female alike. For in so far as the woman participates in this development of consciousness, she too has a symbolically male consciousness and may experience the unconscious as "negatively feminine" (148).

Several critics have pointed to Marlow's treatment of women as indicative of Conrad's possible misogyny and late Victorian anxiety about the role of women. For example, Per Serrislev Petersen sees Conrad's description of the woman on the riverbank as participating in a trend of "lurid fin-de-siècle demonization, in the fictional constructions and discourses of anxiety-ridden male artists and writers, as a female vampire, an aggressively phallic or masculinized woman, who excels in impaling her male victims on the stake of her dark female lust or the pin of a pointedly formulated phrase" (42).

While I agree with Peterson's characterization of the woman as frighteningly negative, I think it a mistake to confuse Marlow's impressions of her with Conrad's notions about women. While Heart of Darkness has biographical parallels to Conrad's own life, the link between Marlow and Conrad's personalities is more tenuous. As Susan Jones points out, Marlow's description
of his aunt is unlike the relationship Conrad enjoyed with the benefactor of his own trip to the Congo - his cousin Marguerite Poradowska. Poradowska was a writer herself "with whom [Conrad] shared "confidences of a profound and philosophical nature" (73), which runs counter to the notion of his construction of women as largely speechless. Further, Jones notes Conrad's portrayal of female characters in his early fiction won him praise both from readers and critics, and gained Conrad "a reputation for the invention of romance roles for female characters...." (11). While reviewers noted the appeal of his works to female readers, his publisher "promoted the image of the author as a writer for a somewhat select, coterie audience, thus initiating his reputation as what would later be termed modernist," gambling that this would prove to be more lucrative for them and Conrad (12). See Susan Jones, *Conrad and Women*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1999.

3In more recent work, John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow have suggested a modifications of Turner's definition of pilgrimage that is more heterogenous and includes consensus as well as *communitas*. See Introduction, *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*, ed. John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow (London: Routledge, 1991) 2.

Chapter 2


2In a three month exchange of correspondence, Eliot and Ezra Pound discussed the epigraph to *The Waste Land*. Interestingly, Eliot's original epigraph was a selection from *Heart of Darkness*, in which Marlow observes Kurtz as he lies dying:

Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation and surrender during that supreme movement of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision - he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath - The horror! The horror! (see Grover Smith, Preface, *The Waste Land* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983) xii.)

In this same scene, Marlow has moments earlier heard Kurtz say, "I am lying here in the dark waiting for death," to which Marlow replies, "Oh, nonsense!" (Conrad 111). Kurtz's imminent death suggests the ailing Fisher King and the inability of Marlow, as the Grail knight, to restore the king.
Unenthusiastic about Eliot's choice, Pound wrote, "I doubt if Conrad is weighty enough to stand the citation" (Eliot, The Letters 24 Saturnus An I, 497). (Note that this date has been interpreted as both 24 December 1921 and 24 January 1922 depending on how critics decode Pound's private calendar; Gardner uses the 1922 date, Valerie Eliot, in her editing of Eliot's letters uses the former date.)

Eliot replied a month later, "Do you mean not use the Conrad quot. or simply not put Conrad's name to it? It is much the most appropriate I can find, and somewhat elucidative" (The Letters 24? [sic] January 1922, 504). Pound's response was to

Do as you like about my obstetric effort.

Ditto re the Conrad; who am I to grudge him his laurel crown.


By March, Eliot had found the quotation regarding the Sibyl, from the Satyricon, of which he notified Pound by mail:

Cher maitre:

I have substituted for the J. Conrad the following, or something like it:

'Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego oculis meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent: ΢ιβιλλα τι θελεις; respondebat illa: άποθυνην θελω" (Letters 12 Mar 1922, 506).


Chapter 3

1 Richardson envisaged the thirteen volumes as chapters; see Gillian Hanscombe, Introduction, Pilgrimage, by Dorothy Richardson (Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1989) 1. Twelve of Richardson's thirteen chapter-volumes were published as a collection in 1938; a second collection was published in 1967 (J. M. Dent and Sons) that included the final chapter-volume, March Moonlight. However, an review in the December 1931 edition of Close Up contains a reference to the ten "chapter-volumes in Pilgrimage", which suggests that the collection title was already known to the reading public (Richardson, "Dorothy M. Richardson" 2); from the Dorothy Richardson archives at Beinicke Library, Yale. In a Foreward to the collection, written in 1938, Richardson discusses the literary history of Pilgrimage, noting that when the first chapter-volume was accepted for publication, "the covering title being at the moment in use elsewhere, it was published as 'Pointed Roofs' (10).

New Woman literature, popular around the turn of the twentieth century, challenged the inevitability of marriage, the nuclear family, Victorian notions of female purity, as well as the idea of the 'angel in the house;' see Ann L. Ardis, New Woman, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1990).


The archetype of the Terrible Mother for Miriam is complexly bound up with images of her actual mother, who commits suicide with a butcher knife.


Chapter 4

Hugh Kenner has also noted how the tower recalls "the opening of Hamlet, high on the battlements of Elsinore" and thus begins an identification of Stephen with the character of Hamlet as failed hero; see The Pound Era, 47.

Paul Vanderham argues that Ezra Pound deleted the section about the outhouse in the Little Review's serialized version of Ulysses, ostensibly because the material
was likely to cause suppression of the magazine by the U.S. Post Office. However Vanderham also makes the claim that Pound's real motives lay more closely in Pound's "objections to Joyce's tendency to subvert hierarchies cherished by Pound, especially that which separates the erotic and excremental aspects of human sexuality"; see *James Joyce and Censorship*, 1.


However, lest we make too much of the connection between the *Odyssey* and *Ulysses*, it should be noted that when discussing the nature of the epic in *Ulysses*, Joyce described the novel as "an epic of two races (Israelite-Irish) and at the same time the cycle of the human body as well as a little story of a day (life)" (original letter in Italian). never mentioning the connection to the *Odyssey*. See James Joyce, "To Carlo Linati" 21 Sept 1920, *Letters of James Joyce, vol. 1*, ed. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Viking P, 1966) 146.

A further, more ironic assessment of marriage is suggested in the comparison between Gertie's idealized views of marriage and Bloom's own status as cuckolded husband, hinted at in the repetition of the final words of the chapter:

*Cuckoo

Cuckoo

Cuckoo* (499)

Joyce's description of his "Penelope" chapter is eerily similar to a description written by Katherine Mansfield of Dorothy Richardson's fifth chapter-volume of *Pilgrimage, The Tunnel*. Mansfield writes: "There is no plot, no beginning, middle
or end." (quoted in Novels and Novelists 4); her review appeared in The Athenaeum on April 4, 1919 while Joyce’s letter is dated two and a half years later on October 7, 1921.

Chapter 5

1 *Four Quartets* was initially published as four individual poems: “Burnt Norton” in 1935, “East Coker” in 1940, “The Dry Salvages” in 1941 and “Little Gidding” in 1942. The poems were collected for publication in 1943.


3 James P. Sexton, in a brief note, associates “Burnt Norton” with the Ascension, rather than with a return to Eden. He thus reads the central dilemma of “Burnt Norton” as the loss of Christ. While I agree that Christ is absent from “Burnt Norton”, I would argue that it is because the poet’s preoccupation with the garden situates his argument in the Old Testament rather than the New. However, if time is indeed unredeemable as the poet claims, then the distinction is rendered unnecessary since both time periods will be present simultaneously. See James P. Sexton, “Four Quartets and the Christian Calendar,” *American Literature*, 43(2) (1971): 279-281.

4 Eliot’s interest in Buddhism is well established. For further discussion of Buddhist influences in *Four Quartets*, see also Paul Foster, *The Golden Lotus: Buddhist Influence in T.S. Eliot’s Four Quartets* (Sussex: The Book Guild, 1998).


7 Personal communication from Don Grayston, cleric and professor of religious studies.
8 For a more in-depth discussion of the influence of Hinduism on the *Four Quartets*, see Narsingh Srivastava, "The Ideas of *The Bhagavad Gita* in *Four Quartets*," *Comparative Literature* XXIX (2) (1977): 97-108.

9 Smith acknowledges the difficulty of translating the line and that his translation is a merger of other paraphrases; see Grover Smith, *T.S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays: A Study in Sources and Meaning* (1950; Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1974) 255-6.

**Chapter 6**


2 Lilith is Sumero-Babylonian in origin and is often described as Adam's first wife who deserts him when "he insisted that she assume the subordinate position in their lovemaking"; see Carrin Dunne, *Behold Woman: A Jungian Approach to Feminist Theology* (Illinois: Chiron P, 1989) 10.

3 Alchemy was believed invented by Hermes and is described in numerous medieval texts, among them the Gnostic tract, the *Corpus Hermeticum*, claimed to be a revelation of the "Thrice Great Hermes." The alchemical crucible was the *vas hermeticum*, or Womb of Hermes, in which Hermes fertilized the Holy Vase of the Great Mother. See *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson, et al. (New York: Garland, 1990) 372.

4 In a letter to Norman Holmes Pearson, H.D. wrote that "... - I think Br[yer] is wrong to say there is R[oman] C[atholic] implication - I distinctly link the LADY up with Venus-Annael, with the Moon, with the pre-Christian Roman Bona Dea, with the Byzantine Greek church Santa Sophia and the SS of the Sanctus Spiritus. I say she is NOT even

\[\text{vas spirituale}\]

\[\text{rosa mystica} \] – which is lovely poetry;

\[\text{ora pro nobis}.\]

5 In the Princess dream, H.D. saw a female figure that H.D. identified as an Egyptian Princess. H.D. observed the Princess to descend down the marble steps to a river where she searches for a baby in a "shallow basket or ark or box or boat" (37). In her conversations with Freud, H.D. recognized the vision as originating from the picture of Miriam searching for Moses in the Doolittle family Bible. See H.D., *Tribute to Freud* (1956; New York: New Directions, 1974) 36-37.

6 Personal communication from Professor Stephen Collis.

Chapter 7

1 Bridges figure prominently in this novel – Caravaggio is seen constructing a rope bridge between the Villa San Girolamo and the neighbouring one, Kip constructs bailey bridges to allow for movement of troops, Kip falls off his motorcycle on the bridge over the Ofanto River when his motorcycle skids in the rain, and Caravaggio is flung off the Santa Trinità Bridge when it explodes just after his thumbs are cut off.

2 Interestingly, the Church of San Giovanni a Carbonara is the 15th century, real-life mausoleum of King Laudislao, a Hungarian who brought comparative peace to Italy. See Paoletti, John T. and Gary M. Radke. *Art in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Abrams, 1997, 166-169). Kip's search for solace in the tomb parallels his presence in the villa where he sits at the bedside of the nearly dead man who is likely Ladislao de Almasy. And as my colleague, Tracy Wyman-Marchand has pointed out, the Italian word 'carbonarra' is derived from the Latin for 'carbon', and is sometimes used to refer to coal miners, who are 'sooty' with carbon, and to fried bacon, both descriptions which could be used to describe Almasy/The English patient as he reclines in the bed at the Villa San Girolamo.

3 Igor Mavric discusses the postmodern nature of *The English Patient* in his article, "Creating the National in the International Context: the Postmodernity of Michael Ondaatje's Fiction"; Rufus Cook, in his article, "Imploding Time and Geography: Narrative Compressions in Michael Ondaatje's The English Patient," writes that "...Ondaatje goes well beyond the familiar postmodern techniques of coyly anticipating future developments in the plot, of parenthetically foreshadowing Kip's eventual appearance in the novel ... or letting us know in advance that the English patient is destined to die...." (111-112).
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Chapter 4


Chapter 5


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Chapter 6


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Chapter 7


