The Underlying Unity of T. S. Eliot´s Ariel Poems

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to describe the thematic cohesion of the Ariel Poems by T. S. Eliot. The argument defended is that, despite the staggered publication of the five components that are part of the Faber & Faber's Ariel series, the poems are a unified whole. This interconnection is approached from the theme of the mutability of human experience, including especially vivid memories and the dawning of faith and Revelation, which the poems' different *personae* attempt to retrieve or bring into a steadier focus. Simultaneously, an analogous process takes place in the intertext as the meaning of these poems and of their hypotexts is transformed with the publication of each subsequent work of the sequence, a relation that Eliot thoroughly described in Tradition and the Individual Talent (1917). In addition, the use of dramatic monologue will be discussed as this assumes primary importance when bringing to life the multiple voices that coexist within each poem. The work focuses on the arrangement of the poems as they appeared in the *Collected Poems*; therefore, the poems analysed are "Journey of the Magi", "A Song for Simeon", "Animula", "Marina" and "The Cultivation of Christmas Trees".

Introduction

The Ariel Poems[1] were originally part of the series of illustrated pamphlets first commissioned by Faber & Faber on 1927, and designed as Christmas cards. To that first year's batch Eliot contributed with "Journey of the Magi" (1927), publishing "A Song for Simeon" (1928), "Animula" (1929) and "Marina" (1930) until the series ended in 1931, and for which he also provided "Triumphal March." Later on, however, during the compilation of the *Collected Poems* (1963), as Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue remark,[2] Eliot "transferred *Triumphal March* to the section of 'Unfinished poems' as part of *Coriolan*." to establish it as the opening part of a new series (758). Actually, such design *predates* the publication of the poem in Faber's Ariel series. In a letter to Marguerite Caetani on June, 23 1931, Eliot affirms that "I have done a part of a projected long poem, but this part must be used for our 'Ariel' series in the autumn" (*Letters vol.5* 594). Likewise, Ricks and McCue remark that "For the purposes of the Ariel series" the title of the poem was changed initially from "Coriolan: Part I" to "Triumphal March" (817). In other words, Eliot never really did see this work as part of his Ariel Poems, and only considered shoehorning it in because his habitual slowness as a composer left him

[1] Eliot inherited this title from Faber& Faber and it really does not seem to have had any bearing on the central themes and concerns of what he was to build into his own homonymous sequence. Indeed, Ricks and McCue cite an interview in which Eliot clearly states that he simply adopted the name to designate the poems that had been published in Faber's series (758).

[2] Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue are the editors of the latest edition of Eliot's complete works in which they offer an exhaustive list of possible textual sources for Eliot's poems as well as the poet's thoughts on his own works but do not analyse neither the meaning of the poems nor of their hypotexts. Such discussion, rather, is the task of the present work, which only uses Ricks and McCue's work to illustrate its claims.

facing an unmeetable publication deadline. As we shall see, given the fact that a major Ariel theme is the way in which the passing of time affects formative inspiration, "The Cultivation of Christmas Trees" is the perfect concluding piece; a work that took him decades to complete as he published it in the Faber & Faber's new Ariel series on 1954. Consequently, this study will follow Eliot's scheme and will not consider "Triumphal March" for the analysis of the unity between these works, whether a connection between this piece and the rest can in fact be established or not.

In spite of the interval of time between the publication of the first four poems and the last one, it is the intention in these pages to describe the thematic cohesion of the whole sequence. Their consideration as a unity has not been taken for granted but is upheld by F. R. Leavis' comments on the first three poems of the sequence, which to him "all point the same way." (212) and by A. David Moody, who regards these three works "as an introduction to the style and the preoccupations of the major sequence." (132) Further evidence can be found in the asseverations of Martin Scofield, who, based on Eliot's own comments on a 1959 interview, reports that Eliot "felt" that poems like *Ash-Wednesday* and *The Hollow Men* evolved from "separate poems" until he regarded them "as a sequence." (Scofield 137) If such were the poet's views on two of his major works, it is plausible that the Ariel Poems could have been regarded in the same light. Even more, such continuity can be claimed to be at work over the entire body of Eliot's writings. As Scofield asserts, readers can "discern a kind of pattern […] emerging in Eliot's *ouvre* as a whole: the pattern of recurring words, images, motifs and situations which grows out of a continual re-examination of experience and a casting of it into different forms." (172)[3]

Although Scofield's comments pave the way for the subject studied in this work, it cannot be denied that the unity of the Ariel Poems has already been discussed from other perspectives. Eliot himself already highlighted the connection between two of them in an interview in 1948. In it, he described "Journey of the Magi" and "A Song for Simeon" as poems that ask, "how fully was the Trust revealed to those who were inspired to recognise Our Lord so soon after the Nativity?" (Eliot qtd. Ricks and McCue 759) Indeed, Moody identifies the appreciation and understanding of the Incarnation as "the governing idea of all his [Eliot's] poetry after 1925." (132) However, if we are to see

[3] Scofield's asseveration is supported by Moody's study of the subject of the Incarnation in Eliot's work (Moody 132), a theme that connects "Gerontion" (1920) with the rest of Eliot's poetry and even with plays like *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935).

these works as just a poetic appreciation of the miracle of the Incarnation and the Nativity we encounter a major problem: the rather indirect and faint expression of such theme in "Animula" and especially in "Marina." This is why scholars like Moody have resorted to the idea of the juxtaposition of birth and death, overtly highlighted by Eliot in the poems, to prove the connection between the Ariel Poems and integrate them within the rest of Eliot's *oeuvre*. Granted, this subject is likewise central to the whole sequence, yet the exploration of other routes should not be disregarded, especially if they go beyond what the author makes evident.

It is the intention of this work to present an understanding of the Ariel Poems as a unified sequence of works that can be woven together through the reflection on the transformation over time of experience, revelation and memory, in addition and complementary to the other major motifs already mentioned. Such mutability is essential when it comes to the integration of new episodes into the memory of any individual, producing a re-evaluation and a re-shaping of all past experiences and feelings stored in that individual's memory, a process similar to the symbiotic workings of memory and perception described by Henri Bergson in *Matter and Memory* (1896). The articulation of this idea can be structured on three different levels: individual, social and textual. The first is expressed by a series of elderly speakers who, in introspection or recollection, ponder over such transformation, or desire and search for the preservation or recovery of those ephemeral moments. The social dimension shows how the previously mentioned aspects of experience are bound to be altered as changes in a society's thought and sensibility take place, as Eliot remarks in several of his essays. Eliot illuminates this perspective by fusing his own subjectivity into the poems' composite *personae* through a highly individual application of the technique of dramatic monologue.[4] At the textual level the poems enable us to reflect on how intertextuality operates: any work of art experiences an alteration of its meaning, as well as the audience's response to it, each time a new work is integrated into human culture; an idea that Eliot developed in his famous essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1917). Thus, this process of textual re-signification could be deemed as analogous to that of the transformation of experience and memory. As far as the present study is concerned, several components that are

[4] For purposes of clarification the use of '*persona'* or '*personae'* refers to the character(s) presented in poetry, whether in a dramatic monologue or in lyric, and is distinguished from the *dramatis personae* of drama. The present work uses the definition of the term that Eliot offers in "The Three Voices of Poetry," (1953) the "several historical characters through whom he [Ezra Pound] spoke:" (1965: 95)

entwined with the major thematic line will be brought to the discussion, namely, (a) the intertextual dimension of the works, (b) Bergson's theory of "pure memory" (c) the visionary moment in relation to Aristotle's concept of *anagnorisis* and (d) dramatic monologue and its use by Eliot.

Before delving into the analysis of the poems, a survey on the works of other scholars and of the author himself should be offered in search of supporting evidence. In fact, central aspects of the present study are greatly indebted to Robert Keir Shepherd and his reading of "Journey of the Magi." Although those of its core ideas relevant to the present work are going to be thoroughly discussed in the analysis of the first of the Ariel Poems, for the moment two of Shepherd's main points have been selected as an initial attempt to defend the ongoing argument. The first, which constitutes the very groundwork of the subject developed in these pages, is the crucial awareness of the effects of the passage of time upon everything that human experience accrues. Referring to Eliot's citation of the Archbishop Lancelot Andrewes' 1622 Christmas Sermon in the first lines of "Journey of the Magi", Shepherd affirms that

> […] while Andrewes writes of the journey alone, Eliot focuses upon its aftermath. What we have forgotten to take into consideration is the passage of time—the time that has elapsed between the Magus' journey and the dictation of this memorandum. All those years ago there was hope—the promise of a Saviour. Doubtless the journey was at least undertaken gladly, yet memory is deceptive, almost certainly coloured by present experience. Did a sensation of hardships suffered rather than accepted, […] emerge over time or were these feelings really experienced on say, just for example, December of the last year BC? […] After all, time breeds lethargy as well as the hope or even despair of eternal bliss. (Shepherd 1520)

The second major motif of Shepherd's analysis of the poem is that he underlines the significance of the imprint of Eliot's subjectivity upon it. Shepherd sets out to demonstrate how the poet expresses personal thoughts and feelings through a clever device, a lyric transformation of the dramatic monologue, which allows Eliot to assume the guise of different *personae* and express his own subjectivity through them:

> in creating the first in the *Ariel Poems* sequence, Eliot set out to fuse [the first] two of the three poetic voices […] Think of it as a daring experiment: the lyric

> medium by which the poet might communicate half-formed private thoughts (perhaps better, the sense of a half-formed belief) to the readership is disguised as a dramatic monologue, creating the mirage of that selfsame poet attempting to operate from within the head and heart of a Magus. In this case, however, the sense of the author playing a role, the sense of division between himself and his character, is obliterated. […] Despite the illusion of three speaking voices, it is really Eliot who is addressing us throughout. (Shepherd 1520-1521)

Shepherd's stance is founded upon Eliot's own theories on poetic expression and dramatic monologue, which he explains in his essay, "The Three Voices of Poetry" (1953), a text that is going to be studied as well, alongside the technique of dramatic monologue, in next section. Although the defence of poetic subjectivity and the confessional mode is beyond the scope of the present study, the idea that Eliot is using dramatic monologue in the recreation of different *personae* as a medium to express his own subjectivity in contrast to that of other individuals, whether historical or fictional, makes us reflect upon the transformation of a society's sensibility as a result of the changes that have taken place in it. Were we to focus on the miracle of Incarnation, for instance, by impersonating characters like the Magus or Simeon, Eliot can approach said mystery from the perspective of direct witnesses but with the knowledge and awareness of an individual from the twentieth century. As quoted by Ricks and McCue from John Hayward's *London Letter*, Eliot claimed that "we must see the Nativity story with a consciousness of everything that has happened in the 1900 odd years since. We have to put ourselves there, and we have to see those events here." (1937 qtd. Ricks and McCue 761) What can be inferred from this remark is that Eliot approaches the Nativity, and for that matter any significant moment in an individual's life, with a mature awareness that takes into account the fact that any feeling or experience, as well as their appreciation and remembrance, is never stable. Not even the miracle of the Incarnation is bound to remain the same in the memories of those that witnessed it and in the collective mind of the societies that have come, and will come, after. As previously described, this results not only from the fact that our perspective of any event is bound to change with time or with subsequent experiences, but, according to Bahktin and his notion of intersubjectivity, with the experiences of other individuals as well (Beasley-Murray 58). Eliot made the following comment about this mutability of sensibility and experience, both in individual and social terms, in "The Social Function of Poetry" (1945):

> But people do not only experience the world differently in different places, they experience differently at different times. In fact, our sensibility is constantly changing, as the world about us changes […] It is not the same as that of our fathers; and finally, we ourselves are not quite the same persons that we were a year ago. ("Social Function" 20)

A further argument in favour of the thematic line proposed can be found in Eliot's *oeuvre*, since several of his works written after 1925 are concerned with the evaluation, reordering and expression of experience and thought.[5] In *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933), Eliot discusses the fact that in its expression poetry communicates an extraordinary experience whose existence is based on the combination of different "personal experiences ordered in some way" that differs "from the way of valuation of practical life" (*Use of Poetry* 30). The passage of time is inherent and essential to this ordering process as Eliot makes crystal clear when assessing the quality of an artist's work over the years in his essay, "Yeats" (1940). In it, he stresses the importance of retrospection in that the feelings of youth, and their intensity (Eliot, "Yeats" 258-259), are "preserved to receive their full and due expression in retrospect. For the interesting feelings of age are not just different feelings; they are feelings into which the feelings of youth are integrated." (Eliot, "Yeats" 259) Although from the previous quote one might get the idea that Eliot was sure about the immutability of emotions, as if the feelings of an individual were the same throughout life, one cannot but grasp a sense of the necessity of change in that process of integration. This idea, we shall see, echoes Bergson's understanding of memory and perception, as well as the process of re-signification that underlies Eliot's notion of "the historical sense." If past experiences are incorporated into new ones, then it is inevitable that they will be altered in that process of synthesis. In fact, Eliot does underline the need for acknowledgment of change in the life of any individual, but especially in that of a poet, since otherwise his or her work might become stagnant or dishonest:

[5] In fact, this concern with re-evaluation also characterises the critical output of Eliot's late period, since in some of the essays composed after 1925 the author qualifies or reassesses the poetics and critical statements of his youth. As Shepherd argues (1515), such is the case of poetic impersonality and the Objective Correlative, which he developed in "Hamlet and his Problems" (1919) and in "The Three Voices of Poetry" (1953). The latter is also part of his lifelong discussion on poetic drama, previously developed in "Rhetoric and Poetic Drama" (1919), "A Dialogue on Dramatic poetry" (1928), "Poetry and Drama" (1951). Likewise, in "The Frontiers of Criticism" (1956) Eliot re-evaluates some of the claims made in "The Function of Criticism" (1923), as he states in the former ("Frontiers of Criticism" 115, 117-118).

> Now, in theory, there is no reason why a poet's inspiration or material should fail, in middle age or at any time before senility. For a man who is capable of experience finds himself in a different world in every decade of his life; as he sees it with different eyes, the material of his art is continually renewed. But in fact, very few poets have shown this capacity of adaptation to the years. […] Most men either cling to the experiences of youth, so that their writing becomes an insincere mimicry of their earlier work, or they leave their passion behind, and write only from the head, with a hollow and wasted virtuosity. (Eliot, "Yeats" 257)

Moreover, in his work "Second Thoughts about Humanism" (1929) the organization and reconstruction of experience appears intimately connected to the expression of religious beliefs. In it, Eliot affirms that a process of putting "the sentiments in order" comes later in the life of some individuals in the evolution from intellectual to spiritual freedom ("Second Thoughts" 491). In fact, Eliot's comments have led Scofield to see the Ariel Poems as part of that process of ordering: "they are […] exercises, experiments in expressing a new religious state of mind" (Scofield 146), organised around various "*personae*". Consequently, the different speakers of the Ariel Poems can be understood as a reflection of the same process in that through dramatic monologue Eliot reassesses his experiences and beliefs, at the same time that the diverse *personae* go through the same procedure. These personae have experienced revelation and all that is left for them is to ponder over its significance, to laments its loss, or to be deeply moved by it and desire its permanence. The stress here is not in determining the nature of revelation but on poetically expressing its experience. In that sense, this is similar to Scott Freer's and Michel Bell's stance concerning the expression of belief in Eliot's poetry, which underlines "that what is at stake, perhaps, is not doctrine or belief in themselves so much as the manner in which they are experienced and lived." (Bell and Freer xii)

Theoretical framework

As previously stated, the diverse notions that have been described in the attempt to offer a complementary understanding of the theme(s) that unites the Ariel Poems have to be discussed so as to establish the theoretical basis for the ensuing analysis. The purpose of this section, then, is to explore the following key concepts: the process of textual re-

signification in relation to Bergson's "pure memory", the moment of revelation and dramatic monologue.

Although the eminent formulations of intertextuality date from the sixties as post-structuralist authors set out to explore and define it, the cultural interconnections that the term describes have been analysed in relation to imitation and mimesis since the era of Classical Greek literature (Martinez 269). The term itself was certainly coined by Kristeva in 1966 in her essay "Word, Dialogue and Novel" in which she considers the text as "a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of *intertextuality* replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least double" (Kristeva and Moi 37). In fact, the notion is a development of Bakhtin's 'dialogism' that opposes the delusive vision of language as unified by defending a multiplicity of voices existing within the text (Martinez 273). The main elements for Kristeva's intertextuality are the unification of writer and reader within the text's anonymity (Kristeva and Moi 63), and the vision of the text as "*productivity*", a redistribution and permutation of texts in which "utterances taken from different texts intersect […] and neutralize one another" (Kristeva 52 qtd. Orr 27).

As just stated, the idea behind the term had been in use long before structuralist and post-structuralist authors gave it its current eminence. Alongside other poets like Ezra Pound, Eliot placed intertextuality at the core of his poetry as well as at the centre of his poetics and critical output. In "Philip Massinger" (1920), he not only disclosed the recurrent use of allusions in an author's work but advocated for it in one of his most famous quotes: "Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different." (Eliot, "Philip" 206) In whatever form and for better or for worse, the intertext is always present in a poet's work, linking it to the literary productions of said poet's predecessors and to his or her tradition. This connection certainly extends beyond literature to include other fields of arts and knowledge in general. In his essay, Eliot argues that the characteristic that makes a writer fit his label of "traditional" is the awareness of and compliance with the "historical sense". Such concept, he defines as

> a perception not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it

> the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. (Eliot, "Tradition" 14)

What is significant about Eliot's formulation of the idea is that it renders the works of the past as contemporary to those of the present; any text, regardless of the date of its composition and completion, is still open to receive new meaning, or rather, to have its significance, and that of the artist, transformed ("Tradition" 15). Eliot justifies his views on the grounds that it is not illogical to think that if the present is determined by the past, the latter can also be defined by the former ("Tradition" 15). This process of re-signification occurs to both old and new works of art each time an artist creates a new work:

> The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art towards the whole are readjusted; (Eliot, "Tradition" 15)

Although pre-existing texts, considered both in their individuality and as a unified whole, are indeed "complete" in themselves, they are endowed with new –complementary or alternative– meanings and offer further interpretative possibilities as new works are introduced into tradition. In that sense, we could establish an analogy between the "historical sense" and the mutability of experience in that just as the significance of a text is altered by the creation of new ones so the remembrances of past experiences change as new episodes are integrated into an individual's memory.

Therefore, even if in the first two poems of the sequence the subject of experience might seem less significant that the motif of the Incarnation and the juxtaposition of Birth and Death, the last three pieces integrate new elements into the Ariel Poems that open the possibility for a different interpretation of the whole sequence. In other words, repeated readings of the complete sequence –taking full advantage of this intertextual process of re-signification– enable us to discover other common threads between them. In fact, Eliot recommended a similar way of reading in his essay "Dante" (1929) in order to fully appreciate and understand the works of the Florentine, the *Divine Comedy* and the *Vita Nuova*, as a unified whole ("Dante" 269, 274). Similarly, in "Yeats" he stated that a

poet's "later work cannot be understood, or properly enjoyed, without a study and appreciation of the earlier; and the later work again reflects light upon the earlier, and shows us beauty and significance not before perceived." (Eliot, "Yeats" 260)

In his analysis of the Ariel Poems, Moody reflects the interconnectivity of Eliot's *oeuvre*, not only within his own poetry but also in regard to the texts from which he derived some of his works. For that matter, and despite Moody's different focus, the fragment is worth quoting in its entirety.

> [Eliot] strives to make one event of the birth and the death of Christ;[6] to identify Christmas Day and Good Friday; and to associate the good tidings of great joy with the deaths of Christian martyrs. The emphasis is all upon Christ's entering the world to bring its life to an end. In the poems it is the same. To Gerontion, to the Magus, to Simeon, to the poet himself, Christ's birth means their death. As in *Ash Wednesday* V, the Word made flesh becomes the antonym of the world. Thus the classic statement of the Incarnation, at the beginning of the Gospel according to John, is carried through to a poetics of decarnation (132)

Moody's quote emphasises the understanding of Eliot's work after 1925 as the continuous development of a common theme that not only binds the texts composed precisely in that period but also links them to previous works like "Gerontion" (1920), as well as to hypotexts, like the *Gospel of John*, that conform their thematic and textual foundations. In fact, the allusion to this text is also interconnected to a further textual reference as Eliot's reconstruction of the first lines of the Gospel in "Gerontion" and *Ash Wednesday* V (1930) belongs not only to that text but also to Lancelot Andrewes' Nativity sermon on *Matthew* (Andrewes, "Sermon VI" 91), as James Longenbach has indicated (177). We can expand the network even further as the allusion to Andrewes could also be linked to Eliot's use of another of Andrewes' sermons (XV) in the first lines of "Journey of the Magi". As a result, and regardless of the author's intention, Eliot's reliance on intertextuality enables us to follow the connecting threads between the different texts of the network, finding new meanings at both ends of the chain as the significance of any texts is altered with the addition of new works. For the present case, the effect of the "historical sense" is that not only Eliot's own compositions are affected by it, receiving new implications and, consequently, opening the path for new interpretations, but that

[6] Although naturally, in so doing he is only adhering to the two millennia-old discipline of biblical exegesis. See pages 26-8 of this paper.

even the hypotexts that he relied on and quoted from are transformed in the process. In other words, the composition of each new part of the Ariel Poems alters the implications of the previous issues of the sequence, of Eliot's previous works, as well as of texts by other authors that Eliot alludes in his writings.

As previously suggested, the process underlying Eliot's "historical sense" and the transformation of experience finds a cognate in Bergson's theory of "pure memory" and "pure perception", establishing a common ground for the discussion of these three approaches, as well as for the subsequent topic, revelation. However, for the purpose of this work and for the sake of clarity only the main aspects of memory and its interaction with perception are going to be explained. In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson posits the existence of "pure perception" and "pure memory", two opposite abstractions that in practice are mutually dependent. This relation stems from the fact that perception relies on "duration" –Bergson's view of time as experienced, not measured artificially and arbitrarily– and thus "partakes of memory." (Bergson 325) Although Bergson does not depict "pure memory" as an ideal *per se*, his definition is anything but concrete. "Pure memory" is a "virtual state" located in the past that contains all memories and the point from which these progress, through various planes of consciousness, towards the present where they are "materialized in an actual perception" as part of physical response (319).

In this process of materialisation that goes from the past (memory) into the present (perception and action), these remembrances are fused with "our perception of the present, and may even take its place" (Bergson 70). In other words, they "complete our present experience" with memories of the past which eventually concludes by "covering up and submerging the former." (Bergson 70); remembrances 'colour' so to speak perceptions and experiences of the present. At the same time, these memories are also transformed since in this process of integration they "shrink" to conform to the criteria set by practical consciousness –based on a precept of utility for the organism's present– or be discarded by it (Bergson 96-97). In the common functioning of consciousness, these two "acts […] interpenetrate each other, are always exchanging something of their substance as by a process of endosmosis" (Bergson 1929: 72). In this synthesis, the data of the present moment, perception, mingles with "our past experience", memory, which tends to "supplant our actual perceptions, of which we then retain only a few hints, thus using them merely as signs that recall to us former images." (Bergson 24)

As a result, this scheme could certainly provide a way to understand the process of transformation of experience described in this study, as well as be read as a process analogous to the "historical sense." Such idea derives from the stress placed on the interdependence of past and present, considering perceptions and memories as unfinished elements that, like any work of art, can be altered in the integration of new images. However, this does not mean that the articulation of this mutability in the Ariel Poems is approached exclusively from Bergson's framework, since in the poems Eliot offers various understandings of time and the impermanence of existence deriving from other doctrines as well. Although in the previous definition, Bergson does not plainly state that time itself alters memories, in his distinction between the two types of memory, "learnt recollection" and "spontaneous recollection" (1929: 92-93, 95), Bergson indicates that the latter is "perfect from the outset; time can add nothing to its image without disfiguring it;" (95). This definition precisely stresses the inevitability of change, in this case through time, in addition to the transformation inherent to any process of integration, whether in the case of the "historical sense" or in the "endosmosis" of memory and perception.

Bergson's theories likewise offer a complementary perspective on another of the major notions present in the Ariel Poems, the visionary moment. In his analysis of "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" (1911), Donald J. Childs indicates that Eliot's interest in Bergson's "philosophical arguments" during his early period was lost later in his life with the exception of his fascination for the Bergsonian "mystical intuition" (Childs 487), which in 1924 Eliot described as a captivating "promise of immortality" (Eliot 29 qtd. Childs 476-477). Although as in the previous case, the understanding of revelation in the Ariel sequence is nurtured from sources other than Bergson, the influence of the French philosopher is granted given the significance that his theories and concepts had in the development of the epiphany in modernist literature (Anderson 178). In fact, Bergson's synthesis of "pure memory" and "pure perception", which he called "concrete perception", might indeed have been a valuable theoretical resource for modernist authors. This is because in this union consciousness "prolongs a plurality of moments into each other, contracting them into a single intuition (292), and thus could be read as analogous to the modernist epiphany (Hanna 87-89; Anderson 178). According to Paul Matby, the literary expression of revelation, especially that developed by modernist, attributed the "agency" and the source of the epiphany to the individual's "psyche" and does not led to a moment of union with God as the conventional mystic experience (19).

Such would be the case of an epiphany based almost exclusively on Bergson's framework, but in the Ariel Poems, as we shall see, Eliot combines both types thanks to the selection of the textual sources for each of his works.

Common to both approaches to the moment of vision is the outcome of revelation, the transformation of the subject in the instant of intuition. Concerning its effects, Maltby divides the visionary moment into two categories: "redemptive", which implies a "transfiguration or regeneration of the subject" and "catastrophic", derived from Aristotelian recognition or *anagnorisis*, and that results in an acute feeling of "spiritual desolation" (19). The connection between mystical revelation and the dramatic notion developed by Aristotle in his *Poetics* is central for the analysis of "Marina," a poem that perfectly blends the mystical with the dramatic in its allusion to Shakespeare's *Pericles* and Seneca's *Hercules Furens*. This synthesis ought not to be attributed only to Eliot's own design, who devised said poem precisely as a "comment on the Recognition Motive in Shakespeare's later plays" (Eliot, *Letters vol.5* 270), but can already be appreciated in Shakespeare's romances, as Wilson G. Knight affirms (13). In fact, according to Robert L. Leid, epiphany is present throughout Shakespeare's *oeuvre* as a feature derived from medieval mystery plays (519) that adopts various forms depending on the character and purposes of each play.[7] Despite his ambiguous conclusion regarding the secularity or religiousness of Shakespeare's design, Reid does affirm that Shakespearean epiphany is informed by five "New Testament events widely regarded as epiphanal" (Jesus' Nativity, Baptism, Transfiguration, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension) and by the use of "tragic *anagnorisis*" (524).

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle defines *anagnorisis* as "a change from ignorance to knowledge, producing love or hate between the persons destined by the poet to good or bad fortune" (41). Although John Macfarlane's work precisely questions this –the attribution of recognition to the characters on the grounds of the original meaning of *anagnorisis* (367)– such philological debate is not the concern of the present work. This essay is, rather, framed in the traditional understanding of the concept that Macfarlane examines in his article. The significance of this reading of the term is that it also takes into account the past and the future of the characters, referring to "their future states, as

[7] For a thorough list on the different forms that epiphany adopts, and its implications, in the work of the Bard, see Reid, Robert L. "Epiphanal Encounters in Shakespearean Dramaturgy" Comparative Drama, vol. 32, no. 4, 1999, pp. 518-540.

'the persons destined or marked out for good or bad fortune'" and "to their past states, as 'the persons who have been defined [previously] by good or bad fortune.'" (Macfarlane 367) In other words, the moment of recognition is not merely framed within the characters' present but it also involves their past and their future. As a result, the different moments of revelation that the various *personae* experience in the Ariel Poems can be seen not as merely rooted in that instant of vision but as affecting their entire experience, the memories of past events as well as the perception of future episodes, transforming them in the process.

Another characteristic that binds the Ariel Poems together is, according to Scofield, the use of *personae* as the speakers of Eliot's poems,[8] view also held by Shepherd (1527) and by David Ward (245), which is unquestionably influenced by Victorian dramatic monologues. In her analysis of its significance on the poetry of Eliot and Pound, Carol T. Christ posits the theory that though Eliot claimed kinship for his use of dramatic monologue with that of Browning (Eliot, "Three Voices" 94-95), his use of the dramatic monologue owes more to Tennyson.[9] According to her, this results from Eliot's use of the form as "a mask through which he can express and disguise his most immediate psychological concerns." (Christ 218), in introspection and separated by the use of "Laforguian irony" (Christ 221), which Christ argues to be similar to Tennyson's procedure. It should be noted, however, that Christ seems to have disregarded the effort that Eliot spends in scorning Browning's use of *persona* as if he were a very bad actor dressing in a costume that hardly disguises him at all (Eliot, "Three Voices" 94-95). Yet despite his criticism, Eliot does borrow some aspects of Browning's technique, as Shepherd illustrates (1523). Given that, as we shall see, Eliot's "A Song for Simeon" owes a great deal to Tennyson's "St. Simeon Stylites" it could be argued that the poet he borrows from –and we should not forget Swinburne's influence– depends very much on the specific use to which he intends to put his hypotexts.

If Tennyson's own version of the dramatic monologue offers the poet the opportunity to express simultaneously his or her subjectivity while concealing it through detachment, it is not far-fetched to think that Eliot would gladly adopt this feature from

[8] In his analysis, Shepherd also argues that this device is at work in many other poems by Eliot, including "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and *The Waste-Land* (1519-1520).

[9] For a deeper analysis on the differences between Browning's and Tennyson's monologues, as well as their influence on Eliot and Pound, see Christ, Carol T. "Self-Concealment and Self-Expression in Eliot's and Pound's Dramatic Monologues." Victorian Poetry, vol. 22, no. 2, (1984), pp. 217-226.

Tennyson's style. This opinion is suggested by Eliot's criticism against the conspicuousness of the illusion of dramatic monologue since, Shepherd argues, he might have felt that "there is too much of the subjective *lyric* detectable within it" (1519). However, as Shepherd points out, Eliot expresses no complaint when such subjective element plays a role in the composition of poetry for the stage (1519). This has lead Shepherd to wonder whether Eliot might have been aware of and thus tried to hide the fact that "there is a lyric, personal element in *every* creator's work—his own included" (1519).

However controversial Shepherd's opinion might seem, it is clear that Eliot does not refrain from accepting, and even embracing, the idea that the poet's subjectivity is partly rendered into the composition. Such is his view throughout the discussion of the combination of voices in verse drama in "The Three Voices of Poetry" and in his conclusion to the essay: "The world of a great poetic dramatist is a world in which the creator is everywhere present, and everywhere hidden." (Eliot, "Three Voices" 102) This subjective ingredient is not particular to drama as it also plays a role in the process of creation of lyric poetry, which uses it as the "germ" from which the poem evolves into its final shape and departs from the author's possession (Eliot, "Three Voices" 96-98). This subjective element is emphasised a bit more on a previous essay, "Poetry and Drama" (1951), in which Eliot affirms "In writing other [than dramatic] verse, I think that one is writing, so to speak, in terms of one's own voice: […] For it is yourself speaking." ("Poetry" 78) Therefore, it is fairly reasonable to think that if one may detect the presence of a subjective element in the poetry of Eliot which is not merely traceable but even central to his artistic aims,[10] the two forms of dramatic poetry (i.e. monologue and verse drama) as vehicles that would enable him to express personal feelings and disguise them in the voices of dramatic characters, then these voices appearing to emanate from characters (that is, *personae*) amounts to "the most effective shield between himself and the audience " (Shepherd 2017: 1519) that Eliot could find.

According to Christ, Eliot's adaptation of dramatic monologue is also indebted to Tennyson in the composition of characters engaged in "lyric introspection." (221), as Tennyson's dramatic monologues usually are "soliloquies in which the speaker is trying

[10] Shepherd indicates in his article some of the most widely known examples of autobiographical references that can be readily documented on Eliot's poetry, namely "the whole 'Hyacinth Garden' passage" and "the arguments with Vivienne" in *The Waste-Land* (1520), in addition to a fragment of "Journey of the Magi" that will be discussed in the following section.

to persuade no one but himself" (Christ 220). Although, there is indeed a major lyric component and a process of introspection in Eliot's handling of the dramatic monologue that may be indebted to Tennyson, the idea that in Eliot's poetry, especially in the case of the Ariel Poems, the speakers are soliloquising is not entirely accurate. First and foremost, as we shall see, because dramatic monologue presupposes the *persona*'s awareness of the existence of an audience ("Three Voices" 89). In addition, beneath the central position of the apparently solitary speaker there can be heard multiple voices. Some of these are from other authors; others belong to characters from other texts; all of them, however, are connected to that of the poet himself. Such multi-voicedness is consequential to Eliot's reliance on intertextuality and to his personal understanding of poetry and its voices,[11] but it is also an inherent feature of dramatic monologue itself. In it, the poet is able to don a mask, to assume a persona and a voice foreign to him or her, yet at the same time, it also exposes the poet's own subjectivity. In fact, this exposition is not accidental but constitutes the core and the actual point of dramatic monologue as a form of mimicry, the "recognition of the person mimicked and in the incompleteness of the illusion" (Eliot, "Three Voices" 95). As Christ concludes: "The poem thus has the potential to project two identities—that of the poet and that of the voice he or she creates." (218)

Such perspective is consistent with Eliot's statements in "The Three Voices of Poetry" in which he set out to identify the three predominant voices that are to be heard in poetry:

> The first voice is the voice of the poet talking to himself — or to nobody. The second is the voice of the poet addressing an audience, whether large or small. The third is the voice of the poet when he attempts to create a dramatic character speaking in verse; when he is saying, not what he would say in his own person, but only what he can say within the limits of one imaginary character addressing another imaginary character. ("Three Voices" 89)

The description of the works where the first of these voices is heard is somewhat unclear due to the problematic definition of the term 'lyric' (Eliot, "Three Voices" 96). After a thorough discussion on it, Eliot concludes that the first voice is heard in the poems that the author designs out of sheer creative impulse and necessity to render into words a

[11] The convergence of different voices within the poems' speakers and, according to Eliot's theory, within poetry itself is not to be confused with the notions of "dialogism" or "polyphony" but can be interpreted as counterparts to the textual aspects that Bahktin famously coined.

particular sensation ("Three Voices"97), which, once finished, disappears and is substituted by the poem ("Three Voices"98) – a process that involves no audience. The second voice dominates the dramatic monologue since the poet's donning of a mask implies the existence of an audience (Eliot, "Three Voices" 96), and is found likewise in any form of didactic poetry, in works with a "conscious social purpose" whether to instruct or entertain (Eliot, "Three Voices"96). Lastly, the third voice constitutes the foundations of dramatic poetry. The interest of the Ariel sequence, however, lies in the combination of the three of them and in Eliot's presentation, if in a suitably ambiguous form, of his *modus operandi* to the readership.

Eliot affirms, "in every poem, from the private meditation to the epic or the drama, there is more than one voice to be heard." ("Three Voices"100) He indicates that while the first and the second voices are to be found together in non-dramatic poetry, the three of them operate simultaneously in dramatic poetry (Eliot, "Three Voices"99). In the latter, we can hear in some occasions "the voices of the author and the character in unison, saying something appropriate to the character, but something which the author could say for himself also, though the words may not have quite the same meaning for both." (Eliot "Three Voices"100) In fact, such thing might be the outcome of the process of creation of any dramatic character. In it, the poet cannot merely identify the characters with himself but rather he has to make the effort to identify himself with the particularities of said character, fitting the poetry to the character's identity (Eliot, "Three Voices" 91, 95). Likewise, in order to make a character believable, the writer has to feel "a profound sympathy with that character" (Eliot, "Three Voices" 93). As a result, the creation of a believable character consists in a "give-and-take" between the author and the character, since the author "may put into that character […] some traits of his own […] that he has found within himself. Something perhaps never realized in his own life," while at the same time "he is influenced by the character he creates." (Eliot, "Three Voices" 94)

Whether in one form of other, the combination of voices allows a form like dramatic monologue that, according to Eliot, precisely aims at revealing the poet behind the mask, to be intentionally used so as to "highlight aspects of the age in which it was written as it does of a past era" (Shepherd 1518). Shepherd offers the examples of Tennyson's "Boädicea", which echoes the "effects of British imperialism in India" and Browning's "An Epistle Containing the Strange Medical Experience of Karshish, the Arab Physician" that can be read in the context of the collision between faith and science

of a "post-Darwinian" society (1518). Thus, as remarked in the reference to "The Social Function of Poetry", dramatic monologue offers Eliot the possibility to foreground certain aspects of the modern mind and modern society to compare or contrast them to those from previous times and communities –according to Eliot's "fantasy of realism" (Eliot, *Letters vol.3* 860)– reflecting the mutability of both individual and social experience.

Eliot, however, does not confine his work to this dual figure of character-poet; the *persona* in some of his poems, certainly in the case of the Ariel sequence, assimilates other figures in addition to that of the poet and the intended speaker. The result of such design is the creation of an amalgam, a composite figure that unifies the voices of the different *personae* that constitute it. In a sense, this echoes one of the characteristics of a poet's mind that Eliot describes in "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921), the ability to unite different feelings, experiences and, it might be added, texts: "When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience;" (Eliot, "Metaphysical" 287). In fact, as will be highlighted, this design is common to all but one of the poetic voices of the Ariel Poems. Such idea is based on Shepherd's exploration of the first work of the sequence, in which Eliot's Magus incorporates the figure of Lancelot Andrewes into the *persona* already constituted by the mytho-historical character of one of the Magi and himself.

> […] what Eliot is really doing here is breaking the cardinal rule of the dramatic monologue form. […] [In] *Journey*, in much the same way as the other poems in the *Ariel* sequence, [he] takes up the gauntlet that he was to throw down officially before Browning in "The Three Voices". The author plays at being the character-as-narrator but can never do so with any real degree of verisimilitude. […] The result represented not the donning of an ultimately unconvincing mask, but a gradual slippage of the same, revealing the real doubts of a real author beneath. […], by inserting the passage of time and attendant growth of doubt into the picture, Eliot was expressing more his own doubts and those of his generation than the heart-searchings of a mytho-historical figure in (very approximately) 32 C.E.. Andrewes' aim was to convince a congregation to dispel doubt, Eliot's to voice it. To do so he made use of the same figure, even aimed his writing at a similarly

> hesitant and lapsed audience. In 1927, however, Eliot was his own audience. (Shepherd 1527)[12]

Shepherd's final claim derives, of course, from Eliot's description of the first voice of poetry, in which the poet writes with no audience in mind as the work is meant "For the poet's own voice" (Shepherd 1511), apparently favouring the significance of the first voice over the rest. However, if we are to follow closely Eliot's analysis, it could be argued that the audience of the poem can comprise simultaneously both Eliot and the reader, as it combines the private essence of the first voice with the public character of the second and the third voice. In other words, the poems can be read as private exercises of spiritual meditation for Eliot but also as an invitation to his readership to undergo the same process of reflection. Thus, Eliot's take on dramatic monologue also presents another additional viewpoint, that of the various *personae*. Not only are Eliot and the reader able to muse upon the characteristics and values of each of the time-periods featured, revering or questioning them, but also to reflect on the very same process of evaluation made by authors who, like Andrewes, pondered over the same subjects.

The combination of the personal and impersonal modes, the mixture of private meditative introspection with a composition for an audience as the three voices of poetry fuse together renders the term 'dramatic monologue' inefficient. Likewise, it is clear from the start that the Ariel Poems cannot be conceived as dramatic poetry in its own right. In fact, Moody considers that the voice in them is "lyrical rather than dramatic" (344), even when he finds a dramatic element and purpose in much of Eliot's early work. Shepherd offers an alternative view, the idea that Eliot combines the dramatic element with the lyrical voice (1523), transforming dramatic monologue into lyrical monologue. As he concludes, "In Eliot's best work […] the dramatic monologue not only intertwines with lyric—it becomes it." (Shepherd 1529). Shepherd reinforces such perspective by referring to W. R. Johnson's *The Idea of Lyric*, in which, according to Shepherd, the author precisely terms the Ariel Poems as an example of "lyric monologue" (Johnson qtd. Shepherd 1528), a concept that he describes as follows:

[12] Although Shepherd argues that Eliot is breaking the central rule of dramatic monologue, Eliot would have differed in that for him dramatic monologue precisely aims at such recognition, as previously quoted. The middle ground between these two perspectives consists in deeming said break the actual untold rule of dramatic monologue.

> [Lyric monologue] can, in the most natural way (a person speaking to himself) imagine and attempt to order the most intense and the most discordant experiences without the need to communicate them; in the mode of lyric monologue the anguished private world, carefully hidden in and structured by a private, intricate, ironic art, is allowed its pure, full voice. (Johnson 174 qtd. Shepherd 1529)

Johnson's explanation can also be considered as a final argument in favour of the thematic line proposed in this work, highlighting how the evaluation and expression of human experience is central to the Ariel Poems as examples of lyric monologue. In them, Eliot designs different *personae* that enable him to put the "sentiments in order" as he would have said, to reflect upon various subjects and texts that interest him, to question his own beliefs, those of his society or even of the communities that came before him. His position, in fact, is the same than that of the *personae* who, as reflections of himself, ponder over their own experiences. At the same time, however, the combination of lyric and dramatic, the use of at least two of the voices of poetry, opens a way for the audience to join Eliot and his *personae* in reflection.

Journey of the Magi

In "Journey of the Magi", Eliot appears, at first glance, to describe the Nativity story from the perspective of one of the "wise men" that travelled from the East to pay homage to the "King of the Jews" as related in the *Gospel of Matthew* (*King James Bible* 2: 1-12). The work focuses on one Magus' remembrance of the journey and on the impressions that it left upon him.[13] Years or decades after the return home, the Magus reflects with no little bitterness upon all the hardships endured, the sights and experiences that stand out in his memory and ponders upon the significance that the journey and Christ's birth has had for him. However, his descriptive powers seem to falter at the crucial point-visiting the infant Christ and the gift-giving; after a blow-by-blow account of the journey itself he skips hurriedly to an analysis of the implications of the Epiphany, yet dismisses the stable scene with a curt "[…] it was (you may say) satisfactory"(l. 31).

[13] Although we cannot be sure whether he speaks for himself alone or as spokesman's for the Magi he changes from first person plural to first person singular for the last verse paragraph which begins on line 32 so that, for example, "[…] and so *we* continued" becomes "*I* remember" (italics mine) (ll.29/32). This slippage into first person singular is also observable in "A Song for Simeon" see below, pp. 38-39. Also, see page 27 for a clarification on the reasoning behind the Western Church's choice for the three Magi.

As a result, the poem offers an excellent standpoint from which to consider the transformation of an individual's re-evaluation of his experiences, including that of revelation. This process of mutability occurs simultaneously at the individual, the social and the textual level as the poem's *persona* integrates the voice of Eliot as well as that of Lancelot Andrewes in his 1622 Christmas sermon. This being the case, the poem amounts to a meditation upon how the experience and representation of the Nativity and the Epiphany have changed over years and centuries. This is due to the three temporal layers that are superimposed one upon the other: the period of some 30 years that has passed between the Magus' visit and the dictation of his memoir to a scribe, the 1600 years that separate Andrewes' sermon from the latter and the several centuries that separate Eliot's description from the other two. It should also be noted, however, that the triptych of timescales and narrators might well be telescoped into one, given that Eliot elucidates that the Magus distorts the tone of the opening Andrewes citation by deliberate miscontextualization (though Andrewes' text *per se* –apart from transference from third to first person narrative– is left practically untouched). Likewise, he also breaks the rules of, at very least, the Victorian form of the dramatic monologue by both hinting that he, Eliot, is the ultimate authorial voice behind the Magus' mask and underlining his legerdemain in his 1933 publication, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism.*

The opening lines (ll. 1-5) are almost exactly quoted from Lancelot Andrewes' 1622 Christmas sermon XV (253).[14] However, as already pointed out, Eliot changes the pronoun from the third to the first person in one of Andrewes' sentences, "A cold coming they had of it" (1887: 253), becomes "A cold coming *we* had of it" (italics mine) (l. 1). This apparently minor modification proves to be essential since, as Shepherd argues, if Eliot had retained the original form the poem might have resembled more accurately "a dramatic monologue in the style of Browning, Tennyson or Swinburne" (1512), by impersonating Andrewes while he delivers his sermon. On the contrary, had he not referred to Andrewes' text or, more importantly, had he not included the epigraph within the poetic voice's speech, he could have simply written a dramatic monologue assuming the Magus' identity. In addition, it is significant to note as well that these lines, intended to work as the text's epigraph, are marked by single inverted commas –in other editions

[14] Eliot quoted the same lines in his essay, "Lancelot Andrewes" (350). On the same page Eliot also cites another passage from his sermons that deals with the Incarnation, in which Andrewes underlines the fact that God chose a humble manger instead of "a stately palace," which might be seen in contrast with the Magus' regret for "the summer palaces" (ll. 9-10). Elsewhere in the essay (Eliot, "Lancelot" 348), he includes Andrewes' exposition of *Luke* (ii. II), setting of "A Song For Simeon."

by the use of italics, or by both– a design that makes conspicuous the absence of the conventional space that separates the epigraph from the body of the poem. This partial integration of the epigraph –together with the fact that Andrewes' text is indeed doctored– evinces that Eliot is synthesising Andrewes' representation of the Magi, characterised by their unshakable faith, with his own depiction of one of them in order to compose a character that represents the opposite of Andrewes, voicing as it does both doubt and even potential remorse (Shepherd 1514). This reversal in the Magus' attitude precisely lays bare for the reader's inspection precisely the superimposed layers of time by enabling us to reflect on the distance between the events narrated in Matthew, Andrewes' sermon and Eliot's subversive salvaging of the latter, and to consider the effects of time upon Eliot's "own" speaker, as the Magus' incessant complaints might result from the embittering of his memories.

In regard to the former, Eliot's design does not aim at recreating accurately a character from the Gospels but at highlighting the different characterization of said figure made by two authors from different periods for their respective audiences. In that aspect the poem does conform to one of the principles of dramatic monologue indicated by Shepherd, the connection of the "recreated *persona*" to "important events of the author's own time" (1524), as Eliot's and Andrewes' renditions of the Magus/Magi have a markedly social and purpose by encapsulating the concerns and sentiments of their respective societies. This perspective is conspicuously seen in Andrewes' sermon, which intends to criticise the lethargy of his contemporaries when it comes to faith and religious observance by juxtaposing it to his Magi's readiness to worship Christ despite the hardships implied on such prospect ("Sermon XV" 253-254). As he expresses in it, "what should we have done? […] Our fashion is to see and see again before we stir a foot, especially if it be to the worship of Christ." (Andrewes, "Sermon XV" 1887: 253).

Andrewes' enumeration of the several difficulties faced by the travellers can still be glimpsed in Eliot's poem in the successive use of anaphora in the first stanza (ll. 6, 10, 12-15) that recalls the following fragment: "*And* these difficulties they overcame, of a wearisome, irksome, troublesome, dangerous, unseasonable journey; *and* for all this they came. *And* came it cheerfully and quickly," (italics mine) (Andrewes, "Sermon XV" 253). However, Eliot not only changes the lines in themselves but alters the tone and its implications completely. While in Andrewes' text the enumeration and repetition serve to emphasise the Magi's unwavering faith, as he depicts them as "reflections of his own

unshakable sense of duty and belief" (Shepherd 1514), Eliot's Magus falls short on that department. The repetition of the numerous problems faced and of the regrets that assailed the Magi during the journey (ll. 8-10) sounds like a complaint and a feeling of exhaustion. The repetition of "And" makes the Magus' first person description sound suspiciously like whining.

The problem intrinsic to the poem's setting is that we can never be certain whether those feelings were part of the journey, or if they result from the remembrance of the past. In a sense, such idea recalls the process described by Bergson in which memories of the past are recovered and project themselves upon present perceptions, usurping their place but at the same time being obscured in present experience (Bergson 70), as well as how time robs "spontaneous recollections" of their perfection (Bergson 95). The reader ought to be aware of the lapse of time existing between the journey and the Magus' narration of his memories that, according to Shepherd, he is recording on paper. This interpretation is evinced by the lines "[…] but set down/This set down/This:" (ll. 33-35) –also present in Andrewes' sermon ("Sermon XV" 255)– and by the stanza's punctuation, which offers "a respite for the scribe to whom the Magus is dictating" (Shepherd 1514) and suggests the Magus' hesitation to pronounce his final confession: "with the voices singing in our ears, saying/ That this was all folly." (ll. 19-20)

After so many grievances, it comes naturally that the poem could be considered a commentary on the torpor of Eliot's own society when it comes to faith, especially when considering how "The Cultivation of Christmas Trees" will disdain the secular and materialistic attitudes towards Christmas ("Cultivation" ll. 1-4). Eliot's own statements indeed reinforce this view, "The trouble of the modern age is not merely the inability to believe certain things about God and man which our forefathers believed, but the inability to feel towards man and God as they did." ("Social Function" 25) Nonetheless, he is not so naïve as to merely become a modern Andrewes who brandishes his own crafted ideal of devotion to admonish a more active attitude in faith and worship. The inability that Eliot mentions in the previous quote has nothing to do with a lack of volition but with actual capacity; he is aware that changes in the sensibility and belief of society have taken place –as they ought to– and consequently neither he nor his peers can return to the stance and mind-set of Andrewes.

In pursuit of his ideal, Andrewes criticised, stirred and then comforted his audience by taking part in the construction and validation of several myths that surround

the Nativity and the Epiphany, committing quite a few geographical, historical and religious inaccuracies and relying on tradition and ambiguity "to cover his own tracks" (Shepherd 1522). As Shepherd points out (1522), when Andrewes claims that the Magi had to overcome "The ways deep, the weather sharp" (Andrewes, "Sermon XV" 253) his words can indicate the sand or crevasses of the Judean desert as much as snow. In fact, it would not be preposterous to affirm that in the mind of his seventeenth century English audience the sentence took the shape of the latter. If the image of an essentially English Christmas Day had not completely seized the imagination of the congregation, Andrewes further contributes to the confusion by offering an Epiphany sermon on Christmas Day (Shepherd 1513, 1521). In addition, his homily is undoubtedly influenced by other narratives from Christian liturgy –notably by *Luke* (2: 15-20)– and by art since in this Adoration of the Magi the shepherds also make an appearance (Andrewes, "Sermon XV" 252-253). As Shepherd indicates, an scholar of high calibre as Andrewes had to be aware that

> […] Clement of Alexandria, writing in 200 A.D., […] had proposed March 25th as well as April 20th/21st as dates for the Nativity, their idea being to make the (V)irgin birth coincide with the date given by St. John (the 14th of Nisan) and calculated by Tertulian as March 25th on the Roman (solar) calendar. The same date was also later recognized as the Feast of the Annunciation, meaning that over the centuries Christian writers made every effort to ensure that Christ's crucifixion was seen to occur on the same day as his conception and/or birth. Ironically enough, the most likely period for shepherds to be watching their flocks in the open air would be after the middle of March, since the 14th of Nisan is the day of celebration of the Passover, the feast of the sacrificial (L)lamb. (1522)

According to the *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*, the final choice of date, however, appears to have resulted from the calculations of Hippolytus of Rome (ca. 170-236 C.E) based on the premise that the conception took place in March 25th, the spring equinox (Mills et al. 142). The eventual acceptance of such a date by the Western Church –as opposed to the choice of the 6th of January in the Eastern Church and the Armenian Church– made it possible to coincide, , hence almost totally nullify the pagan festivities of Saturnalia and Brumalia (17th - 23/24th and 25th of December, respectively) (Mills et al. 142).

This discussion evinces the social transformation of experience as a result of the changes that take place in the life and culture of any given society, in this case the Church's complete revamping of the experience of the first Christians to facilitate the assimilation of the Roman Empire's citizens into the new faith (Mills et al. 142-143). In this process, myths, legends and traditions, newly created or borrowed from the communities evangelised, alongside the exegesis of the Bible and the production of Christian art, became the means to achieve a social and spiritual cohesion,. These are of especial importance in the narrative of the Magi, whose bare depiction in *Matthew*, which initially only identifies them as members of the "Persian priestly caste" and followers of Zoroastrianism (Sim 1999: 984), has been rewritten completely. From such a basic origin they have been presented to echo prophetic figures like Balaam from *Numbers* (22-24) and have been implanted by New Testament writers into the Old Testament to fulfil prophecies like *Psalms* (72:11) and *Isaiah* (60). This is conspicuously seen in the exegesis of the latter during the Middle Ages, which from the verse "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (*Isaiah* 60: 2) elevated the Magi into kings (Sim 998). Similarly, in the Western Church, their original unspecified number eventually gave way to their identification as the first three visitors to recognize Jesus as the Messiah and the "first witnesses to the Trinity" (Jensen) based on the three gifts mentioned in *Matthew*.

Eliot's choice of subject for the first of his Ariel Poems not only gave him the freedom –from facts and dogmatic issues– to rewrite the Magi's story "according to my [his] fantasy of realism." (Eliot, *Letters vol.3* 860), but offered him a treasure trove for the development of the major themes of the sequence, the transmutation of experience and the ambiguity of birth and death. In that regard, he is replicating what the Church Fathers and Andrewes did before him, adapting the rendition of the experience of an early Christian to fit the circumstances of his own society by resorting to a mythical dimension that may compensate any inaccuracy, anachronism or ambiguity introduced, while adding some of his own stock as well. Among these, the poetic license of moving from the desert to the "temperate valley,/Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation" (ll. 21-22) in a single day's journey, an error noted by readers already in 1927 (Eliot, *Letters vol.3* 766), and the anachronistic inclusion of a "water-mill" (l. 23) and of "sherbet" (l. 10).[15]

[15] Although the origins of sherbet surely precedes its first documented mention in Ismail Gorgani's 12th century medical encyclopaedia *Zakhireye Khwarazmshahi*, its appearance in a poem set in the first century

Eliot's apparent blunders with fact ought to be attributed to a conscious and deliberate attempt to expose the mythical rendering of the Magi's account at work for the two thousand years of Christianity, questioning the cultural idealisation of the occasion in Andrewes' time as much as in his own. In that regard, Eliot's poem modifies the Archbishop's sermon by adding new meanings for the readers of both texts. This highlights, moreover, an awareness of the alterations that the representation of the Nativity for the individual and collective mind experiences through the years, a process that is materialised in the Magus' own account. At this point in the sequence, such a design is not intended as a criticism of said depictions *per se*, but rather it is aimed at underlining their mythical nature as well as their impermanence. However, as will be seen, in the case of subsequent poems the narrating *personae* –and the poet behind them– will shift their opinions in favour of the fantastic representation of the Christmas miracle in the form of fantasy. Moreover, this change reflects the mutability of experience of Eliot as an individual and as an author. Just as Andrewes eventually turns his initial description of a journey of hardship and suffering into a happy pilgrimage to inspire his congregation so Eliot in his seniority abandons his former views and embraces that mythical vision as opposed to the cold agnostic consumerism that was engulfing Christmas.

At this point in the Ariel sequence, however, Eliot adopts an inquisitive attitude, best exemplified by the Magus' rhetoric question of the last stanza (ll. 35-36), characteristic of Eliot's own approach to poetry and faith in, at least, this period of his career. As Cleo McNelly Kearns argues, "Eliot strove to unify scepticism and belief in the cultivation of spirituality through rational inquiry" (90). His answer to Andrewes' Magi is the representation of an individual that questions his own past decisions as much as his faith, yet who "[…] would do it again." (l. 33); a man whose faith is not battered down by doubt, scepticism or hardship but who rather strives, successfully or not, to allow his belief to subsume them. His depiction reflects the nuances of belief and the friction between the different dimensions of an individual's self, as opposed to Andrewes' one-dimensional portrayal. Even though Andrewes reminds his audience that the pilgrimage was not as brief and celebratory as one could imagine from *Matthew*, he still does not present the Magi as common individuals whose faith can falter as easily as that of any

might be a case of Orientalism in which Eliot uses it to add local colour. Concerning the water mill, Shepherd affirms that a similar kind of device was installed in Antioch around 73-74 C.E., but puts into question the existence of such machine in Bethlehem in 0 B.C. (1526). His claims are based on Örjan Wikander's *Handbook of Ancient Water Technology* (Technology and Change in History, Vol. 2, Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp. ix-xi, 371-410, 607-630, 649-660, 703-741.)

member of the congregation. Similarly, he does not take into account the complexities of faith resulting from the various religions and pantheons coexisting in the Middle East 0 B.C;[16] his Magi are not only Christians in the complete sense of the word but idealistic devotees to a new faith whose divine / mortal fountain head has not yet faced his ultimate challenge. And it goes without saying that the composition of the Epistles of St. Paul which really concretised the official doctrinal basis for a new creed lay still farther in the future.

In truth, the scepticism of the poem's protagonist is also a mirage; Eliot is as incapable of providing an accurate reflection of the mind of a non-English speaking individual from the first century as Andrewes was before him, such are the limitations of the human mind in general and the dramatic monologue form in particular. As Eliot stated, "in the dramatic monologue, is the voice of the poet, who has put on the costume and makeup either of some historical character, or one out of fiction" ("Three Voices" 93). The voice of the Magus that we hear after the citation from Andrewes has ended is thus Eliot's own, and the poet is the first to admit it. He does this by including some of his own memories in the second stanza. The "[…] water-mill beating the darkness," (l. 23) and the "Six hands at an open door dicing…" (l. 27) originate with the "six ruffians seen through an open window playing cards at night at a small French railway junction where there was a water-mill:", one of the recurring *déjà vus* that he describes in his conclusion to *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (Eliot 148). That he chose precisely those memories featured in his poem may suggest that he wanted to further clarify what the inclusion of the Andrewes citation in inverted commas had already made obvious enough, namely that the narrating Magus was the end result of his own fusion of Andrewes miscontextualized and the imaginative extension of a quasi-religious experience of his own. Moreover, Eliot achieves this fusion without any apparent disruption between author and *persona* by making himself and the Magus go over the apparently identical processes of retrospection simultaneously.

In another fragment from the 1964 essay just quoted, Eliot claims that when trying to "visually recall the past" there are certain sensations and perceptions that stand out

[16] As Sim argues, by the time of the Greco-Roman period the term 'magi' no longer referred exclusively to the priests of Zoroastrianism but denoted "a whole range of people involved in esoteric practices", especially those of "astrology and divination" (984). In addition, though initially all the magi were Gentiles, there are several references in the Bible to Jewish magi, Simon (*Acts* 8: 9-24), Elymas (*Acts* 13: 6-11) and Josephus (*Antiquities* 20: 142), which to Sim suggests the possibility for *Matthew*'s magi being Jews (998-1000).

from the rest of experiences in an individual's life and that can possess a "symbolic value" that is beyond our understanding. He characterises them as "the few meagre *arbitrarily chosen* set of snapshots […] the *faded* poor souvenirs of passionate moments." (italics mine) (Eliot, "Use of Poetry" 148). This implies that despite their endurance in one's memory, the *intensity* of these experiences and images wanes and that the reason behind their prominence is unknown, even unconscious, to the individual that experiences them; it is up to each individual to find meaning in them by whatever means available. Eliot's choice is to embed them in his own poetry, embroidered with the Magus' own remembrances that he is "taking […] down for future reference, on the off-chance that everything he sees may prove to be of symbolic religious significance." (Shepherd 1526) The Magus' "[…] three trees on the low sky," (l. 24), the galloping old white horse (l. 25), the "[…] dicing for pieces of silver," (l. 27) and the "empty wine-skins." (l. 28) refer to different episodes in the life of Christ and its later New Testament symbology. Critics have identified them with the three crosses of Calvary, the white horse of *Revelation* (19: 11-14), the price of Judas' betrayal in *Matthew* (26: 15; 27: 35) and the wine-skins of the allegory used by Christ also in *Matthew* (9: 17) (Ricks and McCue 764; Moody 133). Shepherd, however, proposes an alternative: even if these images do find analogies in the Scriptures, they are more than mere references, as they constitute "potential signs of salvation" for the Magus, just as Eliot hopes that the mill, the gamblers and the horse "might assume spiritual-religious significance" (1526). Granted, in establishing these associations Eliot has the benefit of hindsight. The problem entailed in such proposal is that it requires the acceptance of the Magus' memories as truly original, since it is quite fortuitous that they resemble so closely later events from Christ's life.

Instead of considering him a prophet or a dishonest man, the alternative here presented takes into account the palimpsestic nature of memory and experience: in their integration into an individual's memory, new experiences are impressed upon older ones, altering them through the transference of some of their elements. This understanding is counterpart to the functioning of memory as delineated by Bergson, specifically to how memory "creates anew" or "doubles" a perceive image "by reflecting upon it either its own image or some other memory-image of the same kind", adding details from "complementary recollections" of the past until the present image is completely covered (123). The result of this design is the impossibility to ascertain whether the Magus' recollections of the journey have been impressed by details of later events or if his present

experience is coloured by images of his past. Consequently, the only certainty is that the original sights encountered by the Magus during his journey, and his initial impressions of them, are utterly unrecoverable. Similarly, we cannot ascertain which of the two types of moments of vision indicated by Maltby the Magus' revelation represents, since his present spiritual desolation –the catastrophic kind– might not correspond to what he actually felt on his visit to the manger. The sense of loss is even emphasised when considering Bergson's claims that the complete and perfect recording of past images stored in "spontaneous recollection" is disfigured by time and by the conscious mechanism of "learnt recollections", which though it enables us to retrieve specific remembrances, it does so at their expense as this mechanism substitutes them (Bergson 98).

Such transformation would not present in itself a problem for the Magus, a possible Christian convert whose remembrances of past travels have been overwritten with events essential to his faith. The issue at stake here is that if this mutability indeed operates both in mundane and intense experiences, it might even affect moments of mystical enlightenment like revelation. Initially, the Magus' complaints about the hardships of the journey and his brief unaffected remark regarding its conclusion, "Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory" (l. 30), may have led the reader to assume that the Magus was rather uninspired by Christ, or that he *was* but has now lost his faith. Far from it; the fact that he still remembers it and takes the effort of going once more over all their sufferings and experiences in an attempt to forge a meaning out of it gives the completely opposite impression. If he was convinced of and profoundly affected by the Incarnation, and the Salvation it entails, then what he has lost is the joy of it (Shepherd 1524),[17] the initial experience of that moment of spiritual awakening through the years of living in "the old dispensation," among "an alien people" (ll. 41-42). He does not doubt to have witnessed a miracle, as he remarks "[…] there was a Birth, certainly, / We had evidence and no doubt…" (ll. 36-37); what he puts into question is the difference between birth and death that he had never considered previously (ll. 37-39), as well as the implications that these episodes have had over him. The problem of putting so much effort into the reasoning of the mystic experience is that, Cleo McNelly Kearns argues, such

[17] Andrewes' Nativity Sermon (V) might be illustrative to understand the implications of the real joy of faith. In the Archbishop's words: "men may talk what they will, but sure there is no joy in the world to the joy of a man saved; […] Tell any of these [men whose life is in danger], assure them but of a Saviour, it is the best news he ever heard in his life." ("Sermon V" 72)

experience "cannot speak for itself" and if interpreted on rational terms, then the implications from the "inside" of that experience, (i. e. how it *felt*), are lost (84-85). Eliot was aware of this condition when he wrote that "mystical illumination" is a "vision which may be accompanied by the realisation that you will never be able to communicate it to anyone else, or even by the realisation that when it is past you will not be able to recall it to yourself." ("The Use of Poetry" 145)

One can appreciate the pathos of the Magus' figure: being now old and "an eyewitness to a promise which is as yet unfulfilled;" (Shepherd 1515), he has lost the firm assurance and the joy of his revelation, which have been substituted by a myriad of unanswered questions and by experiences whose significance still eludes him. Knowing that his moment of vision is irretrievable, the Magus attempts to find solace in whatever meagre significance he may extract from his memories by associating them to events in his Saviour's life, which eventually distances even further the initial impression of his experiences from his reach. Such idea derives from Bergson's understanding of "learnt recollections" that renders these retrieved images "more and more impersonal, more and more foreign to our past life." (95) For all his reasoning, the Magus is left with the longing to recover the ecstasy and the actual sensations experienced in the past, entertaining the idea of being willing to undergo so much pain once again so as to recover them or to experience revelation once more (l. 43).

A Song for Simeon

"A Song for Simeon", continues the development of the major themes of the Ariel Poems in close connection to the narrative of the Nativity, as the poem's main *persona* is Simeon, the "just and devout" man who witnessed the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple as narrated in *Luke* (2: 25-38). According to the Gospel, Simeon had received the visit of the Holy Spirit, which revealed to him that he "should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ." (*Luke* 2: 26) When he took the Child in his arms, he uttered a prayer that prophesised Jesus as the Saviour and Redeemer (*Luke* 2: 28-32). Given the significance of the episode in Christian dogma and liturgy, Eliot heavily relies on *Luke* and the *Nunc Dimittis,* or the "Song of Simeon", [18] one of the canticles used in Christian

[18] The change from "Song of Simeon" into "A Song for Simeon" may strike as a bit self-conscious if regarded as the name chosen by Simeon for his own speech about himself. Moreover, if considered in

liturgy. As several of the poem's lines are directly quoted from these two texts, the work could be understood as a conversation with God, presumably taking place either simultaneous to the ceremony, or after it, when Simeon ponders over the words that were spoken on the occasion. In the latter case, Simeon would be addressing the Lord in prayer, making a case for his release from the burdens of existence by reflecting on his righteous and pious life and on the lives and the future of his family, his people and of Christ himself in hopes that God would finally fulfil His promise to him.

This design carries interesting implications for the nature of the poem. In *Luke*, Simeon's words were meant to be uttered exclusively by him, "For *mine* eyes have seen thy salvation," (italics mine) (*Luke* 2: 30) in an unrepeatable situation. However, due to the Church's recycling of *Luke* for the composition of the *Nunc Dimitis*, as part of the liturgy for evening prayer, the whole congregation pronounces these words ("Book" 65). This implies a mixture of the personal and the collective modes that is analogous to Simeon's alternation between the two throughout his prayer. Starting his case for his own release from life in the first stanza (ll. 4-7), Simeon promptly joins his voice to the congregation's prayer "Grant us thy peace" (l. 8), resuming his vindication for himself and his family in the subsequent stanza and, once again, uttering the same words in unison with the flock (l. 18). It is essential to note that Simeon's prayer is not to be found anywhere in the *Nunc Dimitis*. Its origin can be traced either in the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God), recited after the Communion, or in the combination of two lines that are part of the Anglican evening service, "And grant us thy Salvation/ […] Give peace in our tyme, O Lord," ("Book" 67), sung after the Lord's Prayer and thus after the recitation of the *Nunc Dimitis* ("Book"65).

Regardless of its precise origin, the allusion contributes to the overall understanding of the poem as a synthesis of individual prayer with liturgy and of dramatic monologue with the lyric and the communal voice. In fact, the poem could be read as the office of evening prayer, Simeon apparently subsuming the roles of priest and congregation, as the second, third –in this case preceded only by a line–, fourth and fifth stanzas are headed by the quotations from liturgy –the congregation's answer– preceded and followed by Simeon's exposition. Albeit partially transformed, dramatic monologue still points towards the presence of the poet however disguised it might be beneath the

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relation to dramatic monologue, this might be a self-referential nod in which Eliot suggests that words are being put into Simeon's mouth.

communal. If Eliot's voice is to be heard somewhere in the text it is precisely on this combination of the first and the second voice of poetry with the use of liturgy for poetic purposes –which he was employing to its utmost possibilities in the composition of *Ash-Wednesday* (1930). Similarly, Simeon's foreshadowing of the Via Crucis (ll. 17-20) is not his own divination but Eliot's benefit of hindsight. As he has previously done in "Journey" by superimposing different layers of time, Eliot exposes how the Church Fathers gave prophetic statements to characters like Simeon – for instance, "(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,)" (*Luke* 2: 35)– to anticipate events in the life of a Saviour that had happened centuries before them.

In contrast to the uncertainty and hesitation expressed by the Magus in his twilight days, in Simeon's case the Incarnation is approached on absolutist terms; the sense of impending doom and disaster is as complete as the assurance of salvation. The first century was indeed a tumultuous period in Judea, as ethnic and religious tensions and economic problems –as conflicts over Roman taxation even managed to be mentioned in *Luke* (2: 1)– gave rise to numerous riots and revolts that eventually coalesced into the Great Revolt or The First Jewish–Roman War (66–73 CE). The outcome of the conflict was the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem and the beginning of the Jewish Diaspora. That events so crucial to the society and culture of the people of Israel are reduced to the foreboding that looms in the apparently harmless blooming "Roman hyacinths" (l. 1), highlights Simeon's complete acceptance of and trust on the Lord's will, as well as Eliot's blatant show of hindsight. His devotion easily subdues any doubt concerning the future of his kin and people (ll. 13-16) as he does not ruminate over the sufferings and the loss that are in store for them, for the Infant and His mother (ll. 19-20), and for those who will come after them (l. 26). His mind is, rather, fixed on "[…] Israel's consolation" (l. 23), a source of comfort that compensates any sorrow, since he is a man that completely believes to have hold Salvation in his own hands, and continues to do so symbolically.

If the figures of the Magus and Simeon are compared, one might even be led to assume that the Magus has indeed lost his faith, given the different answer of each man to suffering and hardship. In truth, such distinction springs not from a fault in the Magus' devotion but from Simeon's condition, a man "[…] who has eighty years and no to-morrow." (l. 24) Unlike the Magus, Simeon need not fear that the remembrance of his experiences and his faith will wane in time; in fact, his sole request to his Maker is that

He fulfils His promise and "Let thy servant depart" (l. 36). The impending and desired death of Simeon is not to be confirmed by any theological source but by Eliot's own scheme, since in "The Cultivation of Christmas Trees" the speaker clarifies "So that before the end, the eightieth Christmas / (By "eightieth" meaning whichever is the last)" ("Cultivation" ll. 27-28), which seems to validate Simeon's "no tomorrow." Whereas the Magus' Epiphany eventually started to fade with time, as one *might* understand from his "I should be glad of another death." (l. 43), interpreted as an expression of his need for fresh proof of divine intent to justify the renewal of his trust in God's will,[19] Simeon's revelation will be kept intact providing that God fulfils the prophecy of the Holy Ghost (*Luke* 2: 26).

These two premises, the concern with the loss of faith and the request to perish, articulated in a plea to God, open the possibility of finding voices from other works amalgamated in the *persona* of Simeon. Critics like Hugh Kenner (105-109) and Scofield (147) have suggested that the poem and his protagonist bear a close resemblance to Eliot's "Gerontion", who also demonstrates the wavering of feelings and faith over time and offers an easily noticeable contrast to Simeon (Kenner 107), and probably to the Magus as well. The points of similarity between these three figures –the Magus, Gerontion and Simeon– is thrown into even sharper focus if we consider that all three may be considered as variants of one appearing in a likely shared hypotext: St. Simeon Stylites,[20] the protagonist of Alfred Tennyson's eponymous poem. The correlation of these figures overall manifests the process of textual re-signification and rearrangement that Eliot described in his definition of the "historical sense." A symbiotic relationship between "Gerontion" and "A Song for Simeon" is constituted in which the former gains new implications with the second –and also the first– instalment of the Ariel Poems, just as the latter's significance is modified by Eliot's earlier work, a process that similarly underlies the relation between Eliot's and Tennyson's poems.

In "Gerontion", Eliot is already toying with the form of dramatic monologue for the development of a poem that at first seems to be a soliloquy or a monologue but which could be read also as a conversation with God in prayer. The relation established between

[19] Under such interpretation the Magus would recall Gideon, who asked God to leave dew on only one side of the blanket in which he had slept out under three times before he would take the field against the Midianites and save the people of Israel in *Judges* (6: 36-40).

[20] In order to distinguish clearly between Eliot's character and his namesake, the former will be addressed simply as 'Simeon' while Tennyson's character will be referred to as 'St. Simeon' or 'Stylites'.

Eliot's two poems might indeed serve to reinforce such understanding. In turn, this serves as a demonstration of Eliot's "historical sense" and of the transformation of spiritual or religious experience at different times, given that "Gerontion" expounds the twentieth century experience of Christianity. Such is the perspective of Jewell Spears Brooker (94-107), who analyses the poem as the reflection upon the history of Western civilization –including (Western) Christianity– under Eliot's "philosophic negativism" (101). However, the reader ought to be aware that the poem is about Christianity as much as about Gerontion himself in that his exposition has quite a definite purpose (l. 51): it is a vindication, an apology expressed in confession. In his stumbles of Christian faith, Gerontion is risking the Salvation of his soul when death draws near in the form of a –very Blakean– "[…] Christ the tiger" (l. 20).[21] For all the hesitance of his belief in God, Gerontion is not so careless as to meet his end without a safeguard: the poem is Gerontion's excuse for the loss of his faith. The degradation of the Church, the appeal to doctrines of cyclicality, the unbelieving character of modern society (ll. 17-20), analogous to the Pharisees' disbelief of Christ (*Matthew* 12: 38-39) and the characterization of history as deceitful and mischievous towards humanity (ll. 33-43); all serve as an excuse for him to avoid responsibility and lay the blame on everything and everyone, up to and including God Himself. Once he has enumerated all the extenuating circumstances, he states the matter simply:

> I would meet you upon this honestly.
>
> I that was near your heart was removed therefrom
>
> To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.
>
> I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it
>
> Since what is kept must be adulterated? (ll. 54-58)

Gerontion claims to have been led astray from God's Love, resulting in the loss of the intensity of faith. As in the case of the Magus, a Bergsonian perspective of time and memory might be as well the source of the draining of Gerontion's passion, if not

[21] The poem's epigraph, extracted from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (III, i, ll. 1-43), underlines the idea of an impending death. The fragment belongs to the conversation between the disguised Duke Vincentio and Claudio, sentenced to die, in which –in response to Claudio's despair– Vincentio recommends him to reassess the value of life, arguing that despite all its lies and wantonness the fear of death makes it worth keeping. Perhaps Gerontion, like Claudio, is trying "To sue to live, I find I seek to die;/And, seeking death, find life: let it come on. (*Measure* III, i, ll. 46-47)

originally at least after being recontextualised by the Ariel Poems. His only difference with the Magus is that he outright expresses his awareness of the inevitability of change, adopting a nihilist stance that underlines the futility of faith that stands in contrast to the Magus' willingness to endure the ordeal once more and to Simeon's piety.

If Tennyson's and Eliot's poems could be easily linked through their protagonists' desire to die. Based on the 4th century Syrian monk and ascetic, known for living almost forty years on top of a high platform, Tennyson's dramatic monologue puts forth a character that is quite the opposite of what Simeon the Elder might have represented, just as Eliot subverted Andrewes' Magi in the previous poem. Praying on his pillar, Tennyson's St. Simeon pleas to God for the forgiveness of all his sins and for his release from mortal life; but what ought to be an example of devotion is turned by the poet into a pathetic excuse from a man that thinks far too highly of both his sacrifice and himself. St. Simeon covets a place among God's saints and martyrs (Tennyson, "St. Simeon" 80) and he is determined to achieve his goal by any means necessary. His speech, thus, is an exhaustive list of all of his merits, mitigating circumstances and the minimization of some of his transgressions. Concerning the latter, St. Simeon revels on the veneration and cheering that he is receiving from fellow Christians (Tennyson, "St. Simeon" 82), a curious behaviour for a hermit that chose isolation to be closer to God (Tennyson, "St. Simeon" 81), and who moments before could not even hear the "people hum/About the column's base…" (Tennyson, "St. Simeon" 80). When he tries to blame it all on the pilgrims "[…] Am I to blame for this,/That here come those that *worship* me? (italics mine) (Tennyson, "St. Simeon" 81), he does it out of concern, and rightly so, for partaking in the sin of idolatry. In fact, throughout his speech, Stylites has made some dangerous remarks, like belittling God's saints and martyrs (Tennyson, "St. Simeon" 80-81), which represents one among the worst of capital sins, pride. On several occasions, St. Simeon presents himself as the most devout of Christians, affirming that he holds a better claim for sainthood that most of those already canonised (Tennyson, "St. Simeon" 81), since nobody has suffered like him , wondering, "Who may be saved?.../Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?" (Tennyson, "St. Simeon" 80) In fact, he is so proud that throughout the text and even in his final confession he boasts of being the worst of sinners (Tennyson, "St. Simeon" 82).

Tennyson's emphasis on St. Simeon's narcissism and conceit; the notion of pious conceit, in fact, lies right at the core of the poem. On the one hand, it amounts to a critique

of certain religious attitudes and of some doctrines, especially of Oxford Movement Catholicism, and on the other hand to an attack upon and a mockery of the overblown celebration of the self and the individualism instituted in Romanticism. Such an interpretation, posited by Herbert F. Tucker in his analysis of the poem (127-131), is best illustrated by the complete absence of capitalization in the pronouns used by Stylites when addressing God, which he does ceaselessly throughout the entire poem; the L(l)ord pales in comparison with the importance assigned to St. Simeon's own self:

> I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
>
> Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,
>
> The watcher on the column till the end;
>
> I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes; (Tennyson, "St. Simeon" 82)

Tucker's understanding is quite insightful when juxtaposed to a poem that balances perfectly the expression of an individual voice that never belittles that of the community, asking for himself nothing more than what he seeks for his people. Even though, as Kenner argues, by establishing a link between Gerontion –as well as Stylites– and Simeon, a "mode of glozing self-consciousness inappropriate to Simeon" is projected upon him (107), the effect of making the connection may be viewed in a quite different light. Granted, Simeon's exposition of his good deeds and his piety (ll. 9-12) –as well as the chosen title for his speech– acquires a hint of conceit and vanity when understood in relation to Gerontion's and Stylites' lists of excuses. However, rather than acting in detriment of Simeon's selflessness, the textual re-signification strengthens his virtues. Not even after Simeon drops the plural –marking the end to the communal service– in his prayer "Grant me thy peace." (l. 30) and concatenates a series of personal remarks (ll. 34-35) could we regard him or his plea in the same light as we do with the other alluded *personae*. Even when his own tribulations are stressed he cannot avoid thinking about them in relation to others: he is indivisible from the community, a fact that, if compared to the Magus, increases the sense of isolation of the latter, not only from his "alien people" ("Journey" l. 42) but from his missing fellow Magi.[22] The Salvation that Simeon is

[22] See footnote no. 13, pp. 23-24. This design was a common development in metaphysical poetry. In John Donne's "Holy Sonnet VII" the speaker's initial meditation upon Christ "Ye whose just tears, or tribulation" precedes his individualistic plea "Bright torch, which shin'st, that *I* the way may see," (italics mine) (308). Similarly, in George Herbert's "Easter Wings" the speaker reflects upon humanity and its Maker at the beginning, "Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store," but promptly starts to think about his own sake

seeking is not just for himself but for his people (l. 23) as well as for the souls of those that will come after (l. 26, 34-35). In contrast, Gerontion and Stylites compose dramas out of their guilt complexes in which Christian Salvation is reduced to mere pose, aimed at convincing both themselves and God of their innocence and aptness for Salvation. In addition, the Magus' desire to undergo once again his ordeal might indeed be as much as a confirmation of his faith as motivated by the fear that he might have wasted his life in a promise yet unfulfilled.

In the end, Simeon's self-effacement frees him from suspicion in that, as Kenner points out, "Simeon inhabits a positive spiritual state, whose tension, because not within himself but between himself and an order outside himself, is purer and more taut that Gerontion's stirring self-contemplation." (108) In other words, in his humility and self-surrender (ll. 34-35), Simeon ultimately remains a servant of God's will; his desire to die depends entirely and ultimately on God's command. His subservient attitude is expressed in the image of the feather moved by the wind: "My life is light, waiting for the death wind,/ Like a feather on the back of my hand." (ll. 4-5), which stands in stark contrast to the wind that traverses across Gerontion's "draughty" house that is woven not by God but by "[…] Vacant shuttles" ("Gerontion" ll. 29-30). Despite the impending danger, there is neither urgency nor concern for his own self in his request, two characteristics that set him apart from the pleas of the other figures.

The echoes of Gerontion and Stylites in the *persona* of Simeon reflects the evolution of the experience of faith and religion at different periods in the course of Christianity, –and, naturally, in the course of Eliot's own struggle towards faith as well– just as the Magus' *persona* enabled us to reflect on the transformation of the appreciation and depiction of the Nativity in different ages. These three characters see the miracle of the Incarnation, and the salvation and the suffering that it entails, differently: for Gerontion it is loss and self-destruction, for St. Simeon it is a craved and deserved reward and for Simeon it is the embodied token of God's will and the glory and sole consolation of his people. A passage from Eliot's "Dante" (1929) might be rather illustrative in the conceptual difference between them: "It is difficult to conceive of an age (of many ages) when human beings cared somewhat about the salvation of the 'soul', but not about each other as 'personalities'." (272) For Stylites and Gerontion, as Christians, salvation is

"O let *me* rise/As larks, harmoniously," (italic mine) (43). Eliot's Simeon, however, maintains both modes throughout his prayer, ending it with the two first lines of the communal *Nunc Dimitts*.

about them as individuals; for Simeon, as a believer who predates the formation of his religion's doctrines, it is about not only his own community but the Christian community in general, since the Divine Will encloses everything. This idea of the evolution of Christianity finds formulation in Simeon's:

> They shall praise Thee and suffer in every generation
>
> With glory and derision,
>
> Light upon light, mounting the saint's stair.[23] (ll. 36-38)

Each of the characters amalgamated in Simeon's *persona* could be seen as one of the stair's steps; all of them connected by their response to the experience of awe and suffering of the Incarnate Word, the ladder that connects heaven and Earth in Jacob's dream in Christian exegesis (*Genesis* 28: 10-17). In that sense, Eliot replicates the layering of three Christian epochs one upon another as he does in the previous poem. Simeon is aware that suffering is intrinsic to the joy of Salvation when he reflects on the Via Crucis (l. 19) and on "[…] the certain hour of maternal sorrow," (l. 20). As Ricks and McCue point out (767), the latter echoes how Jesus expresses the change from suffering into joy through an analogy with a woman in labour (*John* 16: 20-21). Simeon's complete acceptance of this binarism and his complete faith in God stems from his experience of revelation, the fulfilment of the prophecy of the Holy Spirit, the witnessing of Salvation and the well-grounded hope that they will not fade.

When Simeon forswears "the martyrdom" of the Church Fathers and its "ultimate vision" (ll. 29-30), his renunciation is emptier than might be expected. His moment of vision might indeed be not the ultimate, but his recognition of Christ is a revelation nonetheless; one –undoubtedly of redemptive character– that ensures his faith on the Logos and the salvation of humanity. However, as Gerontion remarked, it is inevitable that such experience will be jeopardised in due time. Simeon's death constitutes the best and only solution to prevent his revelation from fading, changing or being questioned just as the Magus' and Gerontion's faith faltered. As will be underlined in "Animula", in the fulfilment of God's Will, the visionary moment is kept intact from the effects of the flux of time and of subsequent experience.

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[23] The saint's stair might also be an indirect reference to St. Simeon and the way in which he received supplies, or as in Tennyson's poem, his request for a ladder so that he could receive the extreme unction from a priest ("St. Simeon" 82)

In what could be deemed an exaggerated enthusiasm to prove the claims of his Bergsonian reading of "Rhapsody on a Windy Night", Childs reaches a conclusion that might be similar in principle. Based on the practicality that dominates and inhibits Bergsonian memory and perception, Childs affirms, "If consciousness is ever to be pure, we must renounce the egotistically practical interests of the intellect as determined by body (478)". Moreover, he adds that such was "the conclusion that Eliot arrived at in his own study of Bergson: the life of the practical intellect is death; the death of the practical intellect is the immortality of Life ever-lasting." (Childs 486) Far from ascribing such conclusion either to Bergson's own work or to Eliot's reading of the French philosopher, especially at that period of his career and life, one cannot but perceive some resemblances between both understandings. Indeed, Simeon's death wish represents the ultimate renunciation to the individuality marked by his physical body and, according to his faith, the beginning of a higher and eternal existence. However, that Eliot would have reached such conclusion so early seems unfeasible; not until the Ariel Poems could Child's affirmation be remotely asserted.

Animula

"Animula" presents a remarkable shift in style from the previous poems, abandoning the Magus' and Simeon's first person narration, which has led Scofield to describe it as an impersonal "meditative reflection" (146). Such understanding would differentiate the poem from the combination of the lyrical voice and the dramatic monologue of the first two Ariel Poems as there would be no *persona* that could serve Eliot as a medium for poetic expression. From a transcendent position, the speaker recounts the development of the soul from its creation until its real birth after its death (l. 31). The impersonality that marks the whole poem is brought to an abrupt end in the last line, in which the poetic voice, after referring to a series of individuals, merges with the collective, "Pray for *us* now and at the hour of our birth." (italics mine) (l. 37) This might be this first indication that such perspective is not entirely accurate. In relation to the previous poems, while the Magus emphasises the collective at the beginning of their speeches and adopts a more personal voice by their conclusion –a design partly replicated by Simeon–, here we have the complete reversal of the order of such scheme. Moreover, it could be argued that the account combines the metaphysical with a descriptive style similar to a manual of psychology, indicating the various stages in the development of the soul from its joyous

infancy to the vicissitudes of adult life. Indeed the process described might be reminiscent of Lacan's "mirror stage", the developmental moment in which the child (about six months old) recognises and enjoys –in an *Aha Erlebnis* or 'Eureka!' experience, the moment of recognition– for the first time his reflection in the mirror (Lacan 502-503). This reflected image becomes the "Ideal-I" (Lacan 503), the "child's image of its ideal ego" that marks the entrance to "the realm of the imaginary" before "entering the language-based world of the symbolic" (Billig 6). This, however, sets the subject on a path of alienation (Lacan 504) between "the organism and its reality", the tension between the self and the social as the individual joins society (Lacan 505), as this moment "projects the formation of the individual into history" (Lacan 505).

The problem that such interpretation would pose is that Lacan's concept was first presented in a conference seven years after the publication of "Animula". Of course, Eliot –like Lacan– might have found similar notions in other sources. Billig indicates several texts where the episode of the mirror is described, one of them dated as far back as 1887: Darwin's 'A Biographical Sketch of an Infant' (10). Another possible source is Bergson's *Matter and Memory,* in which the philosopher also discusses the moment when we abandon our "impersonal" representation during infancy to adopt the body as the "centre" for our representation, understanding as well the "the notion of interiority and exteriority, […] the distinction between my body and other bodies.", an evolution motivated by "experience" (Bergson 43). However, by pursuing this line of interpretation and regard the poem exclusively as an impersonal reflection we would be, like Scofield, disregarding an essential element: the inverted commas in the introductory line, "'Issues from the hand of God, the simple soul'" (l. 1).

As such, we could regard the beginning of "Animula" in much the same light of "Journey of the Magi", in that this is another case of a conspicuous inclusion of the epigraph within the poem, evincing it as an allusion to a text and suggesting the presence of a *persona*. Its origin can be traced back to the combination of two different lines of Canto XVI of "Purgatory" from Dante's *Divine Comedy* (268). These words are part of the speech on free will voiced by Marco Lombardo, one of the souls that are undergoing purification. Therefore, it could be argued that the setting of "Animula" is precisely Dante's mountain, an idea reinforced by the different prayers and the recitation of the Hail Mary –with a significant change in it– in the last stanza (ll. 32-37). Like the rest of purgatory's inhabitants, Marco asks Dante to pray for them when he ascends (Alighieri

267), which might indicate initially that Dante's Lombardo is the poem's *persona*, or at least again as in the first two Ariel Poems, partially so.

As a result, the poem could be viewed as the combination of dramatic monologue, replicating the impersonality of Lombardo –as a soul in purgatory– and his speech's style –that moreover is didactic and thus uses the second voice of poetry (Eliot, "Three Voices" 96)– and of the lyric voice. While the dramatic monologue and the style of the voice impersonated dominate the structure and purpose of the poem, the lyric is seen throughout in the chosen images, especially in concluding stanza, as "Guiterriez", "Boudin" and "Floret" point towards Eliot's hand. In regard to these individuals, Ricks and McCue quote several fragments from Eliot's collected letters. While in 1940, Eliot admits that he had "a particular person" in mind for the first two, in 1942 he contradicts his former claims (Eliot qtd. Ricks and McCue 771). The elements common to the three letters quoted are that Guiterriez and Boudin refer to types of person and career, "the successful person of the machine age and someone who was killed in the last war", that Floret is "entirely imaginary" and that their identities do not clarify by any means the understanding of the poem (Eliot qtd. Ricks and McCue 772)

The *Comedy* also connects the speaker of "Animula" to the amalgamated *persona* of Simeon. In the beginning of "Purgatory" Canto XVI, Dante starts to hear voices "[…] praying for peace and for mercy/ From the Lamb of God who takes away sins" (Alighieri 266). They begin their chant in unison always with the *Agnus Dei*, the invocation that Simeon recurrently quotes in a fragmentary form, "grant us/me thy peace", throughout his prayer ("Song" ll. 8, 18, 32), as previously stated. The subject of Lombardo's speech could be understood as connected to the second and the third poems of the sequence, while serving to reinforce the argument for the overall unity between Eliot's five poems proposed in the present work. Lombardo rejects deterministic worldviews, defending the notion of free will to attribute the wickedness of the world to human agency (Alighieri 267-268). Due to its nature, the soul –compared to a child when it leaves the Maker's hands– may be led astray to rejoice in the deceitful nature of the "trifling good" and pursue it "If guides and curbs do not deflect its love" (Alighieri 268). These safeguards ought to be represented by laws and rulers but, as Lombardo points out (Alighieri 268-269), the problem of free will is that these governors also have it and can be, as they usually are, similarly deceived by the "trifling good" and pursue selfish endeavours. The resulting bad governance –the Pope and the Church being here the accused– is identified as the cause

for the corruption of the world, from its former virtuous state (Alighieri 267), and contributes to the further degradation of human nature.

Therefore, the process of degradation and loss presented in the poem and the process of transmutation seen throughout the Ariel sequence could be understood as a direct result of the separation from God at birth. Only when the soul is reunited with its Creator "[…] in the silence after the viaticum" (l. 31) is such deterioration stopped. This idea is analogous and consequential to the conclusions derived from the study of "A Song for Simeon" in which the fulfilment of God's will, Simeon's death, is seen as the only solution to prevent his revelation and faith from fading like those of Gerontion and the Magus. Marco's discourse eventually finds completion in canto III of "Paradise", when Piccarda Donati[24] explains that the souls of Paradise do not aspire to ascend beyond their allotted place as they are content with the Lord's design, concluding: "And in his will we find our peace" (Alighieri 362). Such thought represents, as David H. Higgins explains in his notes to the work, a fundamental paradox of Christianism: the awareness that humanity "is most free" when "will and reason most conform to those of God." (603)

If we study the intertextual network constructed from the references established between these texts from the main highlights of Eliot's "historical sense", we are able to understand Simeon as an example of one of the central virtues of the souls of Paradise, binding their volition to God's design. Similarly, it allows us to reflect on a new contrast between Simeon and Tennyson's Stylites in the latter's craving to be anointed saint (Tennyson, "St. Simeon" 80-81) that shows how dissonant is the hermit from the Divine Will. At the same time, Piccarda's words acquire a new meaning by being juxtaposed to Eliot's poems, as the implications of her "peace" gain the assurance that her memories and experiences will remain steady for all Eternity. Eliot's framework offers each text the possibility to receive new meaning.

Like the unfortunate souls that still measure "Time by the divisions of the calendar" (Alighieri 266), readers have to be content with Eliot's transformation of a lecture on free will into an exposition of the wreckage of the human soul in the flux of time. A view on the decadent nature of time could be initially inferred from the reference to this particular episode from the *Comedy*, since in it Dante affirms "The world indeed

[24] The first of the souls that converse with Dante in Paradise, Piccarda was a nun who neglected her vows when her brother, Forese Donati –a friend of Dante– forced her to marry to advance the political interests of the family.

is […]/ Utterly empty now of every virtue," (267). Nonetheless, in pursuit of a clearer enunciation of such perspective, the present analysis will shift its focus from Dante's work onto the title of Eliot's poem. In their study, Ricks and McCue trace the origin of its title and major theme back to a poem translated by Lord Byron from Latin, allegedly composed by Emperor Hadrian, titled "Adrian's Address to his Soul, / When Dying." (769),[25] Eliot chose its title from the very first line of Adrian's poem, "Animula!, vagula, blandula," that Byron translated as follows:

> Ah! gentle, fleeting, wav'ring sprite,
> Friend and associate of this clay!
> To what unknown region borne,
> Wilt thou now wing thy distant flight?
> No more with wonted humour gay,
> But pallid, cheerless, and forlorn. (72)

In the poem, the soul is clearly presented under the similar premises than in "Animula", namely the impermanence ("fleeting, wav'ring") that characterises the human spirit, as the soul begins its journey cheerfully but ends it in sorrow. As Ricks and McCue continue (769), Walter Pater used the first lines of the original for an epigraph in *Marius the Epicurean* (Pater 125). The eponymous protagonist of Pater's work is similarly concerned with the passing of time and the impermanence of existence, as he is described as one who "halted at the apprehension of that swift energetic motion in things—the drift of flowers, of little or great souls, of ambitious systems—in the stream around him;" (Pater 133). Pater's use of the poem's lines clearly point towards Heraclitus' Doctrine of Flux, further expounded by Plato in *Cratylus* (402a). According to Plato, its most fundamental implications are that everything is in constant change and that if the universe was compared to a river then one could never return into the same stream. That such system of thought constitutes the core of the poem's thematic development, which clearly expounds the consequences of the flow of time, may serve as a defence for the line of argument proposed in this study. Since under this perspective no element remains permanent, experiences, feelings, beliefs or even revelations have to share the same essence. Plato's description also highlights the impossibility of ever returning to exactly the same point in time; therefore, it is reasonable to affirm that any successful attempt to

[25] Adrian's poem is a Meditation that foreshadows Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* on Epicurean and Stoic philosophy, brief prose fragments penned by the Roman Emperor around 170 A. D.

regress has to be an illusion. If Pater's recycling of Byron's translation introduces into "Animula" Heraclitus' constant flux, then the lines of Hadrian's poem give a nuance to it, namely, that change may not be intrinsically neutral but negative; that time entails degradation.

In this progress of the soul, Ricks and McCue (769) and Moody (135) have identified in the poem's intertextual structure and the first lines (ll. 1-10) the presence of Wordsworth's *The Prelude* and "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood." They quote Eliot's opinion on the latter in "The Silurist" (1927), in which he says that to romanticise about the memories of childhood is indicative of a mood which, though far from unusual, should be avoided if we intend "mature and conscious" (Eliot qtd. Ricks and McCue 769). A critique of this romanticization is found by Moody within the first lines of the poem, the "world of changing lights and noise" (l. 2), which for him does not represent the real experience of a child but "how a textbook of child psychology might put it." (Moody 167). These lines are a manifestation of the conventional cultural abstraction and the idealisation that adults usually create about their own childhoods in particular and about the period in general. It could be argued, however, that the resulting imagery belongs not to a textbook but rather to the inability or difficulty of most adults to recall scenes and experiences of early childhood in a form different that short and fleeting glimpses or sensations. Even if an individual's memory could overcome its own inaccurate nature, the vision of childhood would still be an illusion, one distorted by other experiences –as seen in Bergson's framework– as much as by the idealised renderings of the period made by people from his/her culture.

Taking this evidence of Eliot's awareness of this kind of sentimentality into account, we follow the infant soul in its explorations and enjoyments, among them, "the fragrant brilliance of the Christmas tree," (l. 9), an element that will become central in "The Cultivation of Christmas Trees." Apart from this, the remark that the child "confounds the actual and the fanciful," (l. 4) will not only be echoed in the last of the Ariel Poems but also recalls the cultural idealisation of Christmas revealed and scrutinised in "Journey of the Magi". The soul occupies itself with other activities like "[…] playing-cards and kings and queens," (l. 5), a line that recalls the opening of Baudelaire's "Le Voyage." This idea is supported by the Baudelairian synaesthesia of the "fragrant brilliance" (l. 9), a device rarely used by Eliot, and by the fact that Eliot quotes the alluded line in "The Metaphysical Poets" in its original form: "Pour l'enfant, amoureux de cartes

et d'estampes," ("Metaphysical" 290).[26] Baudelaire's poem shows a similar progression and thematic development to "Animula", presenting the whole course of life and the transformations and suffering that assails humans in their journey.

The first stanza of "Le Voyage" highlights the changes that take place in our conception of reality as we mature. The immensity of the world for the child is substituted by the awareness of its flatness, or rather, the loss of its richness in adulthood: to the child "how big the world is, seen by lamplight on his charts!/ how very small the world is, viewed in retrospect." (Baudelaire 187) The greatness of the choice of image resides in the hint of artificiality within the child's vision, as he is seeing –thanks to the artificial light of a lamp– the cartographic representation of the world, a human-made abstraction that fills the child with expectations that experience later shows to be unrealistic. Eliot places the reference to Baudelaire specifically right before the turning point of his progress of the soul, as games and fairies give way to the burdens of "the growing soul" that increase daily (ll. 15-18). These owe a great deal to the growing challenge to discern between appearance and reality, the "[…] imperatives of 'is and seems' (l. 19), and to the curbing of its desires through discipline and control (l. 20), an indispensable necessity to Dante's Lombardo, as previously noted. These two trials, alongside "The pain of living and the drug of dreams" (l. 21) could be read, in fact, as parallel to the development of Baudelaire's voyage that is filled with hopes and desires as the sighted "Eldorado" and "The Promised Land;" are soon discovered as mere mirages, however, once "[…] dawn reveals a barren reef." (Baudelaire 189). Moreover, given that clear similarities could be drawn between the poems of Eliot and Baudelaire and also between the work of Baudelaire and Dante's *Comedy*,[27] it might be reasonable to affirm that the speaker of "Le Voyage" is integrated into the amalgamated *persona* of "Animula", Lombardo's speech being the catalyst for the three texts and voices to merge. If Andrewes was Eliotized in "Journey of the Magi", here the same thing is happening to Dante's Marco Lombardo and the process is effected by a stratagem of intertextualization, incorporating

[26] The French word 'carte' is polysemous, being capable to denote a letter, a map, cards, or official documents. While in Millay's edition the translation is "globe", which hinders the link between Baudelaire's and Eliot's line, in Wagner's the choice is "cards."

[27] In "Baudelaire" (1930), Eliot acknowledges that the French had been deemed a "fragmentary Dante," (420). "Le Voyage" features at least two images that recall the *Comedy*: when the travelers relate that they have been "On every rung of the ladder, the high as well as the low/ The tedious spectacle of sin-that-never dies" (Baudelaire 193) and when the speaker asserts "[…] hell? heaven?–what's the odds? We're bound for the Unknown, in search of something new!" (Baudelaire 199). The latter recalls the audacious attitude of Odysseus in his last enterprise of sailing west, as he narrates in canto XVI of "Hell" (Alighieri 158).

as it does works from other authors as well as from Eliot's own *oeuvre,* into what could be regarded as kind of fragmented spiritual odyssey. If we view these references as deliberate patterns woven into the overall design of the sequence, then "Animula" is as much a personal statement about the (in this case successful) struggle for belief, disguised by the presence of a narrating *persona,* as the first two poems in the sequence.

To Baudelaire's speaker the answer to the discovery of this illusiveness might be found in the retelling of the visions of the experienced travellers. Whether in power, lust, religion, or as in the case of "Animula" in hiding "Behind the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*" (l. 23), voyagers are eventually forced to come to terms with the realization of the futility of human agency when faced with the passing of time (Baudelaire 197). The only solution proposed is the desire for annihilation, the comforting poison of suffering and of drowning in the abyss (Baudelaire 1962: 199), a death wish also articulated by Simeon and Stylites, in addition to Gerontion's willing sacrifice to "Christ the tiger" ("Gerontion" ll. 20-48). In "Animula", once the soul is remade by the hands of time (l. 24) it loses its vigour, its capacity for decision and action, growing ungrateful in such stagnation (ll. 25-28) just as Gerontion is reticent about faith after having lost its initial passion. Yet despite reflecting on the heavy losses caused by maturing, neither of Baudelaire's and Eliot's poems take shelter in the realm of idealised childhood. If anything, they add to the horrors of life the assurance of the futility of trying to avoid change and to return to any point before the fleeting present to recover the actual impression of an experience in the moment when it occurred.

Marina

As we advance through the Ariel Poems, we grow certain of the constancy of the two mentioned motifs that underlie the unity of the sequence: the ambiguity and tension between birth and death and the line of argumentation followed in this essay, the mutability and irretrievability of experience, belief and vision. This understanding, seen in the multiple spheres that it comprises, has become central to the development of "Animula" and has found additional support in the intertextual references proposed. However, "Marina" initially presents some difficulties for an approach based on the study of experience and its changes.

In the first two poems, the *personae*'s outpourings on paper and in prayer take place after the moment of revelation and thus allow us to reflect on its transformation in the case of the Magus, and on the possibility of preventing its loss in that of Simeon. "Animula" presents instead a speaker who, from a transcendent position, one privileged with both hindsight and foresight, covers the range of experience that stretches between birth and death. The case of "Marina" diverges due to its immediacy; we enter the dream-like world of the poem at the same time as the speaker is awoken into it. Therefore, the poem should be approached from the understanding that in "Marina" we are witnessing a moment of revelation for the speaker, one related to the concept of recognition as used in drama. Such a perspective is deduced from Eliot's deployment of the 'recognition scenes' of Shakespeare's *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*[28] and Seneca's *Hercules Furens* as the textual foundations of his poem. In fact, the analysis of "Marina" will throw light on how the transmutation resulting from the visionary moment reaches out to the textual dimension, reflecting how the notions of drama established by Aristotle are reshaped in the promising renewal felt in the poem.

The understanding of the poem as the enactment of revelation could also be viewed from another angle, Bergson's theory, which would also serve as a partial explanation of the uniqueness of "Marina" compared with the rest of the Ariel Poems. Bergson's framework would enable us to analyse the poem as a dramatization of the interaction of "pure memory" and "pure perception" –whose synthesis, we should recall, "concrete perception", is the intuition or epiphany– in the moment of mnemonic recognition. According to Bergson, the process of recognition by images is not based on "a mechanical awakening of memories" but rather on the selection by consciousness of images "in pure memory in order to materialize them progressively" by integrating them in the present perception (317).[29] The criteria for the selection is based on the similarity of the past image to the experience perceived (Bergson 114), overcoming the inhibition that practical consciousness otherwise effects over memories. Thus, the moment of recognition in "Marina" is the result of the representation of Pericles' identification of the voice and face of his daughter, which brings the images of the past back to him by the correspondence of perception and memory, past and present, in the moment of

[28] Scholars maintain with a degree of certainty that the authorship of the play can only be attributed to Shakespeare from Act III onwards (Hoeniger liii), while some aspects of the choruses seem to point towards Shakespeare's signature, though not so certainly. (Hoeniger liv-lv). For the convenience of the present work, however, only Shakespeare will be mentioned

[29] For a description of this process, see this thesis pp. 13-14.

intuition/recognition. By applying Bergonian theory to the reading of the poem, these complementary recollections, the images that return (l. 4), are aimed at completing with further details the chosen memory, a process that involves more than mere juxtaposition; it consist in "transporting ourselves to a wider plane of consciousness, in going away from action in the direction of dream" (Bergson 322). Of equal significance for "Marina" and its oneiric imagery is that to Bergson, if the images of the past stored in "pure memory" were not inhibited they might "distort the practical character of life, mingling dream with reality"(Bergson 97) since "Past images […] are the images of idle fancy or of dream:" (Bergson 130). Any reader familiar with *Pericles* is aware of the significance of dreams and of the oneiric atmosphere that covers the play's recognition scene, which also characterises "Marina."

A survey of the textual sources is essential for the understanding of the poem, especially in the case of *Pericles*, as some of the plays' events become hazy and dim elements of "Marina". As this title makes evidently clear, the main reference of the poem is Shakespeare's *Pericles*, the story of the fortunes and misfortunes of the prince of Tyre, which is adapted from one of the best-known medieval romances, *The History of Apollonius, King of Tyre*, collected in the *Gesta Romanorum*, and in John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (Hoeniger xiii). The play, introduced by the character of John Gower himself,[30] presents the several reversals of fortune of Pericles during his voyages at sea. With his life threatened by assassins, Pericles embarks on a journey in which, after being cast adrift during a storm, he meets and marries Thaisa. As they are sailing back to Pericles' kingdom, Thaisa dies –or so it seems– in childbirth during another storm. Pericles leaves his newborn daughter, Marina, in the custody of Cleon and his wife, Dionyza, who years later attempts to kill Marina. Despite the failure of the assassination, Pericles is informed of the death of his daughter and falls into a depressive trance. The last reversal takes place during Neptune's Day –Neptunalia, a feast celebrated on the 23rd of July– in which by chance Marina is sent to comfort the dazed King with her music and voice. Pericles finally recognises his daughter –this being the scene chosen by Eliot for the poem– and, after receiving a vision from Diana, he sets sail for Diana's Temple, where her wife, found and restored to health by Cerimon the physician –also through the medium

[30]The recurrent reliance on archaic vocabulary and several paraphrases from Gower's *Confessio Amantis* have led Hoeniger to affirm that the dramatist is embodying Gower as if the poet had been "reincarnated" (xix); as if the play was Gower's retelling of the story, the events of the stage being the representation of what he is narrating (Hoeniger lxvvii)

of music– resides as a priestess. A second recognition scene ensues and the family is reunited at last.

As a result, *Pericles* reflects a view of life as the passive acceptance of the will of the gods and the stoic endurance of the trials that they impose over the human subject, who finds renewal after the ordeal. Consider, for instance, Pericles humble submission to the designs of the gods in the different storm scenes (Shakespeare, *Pericles* II. i. ll. 1-5; III. i. ll. 1-6) and after the loss of his daughter: "We cannot but obey / The powers above us" (Shakespeare, *Pericles* III. iii. ll. 9-10). This view is not so distanced from Simeon's subservience to God's Will, fulfilling the idea put forth by Marco Lombardo and Piccarda in the *Comedy*. In fact, in his analysis of *Pericles* and the rest of Shakespeare's last plays, Knight affirms that in this group of works "tragedy is merging into mysticism" (13). He compares them precisely to Dante's "Paradise" (Knight 30) in that in both we see the reflections of the "mystic truth from which are born the dogmas of the Catholic Church—the incarnation in actuality of the Divine Logos of Poetry: […] the tragic ministry and death, and the resurrection of the Christ" (Knight 31). With more caution than Knight, Hoeniger admits that though *Pericles* is a play "secular in content and intention." (Hoeniger lxxxviii) one cannot help but to be reminded of the "traditional Christian view of the sufferings man must undergo before he can gain access to a full vision of God's goodness and purpose for him." (Hoeniger lxxxvii)

That Eliot links Pericles with *Hercules Furens* should not be surprising, given the significance that Eliot assigns to the influence of Seneca, as the major representative of roman stoicism in Latin literature, over Elizabethan drama ("Shakespeare" 131) and the Elizabethan mind ("Seneca" 65). In addition, Seneca's work presents a similar setting that *Pericles* based on human endurance and suffering at the hands of the gods. In *Hercules Furens*, Juno, frustrated at Hercules' success in fulfilling each of the famous Twelve Labours that she has imposed over him, states her plan to turn Hercules against himself and his family through madness as a form of revenge on Jupiter. After returning victorious from the underworld, Hercules is forced to deal with Lycus, a tyrant who has taken over Thebes and is threatening the lives of his family. Succeeding once again, Hercules' fortunes are reverted when Juno achieves her goal: a spell of frenzy is cast upon Hercules and he kills his wife and children. Awakening from his madness and recognising the corpses of his loved ones, Hercules decides to commit suicide but is prevented by Theseus who convinces him to atone for his sins in Athens.

The parallels between the two plays are easily drawn, since both present a view on life as based on the obligation to endure or overcome the trials and ordeals devised by the gods and by human wickedness, which result in momentary glimpses of good fortune until the eventual reversal exacerbates the tragedy of the action. They significantly differ, however, in the aftermath: in *Hercules Furens* suffering has no end, while in *Pericles* pain is the path that leads to joy and salvation. In that regard, Aaron Riches argues that while *Hercules Furens* presents "a classical recognition scene that confirms Aristotelian catharsis" and its "peripeteia" for the hero, in "Marina" this "tragic catharsis" is transformed into "a new recognition of the deeper mystery" of "being in new life." (204, 211)

"Marina" quickly suggests the comparison between the fundaments of these two plays through the title's allusion to *Pericles* and by quoting Seneca's work in the epigraph. The lines quoted belong to the very moment when Hercules is awakening from his frenzy (Seneca, V, ll. 1138-1139), which explains the disorientation felt by the speaker of the poem, and which finds parallel in Pericles' coming into consciousness (Shakespeare, *Pericles* V, i, 97-103). Yet the insistent inquisitiveness of Pericles during the recognition scene of the play finds no analogy in the speaker of "Marina", who but for a single question (ll. 17-19) seems either unconcerned with finding answers, enjoying his restoration into sensuous life, or is too excited and confused to be able to frame the appropriate questions. The first two lines set the scene for the poem by synthesising the maritime elements –the coastal geographical features, water, and nautical references– present throughout the text, echoing *Pericles'* scenery. These two lines also cast some light on the identity of the voices integrated within the *persona*, in addition to that of Pericles. Despite the significance of the allusion to Seneca's play, the fact that Eliot does not include the quote of the epigraph within the body of the poem as in the previous Ariel Poems might indicate that he is using *Hercules Furens* only for contrastive purposes. However, the first two lines of the poem find parallels in the play, when Hercules wonders in what waters could he be purified from his crime: "What Tanaïs, what Nile, what Tigris, raging with Persian torrents, what warlike Rhine, or Tagus, […] can cleanse this hands?" (Seneca, V, ll. 1322-1326) The lines find another correlation in *Pericles*, specifically in Gower's chorus: "What pageantry, what feats, what shows, / What minstrelsy, and pretty din," (Shakespeare, *Pericles* V, ii, ll. 6-7). This design might indicate that the

amalgamated *persona* integrates the protagonists of both works as well as the composers (Gower, Seneca and Shakespeare) of the three hypotexts alluded.[31]

Marina's recognition, both in the play and in the poem, cannot but be considered a "redemptive" moment of vision. If in the play, Pericles recovers his senses after years of haze and receives the vision that allows him to be reunited with his lost wife, in the poem, the recognition of Marina's face causes "an experience of *anamnesis* in the fullest sense: illumination before the deepest mystery of being," (Riches 204). The *persona* recovers "images" (l. 4) that probably were lost to him as he awakens into sensuous experience. In that sense, we might recall MacFarlane's description of *anagnorisis* (367), understood as analogous to the moment of revelation, as an instant that stretches towards the past and the future of the subject: the synthesis of the returning memories with the promising future: "The awakened, lips parted, the hope, the new ships." (l. 32) This moment of recovery for the speaker opposes Hercules' "catastrophic" recognition, a comparison sought by Eliot to underline a contrast between life and death (*Letters vol.3* 270).

Indeed, in "Marina" the other major motif of the Ariel sequence, the ambiguity between birth and death, assumes the centrality of the poem and its intertext. This is not surprising considering that *Pericles* prominently features the same contrast, the birth of Marina and the apparent death of Thaisa during the second storm that Thaisa recalls in her question to his husband "[…] Did you not name a tempest,/ A birth and death?" (Shakespeare, *Pericles* V, iii, ll. 32-34) In the poem, alongside the renewal brought by the remembered sensations, the *persona* reflects on a series of cryptic remarks (ll. 6-13) that might strike as allegorical, all of which point towards death; a fragment that Moody, claims to be "based upon a Highland charm or exorcism" familiar to Eliot (154). Indeed, the fragment sounds incantatory, echoing the cadence of prayer, which would reinforce the connection to *Pericles* by appealing to the ritualistic and liturgical elements found by Eliot in the recognition scene of the play (1937 qtd. Ricks and McCue 773). Likewise, this incantation synergises with the character of the lines to which, according to Ricks

[31] A further analogy can be established in relation to the epigraph's lines. Compare Seneca's "What place is this? What region, […] of the world? Where am I? (V, ll. 1138-1140) with Shakespeare's "O dear Diana, Where am I? Where's my lord? What world is this?" (*Pericles* III, ii, l. 107) quoted *exactly* from Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (421). If, as Andrew Galloway affirms, in "In Praise of Peace" Gower is "not quoting Seneca but speaking as if he *were* Seneca" (276), just as *Pericles*' dramatist is trying to impersonate Gower, perhaps Eliot is making a self-referential nod to highlight the illusive nature of dramatic and poetic impersonation, previously exposed in "Journey of the Magi."

and McCue (777), this fragment may refer: the multiple repetition of the formula "She, she, is dead; she's dead:" in the first of John Donne's *The Anniversaries* (275, 276, 279-281). In "The First Anniversary: An Anatomy of the World", the poetic voice performs a figurative post-mortem of the world, which he deems corrupted and dead since the death of Elizabeth Drury, the girl that the poem honours (Donne, *Anniversaries* 272). As an embodiment of all Christian virtues, the speaker turns her into an antidote to the Fall, which condemned humankind and the world to their state of ruin (Donne, *Anniversaries* 273, 275), and thus the last hope for Earth's renewal is lost (Donne, *Anniversaries* 280). In such hopelessness, the speaker finally rejoices over the fact that each year will hold the celebrations over "thy second birth/that is, thy death." since, though the human soul "be got when man is made," in fact it is "born but then/ When man doth die." (Donne, *Anniversaries* 282) These two remarks present a vision of death exact to that of "Animula", the idea that in death and Christian salvation lies the only hope to avoid the degradation of the soul, and prefigures the conclusion of the speaker in "The Cultivation of Christmas Trees" as will be seen.

Donne's poem depicts a dying world, beyond hope and salvation, which could very well be the one where Hercules inhabits and where Pericles dwelt until the recognition of Marina. Thus, the poem's Christian idealisation of Elizabeth Drury could be understood as counterpart to the idealisation of Marina in Shakespeare's play and in Eliot's poem, Donne's underlining loss while the other two, hope. This is best seen when Pericles compares her to "Patience gazing on king's graves, and smiling / Extremity out of act." (*Pericles* V. i. ll. 137-139), a metaphor that implies salvation regardless of how it is interpreted. Moreover, these lines have been linked by Knight to St. Paul's words (1 *Corinthians* 15: 55), clarifying that "Patience is here an all-enduring calm seeing *through* tragedy to the end; smiling through endless death to everlasting living eternity." (Knight 65).

In fact, Donne also presents a similar view in the second poem, "The Second Anniversary: Of the Progress of the Soul" in which the speaker partly has abandoned his dejection to reflect on the hopes that are in store for the human soul after its release from mortality. In conversation with his own soul, the poetic voice exhorts it to forget about worldly life and relish instead on the future that awaits for it (Donne, *Anniversaries* 289), seeing in death the only glimmer of hope and light, as well as the liberation of the soul from its imprisonment (Donne, *Anniversaries* 292). He imagines his own process of

dying, taking conform in the suffering and the gradual dissolution of life (Donne, *Anniversaries* 290). Death is to him a joy, as he would change the "accidental joys" of mortal life for the essential joy (Donne, *Anniversaries* 297). The former are transitory and finite since such is the nature of existence, which he compares to the waters of a river (Donne, *Anniversaries* 297-298), evincing again parallelisms with "Animula" and the cross reference to the Doctrine of Flux. On the contrary, essential joy, like God Himself, cannot "suffer diminution" (Donne 1976: 299) and is permanent: "Joy of a soul's arrival ne'er decays;/ For that soul ever joys and ever stays." (Donne *Anniversaries* 300) The girl becomes analogous to Knight's understanding of Marina when she is praised as one whose virtue and purity made the world a heaven through which essential joy could be reached, a Joy that finds the ultimate expression in the approach of the Resurrection (Donne, *Anniversaries* 300).

Working in tandem with the rest of alluded texts in "Marina", Donne's poem also reprises the contrast between death and life, joy and suffering that takes over the centrality of the Ariel Poem's themes. Yet this significance is not assumed because said topic eclipses the subject of the transmutation of experience but due to the fusion of both motifs through the sequence, a union completed in "Marina" and its intertext. Donne's progress of the soul precisely reinforces the conclusions derived from the study of the second and the third of the Ariel Poems highlighting how in the Christian view of death, experiences and feelings become immutable.

After his sudden realisation the speaker's *memento mori* becomes "[…] unsubstantial, reduced by a wind" (l. 14), a line that, according to Riches (204), might refer to the breath of Jesus (*John* 20: 22) and God's breath in *Genesis* (1: 2; 2: 7), and also related to the wind mentioned by Gerontion and by Simeon. He continues by stating that the wind is also a source of suffering, being the element that causes the several storms and the separation of Pericles' family, which overall "reinforces the awakening of the speaker to the recognition of his own fragility of being, the reality of his dying as a means to rebirth." (Riches 204). This realisation could be considered the "grace" that dissolves the speaker's concern with death. At the same time, this dissolution echoes Prospero's fading "insubstantial pageant" in *The Tempest*, which emphasises the ephemeral and fabricated nature of art and of material existence (Shakespeare, *Tempest* IV, i, ll. 146-158).

The moment of revelation continues by following closely the development of *Pericles*' recognition scene, as the speaker pronounces a question (ll. 17-18) similar to that of Pericles when he asks his daughter "But are you flesh and blood?/Have you a working pulse, and are no fairy" (Shakespeare, *Pericles* V, i, 152-154). The conclusion of the *persona*'s question, "Given or lent? more distant than stars and nearer than the eye" (l. 19) constitutes, for Ricks and McCue, a reference to Tennyson's "To J.S." and "The Higher Pantheism" (778-779). In the former, the poetic voice attempts to comfort a friend for the loss she has suffered through faith. He commences by remarking on the transience of earthly love, its origin in the creator that grants it to us temporarily, "God give us love. Something to love/He lends us;…" (Tennyson, "To J. S." 59), since "This is the curse of time. Alas!" Note that the verbs used in the first line quoted are those mentioned in "Marina." He concludes by affirming that he would be glad to change places with the dead to rest in peace, in a sleep "[…] secure of change." (Tennyson, "To J. S." 60) In "The Higher Pantheism", the speaker converses with his Soul, arguing that the material world is but a reflection –unreal– of God's Vision, the token of the separation of the Soul from God (Tennyson, "Higher" 222-223). He blames his soul for "Making Him broken gleams", emphasizing man's incapacity to hear and see, and commends it to speak to God, since "Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet." (Tennyson, "Higher" 223), line that links it to "Marina." Both texts present a vision of life in the material world as transitory, taking comfort in the realisation of God's benevolence and Love towards humanity, rejoicing in the finite nature of existence as the preliminary stage in the transit to a better and higher form of being.

Essential to this process of ascendance is the understanding that "The *misericordia* of the Paschal Mystery does not erase the wounds of old age, human suffering, or the injury of sin, it transfigures them in forgiveness and the second gift of life graced with meaning beyond the horizon of death." (Riches 211) The *persona* of "Marina" acknowledges such fact when he remarks in the ravages of time over the ship mentioned, a metaphor for his own body (ll. 25, 26), and the final hope offered in the renewal of "the new ships" (l. 32) in what could be considered an echo of Baudelaire's "Le Voyage". Riches claims that just

> as the resurrected Christ bears forever the wounds of his death and crucifixion, so the new life of Pericles bears within it death in restored life. […] death is not the

> last word, but neither is death evaded nor is its tragic fact negated; death is transformed into the means of new life." (203)

In his reunion with Marina in Neptune's Feast –"Between one June and another September." (l. 26)– Eliot's Pericles embraces "the fact that life is loss." in the acceptance of the "unknown" (l. 27) as his own creation (Moody 156), rejoicing in the combined realisation of his own mortality and of a promised transcendence in the form and life of Marina (ll. 28-29). The epiphany of the moment of revelation has led him to conclude by resigning, like Simeon, to his mortal existence for the promised life and to resign "my [his] speech for that unspoken," (l. 31).[32] Thus, Eliot's Pericles is an individual who, like Marina, is (re)born at sea.

In each of the Ariel Poems studied so far, Eliot has been deploying two out of the three voices of poetry referred to in the homonymous essay, merging and alternating between different forms and modes. "Marina" is possibly very different in that respect; it is perhaps Eliot's closest approximation to actual dramatic poetry (that is, the type used in verse drama) outside of a play. In the opening stanza, because of the poem's style and imagery, it would appear that Eliot has opted for an unmediated lyric voice – for the first of his Voices of Poetry, in other words. Indeed, the poem could be viewed as an expression of the author's need to render into words a particular sensation (Eliot, "Three Voices" 97), in which some of the poet's thoughts and sentiments are woven into the fabric of the work but being partially effaced in the composition (Eliot, "Three Voices" 97). Ricks and McCue (776) have identified the "woodthrush singing" with the "song of one bird" that Eliot mentioned in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (Eliot 148), a text that as seen in "Journey" exposes some of the biographical material used by Eliot in his poems. They also indicate that in one of the drafts for "Marina", Eliot had included "Roque Island", Maine, but removed it –and admitted to be glad for doing so– for the final version (Ricks and McCue 776). Indeed, in a letter to McKnight Kauffer July, 24th 1930 Eliot acknowledged that Casco Bay, Maine, is the setting of "Marina" (*Letters vol.3* 270). Both elements point towards the presence of Eliot's voice and self within the composition; however, one should note how the final design differs from both proper lyrical poetry and from its combination with dramatic monologue as in "Journey of the Magi."

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[32] In the renounce to his speech there can be heard echoes to Prospero's abjuration of his powers (Shakespeare, *Tempest* V, i, ll. 33- 57).

If we compare Eliot's use of the same biographical material in "Marina" and in "Journey" it is clear that in the former he does not want us to recognise "the incompleteness of the illusion" inherent to dramatic monologue (Eliot, "Three Voices" 95) as he did in the first of the Ariel sequence. In addition, he effaced the possible last trace of overt biographical references for the final version of the later work. However, the fact that he resorts to the device of *persona* implies that he intends to combine the first and the second voices of poetry, as in the rest of the Ariel Poems. Yet unlike in the previous works, he also makes use of the third voice in that Eliot is not identifying the character with himself, as he did in the cases of the Magus/Andrewes, or Lombardo, but himself with the character (Eliot, "Three Voices" 91). Putting it bluntly, "Marina" fulfils all the necessary conditions that might make it amount to an example of the third voice as he established in his essay: to speak "within the limits of one imaginary character addressing another imaginary character." (Eliot, "Three Voices" 89) In other words, he is not merely aiming to represent what a father might feel when recovering his daughter after years, but the specific feelings of the reunion between Shakespeare's Pericles and Marina.

Such conclusion is possible if we observe that he fits the poetry to the character's nature (Eliot, "Three Voices" 95), reflecting the disorientation and the joy of Pericles, as previously disclosed. He also renders his poem both oneiric, as Shakespeare's recognition scene is (*Pericles* V, i, ll. 161-253), and as musical as the romances are.[33] This is heard for instance in use of anaphora in the allusive first stanza (ll. 1-5), in the incantatory fragment "meaning/Death" (ll. 6-13), or in the profusion of certain sounds in lines like "Bowsprit cracked with ice and paint cracked with heat." (l. 22) Eliot commented on Shakespeare's musicality in "Poetry and Drama" in which he stated that "At such moments [of greatest intensity], we touch the border of those feelings which only music can express. We can never emulate music, because to arrive at the condition of music would be the annihilation of poetry, and especially of dramatic poetry." ("Poetry" 86-87) According to Eliot, this was precisely what Shakespeare was attempting to achieve in his last plays, and, in turn, "Marina" could be regarded likewise.

[33] In her analysis of *The* Tempest, Russ McDonald argues that the play's musicality and its "incantatory appeal" is common to all Shakespeare's romances, affirming that part of this character is produced by lexical repetition and alliteration (97-98), two features that are indeed found in Eliot's "Marina."

In addition, thanks to its intertext, "Marina" presents the possibility to reflect on the evolution of drama that results from the opportunities that arose for the representation of human tragedy with the Paschal mystery. From the reference to Seneca, taking into account its influence over Elizabethan drama, we are able to study not only the dramatic representation of roman stoicism but also the "Greek ethics […] underneath the Roman stoicism (Eliot, "Shakespeare" 133); reflecting on the "delicate shades" that bind and separate the fatalism of Greek, Latin and Elizabethan tragedy (Eliot, "Shakespeare" 134). The choice of *Pericles* also brings into the discussion the Christian dimension of medieval romances like *Apollonius of Tyre* and its syncretisation with Greek mythology (Pickford 600-607); and of medieval miracle plays, given their significant influence over English drama (Hoeniger lxxxix) and, specifically over *Pericles* (Hoeniger lxxxviii).

This transformation of the traditional forms of tragedy concentrates on the changes in the implications of catharsis. Riches contends that Shakespeare's last plays transform Aristotle's concept of tragedy since

> [they] dramatize a uniquely Christian recapitulation of tragedy in which […] a new catharsis is realized in the dramatic experience of forgiveness and return of a loved one thought to be dead. This new Christian catharsis does not negate the meaningful drama of tragedy, but draws it up to a greater experience of meaning realized in *misericordia* (199)

In this renewal of the traditional form of tragedy, defined by Aristotle in his *Poetics*,[34] the implications of catharsis –inseparable from the "cultic root" of Greek tragedy and the understanding of ancient Greek drama as a religious ritual (Riches 200)– are re-evaluated and integrated into a Christian viewpoint. The process, however, remains the same in that through the combination of the suffering experienced after the reversal of fortune and the release produced by the recognition scene, the audience reaches a moment of catharsis. What is being altered is the quality of this instant of purgation in the evolution from pathos to mercy and the integration of the Christian view on suffering, best represented by Dante's *Comedy*. In it, both sides of suffering are represented: as the punishment to sinners, in which torment arises from their own "perpetually perverted

[34] Aristotle defines tragedy as the "imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certaing magnitude;" that "through pity and fear" effects "the proper purgation of these emotions" –i.e. catharsis– (1902: 23), which is essential for the play alongside "Peripeteia or Reversal of intention, and Recognition Scenes" (1902: 27).

nature" (Eliot, "Dante" 255), and as the means to be purified and reach a higher state in beatitude (Eliot, "Dante" 256). In both cases, it is a feeling that emanates from God's Love, as shown in the inscription of Hell's Gate: "I was the invention of the power of God/Of his wisdom, and of his primal love." (Alighieri 55) This idea lies at the heart of most of the texts alluded in the poem and in the present study, being the driving force behind the combination of the birth and death represented by the recognition scenes of *Pericles* and *Hercules Furens*, respectively. In regard to this fusion, Riches affirms that

> [it] turns the logic of tragedy inside out to open up a new and unfathomable vision beyond good and evil, comedy and tragedy: a vision of new life born through death. In 'Marina' this means that the daughter brings […] some kind of recognition of death in the tragic fact of finite being, while yet the father experiences the birth of *misericordia* that lies in the far side of death: (203)

The Cultivation of Christmas Trees

With the last poem of the sequence, "The Cultivation of Christmas Trees" , we come full circle as the work resumes the narrative of the Nativity to put an end, and a beginning, to the two major themes of the Ariel Poems that have become entangled with the unfolding of the sequence. In this case, however, there is no need for a mask; Eliot opts for a twentieth century speaker who ponders on the Nativity and on the representation and attitudes towards it in his society. Much in the manner of Simeon, the speaker drops almost any pretension of individuality, with the exception of a brief first person interjection in the thanksgiving to St. Lucy (ll. 25-26), assuming the collective for the rest of the poem. In that regard, the poem combines the styles of meditative reflection and sermon. The speaker invites the audience to join him in his contemplation but in contrast to the Magus' unsolved questions he has reached his own conclusions that he provides for the audience, thus employing the second voice of poetry that Eliot identifies in didactic works ("Three Voices" 96). As the title indicates, the central element of the inquiry is the Christmas tree, an object that also serves the speaker to underline the transmutation of symbols and traditions simultaneous to his reflection on the changes in the perspective of individuals as they age.

In their study of the poem's textual sources, Ricks and McCue have collected a series of excerpts that delineate Eliot's stance concerning Christmas and religious drama.

In regard to the former, in a letter to Geoffrey Curtis, dated December, 21th 1944, Eliot expresses his difficulty to bear "the non-religious observance of Christmas" except when one is "among [Christian] little children" since "with children there is a seemly congruity between the religious and non-religious" (Eliot qtd. Ricks and McCue 780). In "Religious Drama: Medieval and Modern" (1937), Eliot emphasizes the dangers of the compartmentalisation between secular and religious drama as part of a widespread division between "our religious and ordinary life" (13 qtd. Del Dotto 110). Although Eliot appeals for a "reintegration" of the two spectrums of drama and identity, he clarifies that this "reintegration" is not to be confused with "simplification", or with a return to the frame of mind of a society from the Middle Ages (13-14 qtd. Del Dotto 112). This qualification is also noticed in his description of the medieval attitude towards Christmas, which he believes to have been "a fusion of piety with the excitement of the child's annual Christmas pantomime, and the larking spirit of a bank holiday" that he thinks "unsuitable to the twentieth century" (1937 qtd. Ricks and McCue 781)

In this last remark, Eliot stresses the impossibility, and perhaps the undesirability, of returning to a mind-set from the past, yet unlike in former years one cannot but trace a nuance of yearning for an idealised vision of the Middle Ages, which to him was an era "specially favoured" due to the stability of faith and devotion (8 qtd. Del Dotto 113). Such is the view of Charles J. Del Dotto, who maintains that Eliot's characterization of the period "is built on contradiction" in that this nostalgic expression is drenched in "the ideology of romanticism," (108) that Eliot strove against throughout his career. Proof of that struggle is, as previously seen, the stance that the *persona* of "Journey of the Magi" assumed in regard to Christian mythmaking, as well as the dismissive attitude of the *persona* of "Animula" –and of Eliot himself as previously quoted– towards the romanticisation of childhood. Given that in the latter poem Eliot alludes to Plato's exposition of Heraclitus' Doctrine of Flux in *Cratylus*, he had to be aware that any attempt to return to a point in the past is an illusion. Perhaps in the two decades that separates the poems he has concluded that, though illusive, this idealisation might still serve a purpose. Eliot was no stranger to such way of thought since it was precisely the standpoint of Andrewes in his adaptation of the Magi for his Nativity Sermon (XV). It is quite fitting indeed for a series of poems that represent the transformation of human experience through time that its composer not only evinces in the texts the gradual evolution of his own stance, but the complete reversal of his previous ideas.

The inconsistency that Del Dotto indicates finds a parallel in the several contradictions upon which, according to Neil Armstrong, rest the Christmas holiday: the apparent authenticity of the past as opposed to the present, the commercial versus the familial and the "tension between sacred and secular celebrations" (Armstrong 487). In fact, these aspects lie at the core of Eliot's poem and of his speaker's opinion, who attempts to resolve said contradictions through the synthesis of mature and infant experience, of the origins and the modern development of Christmas and through the syncretism of Christianism and secularism, as parallel to that of Christianism and Paganism.

In the manner of a social commentator, the speaker presents his opinions on the various "attitudes towards Christmas" (l. 1), dismissing those that are markedly secular (ll. 2-4). In contrast to them, there stands the perspective of the child. The speaker promptly clarifies that one should never confuse the "childish" from the perspective of the child "For whom the candle is a star, and the gilded angel/ […] Is not only a decoration, but an angel." (ll. 6, 8) This qualification partly recalls the criticism towards the Wordsworthian remembrance and representation of childhood found by Moody and by Ricks and McCue in "Animula." However, in the evolution of his own perspective, Eliot has lost indeed the firmness of his former stance; though the poetic voice clarifies that these two views should never be confused, he hopes that the child's perspective could be prolonged. He recommends fostering the "spirit of wonder" in children (l. 10) "So that the reverence and the gaiety/May not be forgotten in later experience," (ll. 18-19). Granted, a desire to remember is not the same as the wishful thinking of believing in the complete permanence of emotions and experiences, yet in his speech we might detect a desire to recover part of that magic in its original state.

In that regard, the speaker's stance is ingrained in several discourses of the nineteenth century. One of these is Coleridge's advocacy for a progressive education for children, emphasising "the emotions generated by the children's joy" which contributed to the establishment of Christmas "as a children's festival" and to "the romanticization of childhood" during that century (Armstrong 491). According to Armstrong, in "Christmas within Doors, in the North of Germany" (1809), Coleridge identifies children "as active agents whose performance could inspire emotion in adults." and who in their future would try "to recapture the emotions of their own childhood Christmases." (491) The inspiring aspects of Eliot's poem are indeed based on such idea in that, given the impossibility to

retrieve the child's innocence, adults may still attempt to recover some of their own past joy from the reflection in the child's gaiety and awe.

By the mid-nineteenth century this discourse was integrated into the two trends that characterised Victorian Christmas: the religious appreciation of the holidays, focused on Christian imagery and symbolism mainly through the analogy between the Christmas tree and Christ (Armstrong 495), and the secular, often linked to materialist consumerism. According to Armstrong, these two were so equally established that mid-Victorians "could ascribe Christian symbolism to material artefacts", an ability that subsequent generations mistook for "evidence of an enduring pagan characteristic of a midwinter festival existing since time immemorial, or as representative of a modern secular-consumer society." (496) An example of this trend is Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Tree", a story that shows quite a few similarities to Eliot's poem.

In the tale, the narrator gives in to nostalgia to recall and relate the memories of his childhood Christmases, describing with the utmost detail the toys and decorations – among them a Jacob's ladder–, the books, the ghost stories and carols of his past, as the eye of his memory moves from the bottom of the tree to its top. Wordsworth's ideas concerning childhood and memory are a clear influence over the narrator who uses these remembrances as a source of future comfort (Dickens 105) and believes that "this jocular conceit will live in my remembrance fresh and unfading […] unto the end of time" (Dickens 119). Likewise, the narrator is trying to recapture the child's view. He does this by replicating the child's fancy through which "all common things become uncommon and enchanted […] all rings are talismans […] flower pots are treasures" (Dickens 115) and "the tree itself changes, and becomes a bean-stalk." (Dickens 112) The narrator is establishing a metaphor in which the tree is no longer regarded as an object but as the means "by which we climbed into real life." (Dickens 105). This stair is built out of the allusions to "Jack and the Bean-stalk", to Jacob's Ladder from the *Genesis* (28: 10-17) and through the narrative's ascension up the tree. This "real life" is none other but that enunciated in the works of Dante, Donne, Andrewes as well as in the previous Ariel Poems in which they were cited, the ascension of humanity towards Eternal Bliss in Heaven.

The ascension through the upper branches, whose decorations are seen under "a fairy light" (Dickens 117) culminates when he reaches the treetop, point at which he implores to "let the benignant figure of my childhood stand unchanged!" wishing that the

tree's star "be the Star of all the Christian World!" (Dickens 138), an analogy between Christ and the star drawn from the Christian exegesis of *Numbers* (24: 17). These lines join once again the two motifs studied throughout the Ariel Poems, the steadiness of one's experiences and feelings in the promise of Eternal Salvation. His final thoughts rest upon Mary and Christ in a plea in which he asks that even in his old age he may "turn a child's heart to that figure [Christ] yet, and a child's trustfulness and confidence!" (Dickens 138). The prayer of Dickens' narrator is answered by "a whisper going through the leaves" that confirms the poem to be in honour of Christ (Dickens 138), and that might recall the "Whispers and small laughter between leaves and hurrying feet" of "Marina" (l. 20).

Through the mirage of the child's fancy, which confounds "the actual and the fanciful" as the *persona* of "Animula" would have said (l. 13), the narrator is able to access the symbolical and allegorical dimension that lies beyond material life, which is precisely what the speaker of the last Ariel contribution is entreating us to cultivate. Knowing that experience is impermanent, the speaker is pleading with his audience to foster in ourselves and our children the awe and veneration for the true meaning of Christmas –or what he deems it to be– to ease the transition to an existence where feelings are steadied in the essential joy of Salvation that Donne described in *The Anniversaries*. Instrumental to this design is the moment of revelation in which "the beginning shall remind us of the end/And the first coming of the second coming." (ll. 33-34) If we consider these lines along with the speaker's hope that "The accumulated memories of annual emotion/May be concentrated into a great joy" (ll. 29-30) the speaker's overall design can be grasped. He is establishing a reciprocal relation between the observance of holidays and the meaning of the commemorated events. In it, the yearly celebration of Christmas and Advent, as representatives of the First and the Second Coming become the means through which to arrive at, and perhaps even replicate, the moment of vision, which in turn reveals the significance that lies beneath them: an awareness of the interdependence of birth and death. The speaker, then, moves to indicate the centrality of this symbiosis within Christian teachings, materialised in the figure of Christ, his birth, sacrifice and resurrection and the transformation of this narrative and figure in their integration into the Christmas holidays.

This reflection starts with the speaker's concluding lines (ll. 33-34), which refer to the book of *Revelation* (21: 6), the account of the Second Coming and the Last Judgment and thus the conclusion of the biblical narrative started in the *Genesis*. The

exegesis of *Revelation* (2: 7; 22: 2) established the Tree of Life of *Genesis* (2: 9) as a symbol for Jesus,[35] who for Christians also represents the ladder that connects the world with Heaven described in Jacob's vision. The synthesis of both allegories seen in Dickens's story, in fact, constitutes a conceit recurrent in Western Christian literature. This conceit was essential in the evangelisation of the different cultures of Europe, which was brought to fruition thanks to the syncretism of the Christian doctrine and the various cults, mythologies and traditions of these societies. The elaboration of the analogy between Christ, the Cross and the Tree is best exemplified in "The Dream of the Rood" (c. 700), a poem that "dramatizes the precise moment when the Old-Anglian World Tree became the Christian Rood (Ó Carragáin and North 171).[36] In the poem, a vision is granted to the narrator, in which he sees a tree "suffused with light" ("Dream" l. 5) adorned with gold ("Dream" l. 7), gems ("Dream" l. 18), five jewels ("Dream" l. 9) and, later on, decorated with "gold and silver." ("Dream" l. 91). In these elements one cannot but recall the actual representation of an adorned Christmas tree, which would render the speaker's "[…]first-remembered Christmas Tree," ("Dream" l. 13) not as a reference to his own memories but to the actual first remembered tree, the Rood. In fact, such appears to be the case in that, based on Thomas Becket's first sermon in *Murder in the Cathedral* (Eliot 260-262). Concerning that specific section of the play, Moody asserts, "In Eliot's mind the Christmas tree becomes one with Christ's cross." (132)

This glorious sight of "The Saviour's tree" ("Dream" l. 26) alternates with the macabre representation of the tree as "drenched with flowing gore" ("Dream" l. 24), imagery that appeals to the dichotomy birth/death. Afterwards, the tree begins to speak and relates him the account of the Crucifixion, presenting itself as the Cross that "[…] held high/The Noble King, the Lord of heaven above" ("Dream" ll. 51-52). As Ó Carragáin and North explain, in Anglo-Saxon paganism "there was a tree persona […] with which the heathens, or the missionaries […] portrayed the Cross" that eased the "inculturation of the 'Tree of Life' (Latin *arbor vitae*) into a heathen culture." (164) The poem also shows how the figure of Christ is added into the synthesis of these two elements. On the one hand, in the moment of His death, Christ and the Cross start to become a unity (Ó Carragáin and North 169), as the Cross is also wounded by the spears

[35] The metaphor is also found in *Luke* (23: 31).
[36] A variant of Yggdrasil, the Universe Tree, in which Odin sacrifices himself to win the runic alphabet for humankind, and the entity that protects the last two humans from the Ragnarök, until life in Midgard is renewed (Murphy 16-17), again indicating death as a prerequisite for renewal.

("Dream" ll. 43-55) and, as a result, is honoured and prayed (ll. 95-97). On the other hand, the Rood evinces the combination of the three entities when it states that "Once I became the cruelest of tortures" until "[…] I opened the right way of life for men" ("Dream" ll. 101-103), recalling Christ's words in *John* (1: 51) and by being able to heal "those in awe of me." ("Dream" l. 100), thus linking it with the Tree of Life in *Revelation* (22: 2). The Rood, moreover, moves from the Crucifixion –the redemption of humanity– to the Fall and the Original Sin ("Dream" ll. 118-120) and from there to the Second Coming and Doomsday ("Dream" ll. 122-127); a journey from the beginning to the end. Concerning the Last Judgement, the Rood remarks "Nor then may any man be without fear/About the words the Lord shall say to him." ("Dream" ll. 128-129). This line recalls the fear mentioned by the speaker of "The Cultivation" that was felt "[…] on the occasion/When fear came upon every soul:" (ll. 31-32) as both are sourced in *Acts* (2: 42-44). The Rood alters such ominous warning with the promise of benevolence towards the faithful ("Dream" ll. 134-136), concluding its speech by affirming that "[…] Through the cross each soul/May journey to the heavens from this Earth." ("Dream" ll. 136-137)

The understanding of existence as rooted in this dichotomy of life and death that the poetic voice is attempting to show so evidently through the allusion to the Christian doctrine as well as to its syncretism with pagan beliefs is once more reinforced by the allusion to two texts. These are introduced through the mention of St. Lucy (ll. 25-26), which may refer to Donne's "A Nocturnal Upon S. Lucy's Day, being the shortest day" and by the inclusion of line eighteenth from the "Orphic Hymn to Persephone (XXIX)" placed "at the foot of the last page of the poem in 1954" (Ricks and McCue 782). Although in both this dualism is likewise present, their juxtaposition serves to highlight an essential difference between the pagan and Christian understanding of renewal.

The allusion to the "Hymn to Persephone" constitutes a straightforward form to underline the inseparability of birth and death, given the goddess' role in the Greek pantheon. Daughter of Zeus and Demeter, goddess of harvest and agriculture, responsible for the fertility of the earth, Persephone is also the wife of Hades and thus queen of the underworld and its inhabitants (Athanassakis, l. 6). Likewise, both concepts are combined in her representation of the cycle of life: her seasonal departure from the underworld to stay with her mother marks the beginning of spring, while her return to Hades in autumn marks the beginning of the harvest and the decay of life during winter. The hymn reflects this in her description as "radiant and luminous playmate of the Seasons" (Athanassakis,

l. 9). The two dimensions of her divinity are directly remarked by the speaker when claiming "and you alone are life and death to toiling mortals,/O Persephone for you always nourish all and kill them, too" (Athanassakis, ll. 15-16). The hymn concludes with the speaker's plea for the goddess to send "the earth's fruits." (Athanassakis, l. 17), a request to share her own perennial state of blossoming and abundance simultaneous to the realisation of the implicit death that she represents as she "ferries old age in comfort/to your realm, O queen, and to that of mighty Plouton." (Athanassakis, ll. 19-20)

Donne's "Nocturnal" also features the seasonal cycle to compose an elaborate conceit based on the combined use of paronomasia, the significance of Advent and one of its feast days and a series of opposing concepts: night and day, winter and summer, life and death. In his dejection after the loss of her loved one, Lucy,[37] the speaker positions himself in the negative spectrum of these binaries, since to him the earth has drained whatever light and warmth was left from the feeble rays of a sun now spent (Donne, "Nocturnal" 72). This weakness and brevity are intrinsic to the occasion of the poem, St. Lucy's Day, one of the feast days of Advent. Although it is now celebrated on the 13th of December, before the adoption of the Gregorian calendar Saint Lucy's Feast was held on the winter solstice (Crump 6), the darkest day of the year.

Donne's speaker restores the old calendar to imply the ephemerality of human existence by linking the sun and its brief duration to his lover and her death before time. The impossibility of renewal of the world, of his metaphorical sun, Lucy, and of himself is presented in opposition to the "lesser sun" of the lovers, the actual Sun, whose entrance into Capricorn allows them to "fetch new lust" and thus renew their love and life "At the next world, that is at the next spring:" (Donne, "Nocturnal" 72). These are merely those who cannot live without fleshly contact, referred to disparagingly as "Dull sublunary lovers' love/(Whose soul is sense)" in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" by the same author (Donne 84). In contrast to them and to the alchemist's search for the quintessence of life, in him love has "wrought new alchemy" by which he has been reborn into a state of non-being, "Of absence, darkness, death; things which are not." (Donne, "Nocturnal" 72) Yet, despite appearances, his despair is not complete since there is also a gleam of hope in it. Even in his darkest hour –and that of the world– he still clings to

[37] In his notes to the poem, Smith indicates that probably the poem is composed for Donne's patroness, Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford, but it could also refer to Donne's wife, Anne, or to his daughter, Lucy. (390-391)

the promising light of St. Lucy and her feast, the eve of the greater light to come in Advent and Christmas, the celebrations of the Second Coming and the First Coming of Christ, respectively. His final prayer, "let me prepare towards her, and let me call/ This hour her vigil, and her eve," (Donne, "Nocturnal" 73) encapsulates his hope for a rebirth greater than that of nature's cycle and the anticipation for a future reunion in the promised new life. Both understandings, the pagan and the Christian, are based on the acceptance of the transience of existence. However, whereas in Persephone and her cult the renewal of life implies transformation, the old giving way to the new, the Christian 'new life' is on the contrary established on permanence, on the transcendence of this cycle to gain a steady existence for eternity.

By appealing to the idealisation of childhood and Christmas, the speaker of the last of the Ariel Poems attempts to cultivate the means through which to rise to the everlasting life and joy granted by the Ascension of Christ through his Death on the Rood, hoping that in the timeless existence of eternity emotions and experiences can become permanent. As a modern Andrewes, he makes use of illusions so as to achieve his goal. To that purposes, wants us to recover the child's perspective, which properly appreciates the symbolic dimension beyond material existence, re-signifying the commodity that the Christmas tree has become to regain the Tree of Life, Christ and the Cross, –in a modern replica of early Christian thought– and climb up on it as Dickens' narrator. Thus, the Christian believer has to follow the path of Christ, endure the suffering preliminary to joy and undergo the annihilation, the sacrifice, that life demands. The reconciliation of suffering and joy, of birth and death, is central for Christianism as much as it was for pagan societies and their myths, as reflected by the Orphic Hymn to Persephone, the World Tree of Anglo-Saxon and Norse mythology and its syncretism with the Christian doctrines seen in "The Dream of the Rood". The speaker hopes that these conclusions will not be forgotten and that the moment of vision will be renewed with the annual celebration of Advent and Christmas.

Conclusions

The present study has attempted to explore and describe the unity of the Ariel Poems by T. S. Eliot, a link already indicated by the poet and by other authors concerning two of its most self-evident motifs, the reflection upon the Incarnation, as well as the ambiguity between birth and death that it implies. In order to go beyond what are, by now, somewhat *clichéd* and superficial commentaries the analysis has focused instead on a less conspicuous motif, the impermanence of multiple aspects subsumed in human experience. This thesis has stemmed from the conclusions of Robert K. Shepherd, who has highlighted the significance of time in Eliot's "Journey of the Magi", as part of his analysis of the interaction of poetic voices and the fusion of dramatic monologue with lyric in the poem. Subsequent poems, notably "Animula" and "The Cultivation of Christmas Trees" have validated the selection of this subject as the connecting thread between the Ariel Poems.

A survey of the relevant literature on Eliot, as well as of the author's own work as a critic, has indeed illustrated that much of Eliot's writings after 1925 are concerned with the evaluation and reassessment of experience, as well as the expression of such a process as an individual, poet and critic. With this preliminary evidence, the work has set out by approaching the notion of the transformation of experience –highlighting mystical revelation, faith and memories among the elements integrated within it– by the passing of time and by the integration of subsequent experiences into consciousness. This idea has been articulated on three different levels, individual, social and textual, and has been presented as analogous to the interaction and synthesis of memory and perception proposed by Bergson in *Matter and Memory*, as well as to "the historical sense", the process of textual re-signification described by Eliot in "Tradition and the Individual Talent." Bergson's framework, moreover, has been studied in relation to its influence over the literary expression of revelation, which is likewise indebted to Aristotle's *anagnorisis*.

Lastly, by employing his own modification of the dramatic monologue via a combination with the other two voices of poetry –those of the (verse) dramatist and lyricist– defined in the homonymous essay, Eliot is able to project his own subjectivity onto the poems' various *personae*, being thus able to express personal material –

reflecting the evolution of a society's thought and sensibility as well– through the mediation of these created voices. However, as Shepherd clarifies, Eliot's real intention was to lay bare this design, revealing his own concerns and beliefs at the same time as he reassesses them in the form of intensely subjective meditations on the part of the *personae* that he created as a reflection of his own thoughts, attitudes and spiritual struggles, transforming the dramatic monologue into lyrical monologue.

In "Journey of the Magi" Eliot's subjectivity is easily spotted, as the *persona* reflects the doubts and second thoughts that might have assailed an individual from the twentieth century, the poet himself, as opposed to Andrewes' unwavering Magi. The passing of time and subsequent experiences have drained the Magus' faith or the joy of it rather, stressing how even revelation is suitable to fade away. The antidote to this process is presented in "A Song for Simeon" in his protagonist's willingness to die, according to God's will, which would preserve intact his revelation: the inseparability of birth and death, of suffering and joy, represented by the Incarnate Word. By linking Simeon's *persona* to his own Gerontion and to Tennyson's St. Simeon Stylites, Eliot creates a tension between individualism and selflessness that is replicated by the combination of the lyrical with the communal voice of liturgy.

"Animula" likewise tones down Eliot's voice until its closing prayer, owing its impersonal character to the appropriation of the voice and ideas of Marco Lombardo from Dante's *Divine Comedy*, thus combining the first and the second voice of poetry once more. The interface between both texts underlines the conclusion that only in the fulfilment of God's will, understood as death in this and the previous poem, can the deterioration of the soul presented in "Animula" be halted, a search for annihilation also searched by the travellers of Baudelaire's "Le Voyage" as the cure to the degradation intrinsic to life and experience.

"Marina" represents Eliot's most successful attempt to combine the three voices of poetry, including that of the verse dramatist, in a non-dramatic work, by fitting his words into the frame(work) of the fictional character as Shakespeare devised it. The poem has been interpreted as the poetic rendering of the *persona*'s moment of revelation, an idea confirmed by the allusion to the recognition scenes of Shakespeare's *Pericles* and Seneca's *Hercules Furens*. These two plays represent human life as based on suffering and its stoic endurance, which the former transforms by being associated with Christian Salvation. The poem and its hypotexts are permeated by the Christian view of death as

the only means of avoiding the degradation of time, taking comfort in the prospect of eternal joy in Heaven.

In "The Cultivation of Christmas Trees" Eliot rounds up the conclusions that he seems to have arrived at in the previous poems. No longer through the mask of a *persona*, Eliot intends to use the romanticization of childhood and Christmas to cultivate the means to experience revelation, which in his case consists of the realisation of the indivisibility of birth and death, of joy and suffering; a vision reinforced by the textual allusions brought into discussion. The annual celebration of Advent and Christmas, and the awareness of their meaning, become in turn the method through which to secure this insight from fading, while waiting for the permanence of the existence to come.

After an exhaustive analysis, we can affirm that the Ariel Poems are indeed a unified sequence, despite their original publication in a fragmentary form as part of the Faber & Faber Ariel series. This would come to prove Eliot's recommendation that we should find meaning "in final causes rather than in origins" ("Dante" 274). The study of each of these works has elucidated the possibility to approach them from the subject of the transformation of experience; a theme interrelated with the other topics foregrounded, the Incarnation and the indivisibility of birth and death. As such, and thanks to Eliot's use of several techniques for the expression of poetic subjectivity, we might be able to understand the poems as spiritual and poetic exercises. They reflect different stages in Eliot's struggle with faith and scepticism, each of the poems' *personae* representing a gradual step in the ascension to the new life that Eliot hoped to find in his journey "al som de l'escalina," (Alighieri 315).

Annex: Poems

Journey of the Magi (1927)

'A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.'
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,

And an old white horse galloped in away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

A Song for Simeon (1928)

Lord, the Roman hyacinths are blooming in bowls and
The winter sun creeps by the snow hills;
The stubborn season has made stand.
My life is light, waiting for the death wind,
Like a feather on the back of my hand.
Dust in sunlight and memory in corners
Wait for the wind that chills towards the dead land.

Grant us thy peace.
I have walked many years in this city,
Kept faith and fast, provided for the poor,
Have taken and given honour and ease.
There went never any rejected from my door.
Who shall remember my house, where shall live my children's children
When the time of sorrow is come?
They will take to the goat's path, and the fox's home,
Fleeing from the foreign faces and the foreign swords.

Before the time of cords and scourges and lamentation
Grant us thy peace.
Before the stations of the mountain of desolation,
Before the certain hour of maternal sorrow,
Now at this birth season of decease,
Let the Infant, the still unspeaking and unspoken Word,
Grant Israel's consolation
To one who has eighty years and no to-morrow.

According to thy word,
They shall praise Thee and suffer in every generation
With glory and derision,
Light upon light, mounting the saints' stair.
Not for me the martyrdom, the ecstasy of thought and prayer,
Not for me the ultimate vision.
Grant me thy peace.
(And a sword shall pierce thy heart,
Thine also).
I am tired with my own life and the lives of those after me,

I am dying in my own death and the deaths of those after me.
Let thy servant depart,
Having seen thy salvation.

Gerontion (1920)

Thou hast nor youth nor age
But as it were an after dinner sleep
Dreaming of both.

Here I am, an old man in a dry month,
Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain.
I was neither at the hot gates
Nor fought in the warm rain
Nor knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving a cutlass,
Bitten by flies, fought.
My house is a decayed house,
And the Jew squats on the window-sill, the owner,
Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp,
Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London.
The goat coughs at night in the field overhead;
Rocks, moss, stonecrop, iron, merds.
The woman keeps the kitchen, makes tea,
Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter.

I an old man,
A dull head among windy spaces.

Signs are taken for wonders. ‘We would see a sign!’
The word within a word, unable to speak a word,
Swaddled with darkness. In the juvescence of the year

Came Christ the tiger

In depraved May, dogwood and chestnut, flowering judas,
To be eaten, to be divided, to be drunk
Among whispers; by Mr. Silvero
With caressing hands, at Limoges
Who walked all night in the next room;
By Hakagawa, bowing among the Titians;
By Madame de Tornquist, in the dark room
Shifting the candles; Fräulein von Kulp
Who turned in the hall, one hand on the door. Vacant shuttles
Weave the wind. I have no ghosts,
An old man in a draughty house
Under a windy knob.

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now
History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,
Guides us by vanities. Think now
She gives when our attention is distracted
And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions
That the giving famishes the craving. Gives too late
What's not believed in, or if still believed,
In memory only, reconsidered passion. Gives too soon
Into weak hands, what's thought can be dispensed with
Till the refusal propagates a fear. Think
Neither fear nor courage saves us. Unnatural vices
Are fathered by our heroism. Virtues
Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes.
These tears are shaken from the wrath-bearing tree.

The tiger springs in the new year. Us he devours. Think at last
We have not reached conclusion, when I
Stiffen in a rented house. Think at last
I have not made this show purposelessly
And it is not by any concitation
Of the backward devils
I would meet you upon this honestly.
I that was near your heart was removed therefrom
To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.
I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it
Since what is kept must be adulterated?
I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch:
How should I use it for your closer contact?

These with a thousand small deliberations
Protract the profit of their chilled delirium,
Excite the membrane, when the sense has cooled,
With pungent sauces, multiply variety
In a wilderness of mirrors. What will the spider do,
Suspend its operations, will the weevil
Delay? De Bailhache, Fresca, Mrs. Cammel, whirled
Beyond the circuit of the shuddering Bear
In fractured atoms. Gull against the wind, in the windy straits
Of Belle Isle, or running on the Horn,
White feathers in the snow, the Gulf claims,
And an old man driven by the Trades
To a sleepy corner.

Tenants of the house,

Thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season.

Alfred Tennyson

"St. Simeon Stylites"

Altho' I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold
Of saintdom, and to clamour, morn and sob,
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.
Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,
This not be all in vain that thrice ten years,
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,
A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and snow;
And I had hoped that ere this period closed
Thou wouldst have caught me up into Thy rest,
Denying not these weather-beaten limbs
The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.
O take the meaning, Lord: I do not breathe,
Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were still
Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,

Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crush'd
My spirit flat before thee. O Lord, Lord,
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,
For I was strong and hale of body then;
And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard
Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.
Now am I feeble grown; my end draws nigh;
I hope my end draws nigh: half deaf I am,
So that I scarce can hear the people hum
About the column's base, and almost blind,
And scarce can recognise the fields I know;
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew;
Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,
Have mercy, mercy: take away my sin.
O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,
Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?
Show me the man hath suffered more than I.
For did not all thy martyrs die one death?
For either they were stoned, or crucified,
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn
In twain beneath the ribs; but I die here
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.
Bear witness, if I could have found a way

(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)
More slowly-painful to subdue this home
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,
I had not stinted practice, O my God.
For not alone this pillar-punishment,
Not this alone I bore: but while I lived
In the white convent down the valley there,
For many weeks about my loins I wore
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose;
And spake not of it to a single soul,
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than this
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.
Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,
I lived up there on yonder mountain side.
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones;
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice
Black'd with thy branding thunder, and sometimes
Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came
To touch my body and be heal'd, and live:
And they say then that I work'd miracles,
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O God,
Knowest alone whether this was or no.
Have mercy, mercy; cover all my sin.

Then, that I might be more alone with thee,
Three years I lived upon a pillar, high
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve;
And twice three years I crouch'd on one that rose
Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew
Twice ten long weary weary years to this,
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.
I think that I have borne as much as this -
Or else I dream - and for so long a time,
If I may measure time by yon slow light,
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns -
So much - even so. And yet I know not well,
For that the evil ones comes here, and say,
"Fall down, O Simeon: thou hast suffer'd long
For ages and for ages!" then they prate
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall,
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies,
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked. But yet
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints
Enjoy themselves in Heaven, and men on earth
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the Saints;
Or in the night, after a little sleep,
I wake: the chill stars sparkle; I am wet
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.

I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back;
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die:
O mercy, mercy! wash away my sin.
O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am;
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin:
'Tis their own doing; this is none of mine;
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,
That here come those that worship me? Ha! ha!
They think that I am somewhat. What am I?
The silly people take me for a saint,
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers:
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here)
Have all in all endured as much, and more
Than many just and holy men, whose names
Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.
Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.
What is it I can have done to merit this?
I am a sinner viler than you all.
It may be I have wrought some miracles,
And cured some halt and maim'd; but what of that?
It may be, no one, even among the saints,
May match his pains with mine; but what of that?
Yet do not rise: for you may look on me,
And in your looking you may kneel to God.
Speak! is there any of you halt or maim'd?
I think you know I have some power with Heaven
From my long penance: let him speak his wish.
Yes, I can heal. Power goes forth from me.

They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark! they shout
"St. Simeon Stylites". Why, if so,
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,
God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,
Can I work miracles and not be saved?
This is not told of any. They were saints.
It cannot be but that I shall be saved;
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, "Behold a saint!"
And lower voices saint me from above.
Courage, St. Simeon! This dull chrysalis
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death
Spreads more and more and more, that God hath now
Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all
My mortal archives. O my sons, my sons,
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname Stylites, among men;
I, Simeon, The watcher on the column till the end;
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes;
I, whose bald brows in silent hours become
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
From my high nest of penance here proclaim
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,
A vessel full of sin: all hell beneath
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my sleeve;
Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.
I smote them with the cross; they swarm'd again.
In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my chest:
They flapp'd my light out as I read: I saw
Their faces grow between me and my book:
With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine

They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,
And by this way I'scaped them. Mortify
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns;
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps,
With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain,
Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise:
God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,
Among the powers and princes of this world,
To make me an example to mankind,
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say
But that a time may come - yea, even now,
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs
Of life - I say, that time is at the doors
When you may worship me without reproach;
For I will leave my relics in your land,
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,
When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.
While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike change,
In passing, with a grosser film made thick
These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the end!
Surely the end! What's here? a shape, a shade,
A flash of light. Is that the angel there
That holds a crown? Come, blessed brother, come,
I know thy glittering face. I waited long;
My brows are ready. What! deny it now?
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ!

'Tis gone: 'tis here again; the crown! the crown!
So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.
Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints: I trust
That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven.
Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,
Among you there, and let him presently
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,
And climbing up into my airy home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
A quarter before twelve. But thou, O Lord,
Aid all this foolish people; let them take
Example, pattern: lead them to thy light.

Animula (1929)

‘Issues from the hand of God, the simple soul’
To a flat world of changing lights and noise,
To light, dark, dry or damp, chilly or warm;
Moving between the legs of tables and of chairs,
Rising or falling, grasping at kisses and toys,
Advancing boldly, sudden to take alarm,
Retreating to the corner of arm and knee,
Eager to be reassured, taking pleasure
In the fragrant brilliance of the Christmas tree,
Pleasure in the wind, the sunlight and the sea;
Studies the sunlit pattern on the floor

And running stags around a silver tray;
Confounds the actual and the fanciful,
Content with playing-cards and kings and queens,
What the fairies do and what the servants say.
The heavy burden of the growing soul
Perplexes and offends more, day by day;
Week by week, offends and perplexes more
With the imperatives of 'is and seems'
And may and may not, desire and control.
The pain of living and the drug of dreams
Curl up the small soul in the window seat
Behind the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.
Issues from the hand of time the simple soul
Irresolute and selfish, misshapen, lame,
Unable to fare forward or retreat,
Fearing the warm reality, the offered good,
Denying the importunity of the blood,
Shadow of its own shadows, spectre in its own gloom,
Leaving disordered papers in a dusty room;
Living first in the silence after the viaticum.

Pray for Guiterriez, avid of speed and power,
For Boudin, blown to pieces,
For this one who made a great fortune,
And that one who went his own way.
Pray for Floret, by the boarhound slain between the yew trees,
Pray for us now and at the hour of our birth.

Marina (1930)

Quis hic locus, quae

regio, quae mundi plaga?

What seas what shores what grey rocks and what islands
What water lapping the bow
And scent of pine and the woodthrush singing through the fog
What images return
O my daughter.

Those who sharpen the tooth of the dog, meaning
Death
Those who glitter with the glory of the hummingbird, meaning
Death
Those who sit in the sty of contentment, meaning
Death
Those who suffer the ecstasy of the animals, meaning
Death

Are become unsubstantial, reduced by a wind,
A breath of pine, and the woodsong fog
By this grace dissolved in place

What is this face, less clear and clearer
The pulse in the arm, less strong and stronger—
Given or lent? more distant than stars and nearer than the eye
Whispers and small laughter between leaves and hurrying feet
Under sleep, where all the waters meet.

Bowsprit cracked with ice and paint cracked with heat.
I made this, I have forgotten

And remember.
The rigging weak and the canvas rotten
Between one June and another September.
Made this unknowing, half conscious, unknown, my own.
The garboard strake leaks, the seams need caulking.
This form, this face, this life
Living to live in a world of time beyond me; let me
Resign my life for this life, my speech for that unspoken,
The awakened, lips parted, the hope, the new ships.

What seas what shores what granite islands towards my timbers
And woodthrush calling through the fog
My daughter.

The Cultivation of Christmas Trees (1954)

There are several attitudes towards Christmas,
Some of which we may disregard:
The social, the torpid, the patently commercial,
The rowdy (the pubs being open till midnight),
And the childish — which is not that of the child
For whom the candle is a star, and the gilded angel
Spreading its wings at the summit of the tree
Is not only a decoration, but an angel.

The child wonders at the Christmas Tree:
Let him continue in the spirit of wonder
At the Feast as an event not accepted as a pretext;
So that the glittering rapture, the amazement

Of the first-remembered Christmas Tree,
So that the surprises, delight in new possessions
(Each one with its peculiar and exciting smell),
The expectation of the goose or turkey
And the expected awe on its appearance,

So that the reverence and the gaiety
May not be forgotten in later experience,
In the bored habituation, the fatigue, the tedium,
The awareness of death, the consciousness of failure,
Or in the piety of the convert
Which may be tainted with a self-conceit
Displeasing to God and disrespectful to the children
(And here I remember also with gratitude
St. Lucy, her carol, and her crown of fire):

So that before the end, the eightieth Christmas
(By "eightieth" meaning whichever is the last)
The accumulated memories of annual emotion
May be concentrated into a great joy
Which shall be also a great fear, as on the occasion
When fear came upon every soul:
Because the beginning shall remind us of the end
And the first coming of the second coming.

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