MODERN AMERICAN PILGRIMS:
DWELLING AND RELIGIOUS TRAVEL IN THE LIVES AND WORKS OF HERMAN MELVILLE AND T.S. ELIOT

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Abstract

Part biography, part critical study, and part literary field guide, "Modern American Pilgrims" considers the houses and families, the churches and congregations, the schools and educations, and the offices and businesses that formed Herman Melville's and T.S. Eliot's senses of identity and understanding of the power of literary art. This dissertation argues that the degradation and destruction of the material and institutional structures that constituted Melville's and Eliot's homes led them to purposeful and directed journeys to traditional sites of Christian pilgrimage. Unlike many of their contemporaries and most of their antecedents, these two American pilgrims did not seek open space where they could make something new, they sought to recover something old that could both ground and transform them.

The first chapter of the dissertation shows that the project of self-fashioning that located Herman Melville's ancestors in a family tradition, in a community, and within American history broke down in the face of early nineteenth-century urbanization and economic change. The second chapter considers Melville's 1856-57 journey to the Holy Land as a response to his failure to secure a satisfactory literary and spiritual place for himself. I argue that the epic poem *Clarel* records Melville's attempt to construct poetically a coherent landscape out of the crumbling landmarks he encountered in the Holy Land and that the poem testifies to his engagement with, but ultimate rejection of, religious discipline within an historical creed.

The second part of the dissertation turns to T.S. Eliot and considers a degradation of Eliot's St. Louis context that parallels the destruction of Melville's New York homes. In the first of two Eliot chapters, I argue that Eliot did not reject outright the St. Louis

world his family labored to build as much as he fled its collapse. In the final chapter, I show that Eliot responded to the instability of the city of his youth by searching for new spiritual refuges among the churches of England. Though London's cityscape was manifestly more historically stable than the rapidly industrializing St. Louis, it too was being undermined. Ultimately, Eliot found a series of satisfactory dwelling places on the idiosyncratic pilgrimages described in the *Four Quartets*.

The dissertation's conclusion proposes Elizabeth Gilbert's memoir *Eat, Pray, Love* as a twenty-first century analogue to Melville's nineteenth century and Eliot's accounts of modern American pilgrimage.

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INTRODUCTION:

AMERICAN PILGRIMS AND MODERN AMERICAN PILGRIMS

A small notice in the January 3, 1805 Plymouth *Independent Chronicle* reflected on the state of the site of the Pilgrims' landing at Plymouth Rock and contained the following statement: "Among the glorious events recorded in our history," the anonymous author begins,

> none claim our grateful recollection more, than the pilgrimage of our venerable fore-fathers . . . While in the full enjoyment of their inestimable inheritance, let it not be imagined that prosperity has contracted our hearts, or debased our character; but, let us pay our annual tribute to their shrine, and perpetuate the theme to future generations. *Plymouth* should be the consecrated spot; there the footsteps of our fathers, the revered rock, and their more sacred relics are proper objects to employ our contemplations and animate our zeal.[1]

Far more than a flippant New Year's resolution or an isolated outburst of civic pride, this notice is a call to action reminiscent of the Puritan jermiads of the previous centuries. This anonymous author has achieved prosperity and he acknowledges that it is the monetary share of the "inestimable inheritance" of his forefathers, the Pilgrims, but like the Puritan preachers of old, this author knows that this prosperity and the rest of his birthright can vanish in an instant if he and his neighbors wander from their true calling. This author was not first to express such a worry. In the 1790s, in the full flush of early national pride, groups of prominent Bostonians founded Pilgrim societies to perpetuate

the memory of the Plymouth settlers. Whereas these societies sought to keep the memory of the Pilgrim Fathers alive through intellectual labor and public scholarship, this anonymous author is disturbed by the fading of the material record of the Plymouth settlers - and he had reason to be nervous. By 1805, 175 years after the first settlers stepped ashore from a *Mayflower* skiff, Plymouth Rock had been broken in two while it was being relocated, eager tourists had chipped off pieces of what remained of the rock, and the original site of the landing had been entirely overlaid by bustling wharves. The author writes that Plymouth *should* be the consecrated spot because it was not at all a place set aside for memory or devotion; instead, it was dedicated wholly to the gritty work of international commerce. Despite the thorough accounting of the Plymouth Pilgrims' journey and trials in the historical record by Boston Pilgrim societies, this writer is concerned that the degradation of the physical site of their landing will result in "contracted hearts" or "debased character."

The writer's response to the problem is at once reasonable and startling. His notice suggests restoration, a making visible of the rock and its associated objects to "employ our

contemplations and to animate our zeal." It makes sense that a physical memorial would more tangibly remind the people of Plymouth, Massachusetts, and the United States of the source of their inheritance, but, ironically, the particular memorial this author has in mind demonstrates just how far removed he is from the Pilgrims' theology and standards of conduct. No Puritan would dare use the words "venerable", “shrine,” “consecrated spot,” “sacred relics,” and “proper objects to . . . animate our zeal” to advocate for a place of memorial because the words smack of the superstition and idolatry of the old,

Catholic practices and their revival in the Church of England. While this author's diction might perhaps be dismissed as figurative usage, subsequent Plymouth Pilgrim Society activities suggest that its members, like this author, have in mind the establishment of a literal shrine where the Pilgrim fathers could be venerated.

In 1859, the Plymouth Pilgrim Society laid the cornerstone for a canopy to cover Plymouth Rock. The Civil War interrupted work on the shrine, but when its canopy was completed in 1867 (fig. 1), it was crowned with four scallop shells. These shells are a direct reference to the shells that medieval pilgrims brought back from the Way of Saint James in Spain to prove that they had indeed completed the pilgrimage to Compostella. Furthermore, the canopy covered not only the re-placed rock, but also some reinterred bones that were unearthed on Cole's Hill when a city sewer was being dug in 1854. The thick vault above the rock was a reliquary that held these bones, which were identified by Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes as belonging to a white person who he presumed to be from a Pilgrim and who died during the starving time of the first winter at Plymouth. The canopy borrowed its iconography from the second-most significant European shrine (after St. Peters', Rome) to cover both a sacred rock and the bones of a saint. This is a monument to the Pilgrims that they themselves would have smashed.

This American shrine was destroyed, but the canopy was razed for aesthetic reasons, not theological ones. In 1920, less than seventy five years after the canopy was completed, it was demolished, most of its granite blocks were dumped into Plymouth Harbor, and the bones that were formerly held in the vault above the rock were moved to a simple mausoleum on top of Plymouth's Cole Hill. The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America commissioned a new canopy (fig. 2) to be designed and built

Figure 1: Canopy over Plymouth Rock, Begun 1859, Completed 1867, Razed 1920

Figure 2: McKim, Meade, and White Canopy over Plymouth Rock. Completed 1920.

by the famous firm of McKim, Meade, and White for the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Pilgrims' landing. In contrast to the previous canopy, McKim, Meade, and White's design connected the rock with the sea to allow it to once again plausibly mark the landing place of the Pilgrims. Their canopy strips most of the ornament and all of the pilgrim iconography from the previous design and replaces it with a plain Doric structure that emphasizes the achievement of the Plymouth settlers' democratic government, though at the expense of effacing the Pilgrims' wonder at the mysteries of the invisible world. From one perspective, McKim, Meade, and White's canopy stands today as an appropriately spare monument to a people who considered themselves strangers in this world and who resisted most attempts to attach their devotional practices to the stuff of tradition or to the things of this world. The previous shrine held visitors under the weight of the roof and mausoleum; it gathered visitors from the four cardinal directions and demanded that they accommodate themselves to the dead ancestors above and the rock below. McKim, Meade and White's canopy is not a crypt or a grotto as was the old one; rather, the new canopy is a portico that welcomes visitors to pass through it to contemplate the sea and shoreline that open all the way to the horizon. While the first canopy imposes history, meaning, and tradition, the new canopy's lack of centralized structure and ornament is an invitation to imagination. If the previous baroque canopy was designed to be an American shrine to preserve the memory of the Pilgrims and to enforce their mode of life on subsequent generations, the neoclassical replacement is an American Pantheon that makes few demands upon its visitors and instead presents a vision of democratic America as a "new field of opportunity, [and] a gate of escape from the bondage of the past."[2]

While the shift from a medieval Pilgrim shrine to a neoclassical portico is both a more fitting memorial to the Plymouth settlers and a more accurate representation of Americans' relationship to history, memory, and place, the destruction of the old shrine

does efface an important alternative view. I take the destruction of the Plymouth shrine and the resultant forgetting of the impetus towards memory and the authority of tradition to be a metaphor for a similar effacement in American literary engagement with pilgrimage. This dissertation aims to uncover an alternate strain of American pilgrimage and it finds it hidden in a surprising place - in the works and lives of two of the most thoroughly discussed American writers, Herman Melville and T.S. Eliot. Separately, and over the course of a period that spans nearly a century, Melville and Eliot stepped out of an American tradition of westward pilgrimage to open, untracked land to undertake eastward journeys to old world shrines. Given Melville and Eliot's un-American or at least atypical approaches to pilgrimage, this dissertation asks why they left their homes to seek out places of historical pilgrimage, what they find on their pilgrimages, and how they reckoned with what they found.

American Pilgrims

Pilgrims are not hard to come by in the United States. Each fall, grade school children cut hats out of black construction paper and buckles out of foil to lunch with paper bag-vested peers. They read Thanksgiving declarations and they remember the meal that was shared by the Plymouth Pilgrims and the Wampanoag. Black jacketed, blunderbuss-wielding pilgrims are just as ubiquitous outside the nation's classrooms in November as well, but these pilgrims hawk frozen turkeys, mattresses, cars, and flat screen televisions as Black Friday doorbusters. A Google image search for "pilgrim" returns ten pages full of Thanksgiving cartoons, pilgrim costumes, and lustrous paintings

of the landing at Plymouth Rock. In American discussions of pilgrims, the Plymouth Pilgrims are the point of reference.

It is odd that the Plymouth setters are so closely aligned with pilgrimage in the American imagination because common definitions of pilgrimage poorly describe their permanent removal to a "hideous and desolate wilderness."[3] Depending upon the particular dictionary, a pilgrimage is a "round trip journey undertaken by a person or persons who consider their destination sacred," or "the deliberate traversing of a route to a sacred place which lies outside one's normal habitat," or even "time-honored migrations to outlying sacred areas."[4] Not only was the Plymouth settlers' journey decidedly one way and original (that is, not "time-honored'), by leaving Europe for the New World, the Plymouth settlers fled, rather than sought, shrines and holy places. The Plymouth settlers are pilgrims because William Bradford said they were, and because eighteenth and nineteenth century American writers and historians picked up on his one brief use of the term. In *Of Plymouth Plantation,* Bradford described his fellow Separatists as pilgrims, though he recognized that departure from Leyden for Plymouth did not initiate their pilgrimage, "So they lefte [their] goodly & pleasante citie, which had been ther resting place, nere 12 years," Bradford writes, "but they knew they were *pilgrimes*, & looked not much on these things; but lift up their eyes to ye heavens, their dearest cuntrie, and quieted their spirits."[5] Pilgrimage, to Bradford, signifies a state of exile or wandering, not a journey to a particular destination. The journey from Leyden to Plymouth was not the real pilgrimage, but a metaphor for the real, spiritual life pilgrimage that the Separatists had been living since their births. This new journey - like

their departure from Plymouth, England - provided the Pilgrims a way to think anew their already homeless condition.

Bradford's use of pilgrim to indicate a rootless wanderer is not unwarranted, though he did draw upon an archaic sense of the term to use it this way. The English "pilgrim" derives (via the old French *pèlerin)* from the Latin *peregrinus* (*per*, through + *ager*, field, country, land) which denoted a foreigner, an alien, or a person on a journey far from their home, but by the tenth century (when the term came across the Channel to England), "pilgrim" referred to a person who journeyed to a specific destination. As Bradford's description makes plain, a pilgrim to him is one who does not have an earthly home, a person who is a geographic exile, no matter where on earth he or she is located. For Bradford and the Plymouth settlers, this fundamental homelessness is a result of the Fall which both separated humanity from God and cursed humans with a difficult struggle against the land. Bradford's statement reveals that he believes that his move from Leyden (and his earlier move from England) did not so much cause the condition of *peregrinus* as showed it to be a pre-existing condition. The "Pilgrims" did not become pilgrims when they left; they had always been so.

Anne Bradstreet draws on the same Latin denotation of pilgrim as a troubled exile in her 1669 poem "As Weary Pilgrim." The poem begins with a description of a pilgrim returned to his home after a long and arduous journey:

> As weary pilgrim, now at rest,
>   Hugs with delight his silent nest
> His wasted limbs, now lie full soft
>   That mirey steps, have trodden oft,

Blesses himself to think upon
  His dangers past, and travails done.
The burning sun no more shall heat
  Nor stormy rains on him shall beat.
The briars and thorns no more shall scratch,
  Nor hungry wolves at him shall catch.
He erring paths no more shall tread,
  Nor wild fruits eat, instead of bread.
For waters cold he doth not long
  For thirst no more shall parch his tongue.
No rugged stones his feet shall gall,
  Nor stumps nor rocks cause him to fall.
All cares and fears he bids farewell
  And means in safety now to dwell.[6]

The weary geographical traveler to whom Bradstreet compares herself with the poem's primary simile ("*As* weary pilgrim . . . ") has found all terrestrial paths "erring" and his journey difficult, dangerous, and uncomfortable. No abode provided shelter or dwelling along the way, but now that he is at home in his "nest . . . All cares and fears he bids farewell / and means in safety now to dwell." Bradstreet writes that she too is "a pilgrim . . . on earth perplexed / with sins, with cares and sorrows vext." Her body, like the shrine pilgrim's, is ground down by the arduous journey (it is "by age and pains brought to decay"). Yet, unlike the pilgrim to whom she compares herself, Bradstreet has no hope for an earthy resting place - or as her most famous poem "Some Verses upon the

Burning of Our House" indicates, she strives to throw off whatever hope in an earthly dwelling place she clings to. Like Bradford, Bradstreet embraces her earthly exile and hopes in a final, heavenly rest. Pilgrimage in both Bradford's and Bradstreet's views is not a journey towards a particular earthly destination; rather, it is an embrace of the fundamental homelessness and exile until the appointed time of permanent and eternal heavenly homecoming.

Bradstreet's figurative use of a flesh and blood geographic pilgrim to illustrate her literal lifelong pilgrimage to heaven turns contemporary notions of real material things and figurative spiritual things upside down. In her study of medieval literary pilgrimage, Dee Dyas observes that contemporary readers are quick to describe pilgrimage both as a "literal journey" and as a "lifelong spiritual experience"; yet she notes that it is often far from clear which use of pilgrimage is the reality and which is the metaphor. According to Dyas' revisionist account, medieval writers consider "'geographical' pilgrimage the metaphor of that longer, more complex, journey that every soul must choose to undertake" far more often than is commonly recognized.[7] So too with Bradstreet, who regards the geographical pilgrim finally resting at home after a long journey a mere simile of the very real heavenly rest she anticipates.

To bring greater clarity to the divergent senses of pilgrimage than the words literal and metaphorical can provide, Dyas neatly divides pilgrims into two types, *place pilgrims* and *life pilgrims*. Place pilgrims are, of course, travelers who journey to a particular holy place. Their journeys are geographic and material; they actually walk or ride from their homes to physical shrines. Life pilgrims, however, live out "a detachment from worldly values, commit to moral obedience, and cultivate a heartfelt desire to reach

the heavenly home." In contrast to place pilgrims' geographic and material journeys, the journeys of life pilgrims are at once interior and eschatological.[8] Life pilgrims stay put; indeed, they often see travel, especially religious travel as a distraction from the real spiritual progress they might make in their quotidian pilgrimage. Instead of the penance that place pilgrims find in the struggles of life lived on the move, life pilgrims use the struggles of daily life to remind themselves that they long for the day that they will arrive in their true, heavenly, home.

Bradford and Bradstreet's emphasis on the life pilgrimage over place pilgrimage fits into a more general protestant (and especially a Puritan) suspicion of material expressions and practices of faith. This suspicion and fear of idolatry led to the rejection of the rosary, images of saints, the body of Christ on the cross, and holy relics. The emphasis on the spiritual journey over the geographic also reflects Protestantism's rejection of the special spiritual status of places in favor of a more general holiness of the everyday. Just as Protestants view every calling as sacred (as opposed to a select sacred priesthood), and just as they believe that all life can be lived as an act of worship (and not merely monastic life), so too are all places and spaces equally sacred and secular to them. God, according to the Reformers, was just as present in a market as in a church's chancel – or in Puritan parlance, in the "meeting house." Though the place pilgrim is a handy simile and metaphor for Bradstreet, she certainly rejected his clinging to material images of God, and she would have considered his travel to a shrine a very dangerous practice.

The figurative use of place pilgrimage to illustrate life pilgrimage proved a durable device in American literature. Two centuries years after Bradford and Bradstreet, Henry David Thoreau used pilgrimage as the central metaphor in his essay "Walking."

Despite the historical and theological gulf between Thoreau and the Plymouth Pilgrims, Thoreau's pilgrim metaphor draws on an understanding of pilgrimage that is similar to Bradford's and Bradstreet's. In the beginning of the essay, Thoreau traces the etymology of *sauntering* to "'*a la Sainte Terre*,' to the Holy Land."[9] Thoreau's saunterer or "*Sainte-Terrer"* is not, however, one who actually went to Jerusalem; instead, saunterers were "idle people who roved about the country, in the Middle Ages, and asked charity, under pretense of going *a la Sainte Terre*, to the Holy Land." Thoreau extends his consideration of pilgrims as wanderers by suggesting that another possible origin of "saunter" is its near homonymity to *sans terre*, without land or home. For Thoreau, unlike Bradford and Bradstreet, the lack of a particular dwelling place is neither the result of a curse nor a hardship; instead, Thoreau's true saunterer is without a home in the sense that he is "equally at home everywhere." Despite this important distinction between Thoreau and the New Englanders that preceded him, Thoreau shares with his puritan antecedents an impetus towards free, open, prehistoric, and untouched space. Thoreau concludes the essay with the hopeful statement, "So we saunter toward the Holy Land; till one day the sun shall shine more brightly than ever he has done, shall perchance shine into our minds and hearts, and light up our whole lives with a great awakening light, so warm and serene and golden as on a bank-side in Autumn." The "Holy Land" for which Thoreau longs at the end of the essay is not the historical province of Abraham, Christ, and the apostles; rather, it is a wild, western land of "mystery and poetry" where "no squatter has settled." Thoreau directly repudiates both a backwards historical orientation and an eastward gaze to instead direct his readers west.

Stanley Cavell long ago noted a continuous tradition of migration from the Plymouth settlers to Thoreau. Cavell did not use Dyas' terms for types of pilgrimages, but the tradition that Cavell traces from the Pilgrims to Thoreau is a tradition of life pilgrimage.[10] The movement of both the Pilgrims and Thoreau into the woods of Massachusetts was not a search for a specific historical site to ground faith or affirm truth; rather, both the Puritans' errand into the wilderness and Thoreau's experiment at Walden Pond were acts of embracing a land that made apparent their status as "strangers in this world" and provided space where they could create something new and exemplary. The Puritans entered the "howling and desolate wilderness" of New England knowing that the hardness of the land would not allow them to forget that their true home was in heaven.[11] Likewise, Thoreau moved into the woods to deliberately "hasten a crisis" and, as Cavell writes, to be overcome by nature.[12] Though both the Puritans and Throreau entered the wilderness and woods willing to be transformed by what they "had to teach," clearly they also had in mind a transformation of the land as well.[13] Upon arrival in New England, the Puritans immediately set to work on clearing the land to build a literal "city on a hill" that would be a beacon to what they considered a lost and fallen world. Thoreau similarly began work on his house upon arrival at Walden Pond. He built this house, like the Puritans, as "an experiment, a public demonstration of a truth; to become an example to those from whom [he] departed . . . "[14] Cavell writes that Thoreau takes the Puritan notion of manifesting exemplary new life to its logical conclusion by proposing *Walden* as a sacred text, as a Newer Testament.[15] Thus, Thoreau is, according to Cavell, a pilgrim turned prophet.

Lawrence Buell extends Cavell's claim of Thoreau's prophetic voice by citing the "proliferation of homesteading experiments that claim Thoreau as inspiration, directly or obliquely."[16] From nineteenth utopian socialists and John Muir to Aldo Leopold, Edward Abbey, Annie Dillard, and Chris McCandless, thousands of Americans have performed what Buell calls "Thoreauvian Pilgrimages." These pilgrimages are of course life pilgrimages, not place pilgrimages to the actual site of Thoreau's cabin at Walden Pond. Buell recognizes that Walden itself has become a major American cultural shrine that attracts thousands of tourists and place pilgrims each year; but, he writes, "More important than undertaking a literal visit to Walden [place pilgrimage] . . . more important than preserving it as an oasis, is the enactment [life pilgrimage] in whatever place or mode of Thoreau's own dissociation from organized society." Buell can write that the attunement of a person to a Thoreauvian mode wherever that person may physically be (perhaps even in a city or in the "beaten track of the professions") is "more important" than an actual visit to the shore of Walden Pond because a visit to Walden has been since the nineteenth century "muffled in cliché" and undertaken en masse amidst a crowd of tourists and picnickers.[17] True pilgrims are moved by Thoreau's prophetic voice to "advance confidently in the direction of their dreams," not in the direction of Thoreau's dream. Something of the old Puritan suspicion of tradition, authority, and material things as potential idols haunts Buell's conclusion that "the literal pilgrimage of Concord visitation obviously counts for far less in the long run than the symbolic pilgrimage of putting Thoreau to work in one's life."[18] While the vast majority of American writers from Bradford to Annie Dillard affirm Thoreau's suspicion of the "beaten track," not all Americans found the promise of open, undifferentiated space

appealing. Opposing the familiar pilgrims who embrace free exile on earth are American writers who sought to be bound up in community in particular places. I call these pilgrims Modern American Pilgrims.

Modern **American Pilgrims**

In calling Melville and Eliot "modern American pilgrims" this dissertation enters a conversation about the definition of modernism and modernity, terms that have widely divergent meanings. Susan Stanford Friedman sees these divergent definitions of modern, modernity, and modernism as "a critical Tower of Babel, a cacophony of categories that become increasingly useless the more inconsistently they are used."[19] She concludes that "*modernity* is a term at war with itself, a term that unravels its own definition, a term that codifies the principle of indeterminacy."[20] Despite the term's indeterminancy in general parlance, Friedman observes an opposition between "state planning . . . totalization, centralized system . . . the Enlightenment's rational schemata. 'Progress' – 'Science' – 'Reason' – 'Truth'" on the one hand and the "break with the past, a willed forgetting of tradition, continuity, order . . . the crisis of representation, fragmentation, alienation" on the other. This neatly oppositional understanding of modern cleaves for the most part along disciplinary lines. The social sciences have tended to define modern as a break with medieval institutions and thought that is associated with seventeenth-century Europe. Most social science understandings of modernity recognize faith in human progress and institutional control of society and environment as a central feature of modernity. The humanities, according to Friedman, consider modernism and

modernity to be a "radical rupture from rather than the supreme embodiment of Renaissance Enlightenment humanism."

Though the definition of the term modern is contested, secularism has proved a durable defining characteristic of modernism across most disciplinary boundaries, literary studies included. J. Hillis Miller argues that post-medieval literature records "the gradual withdrawal of God from the world.[21] Perry Miller narrates a decline from the Christian orthodoxy of the Puritan fathers. Ellman and Feidelson introduce the last section of their anthology, "Faith," with a clear statement of modernity as a secularizing force. They write: "The declining authority of the Christian churches, with the decline of the individual Christian faith, is a cultural fact that weighs heavily upon the modern consciousness." More recently, Theodore Ziolkowski argues that religious belief has disappeared, but that people have found secular surrogates for the religious practices which once ordered their lives.[22] All of these studies rely (explicitly or not) upon an understanding of religion that is influenced by Emile Durkheim who considers the natural state of the world to be profane (that is ordinary, undifferentiated, unbounded, open). Particular things of this world are, according to Durkheim, made sacred through the collective human action of setting them apart from the rest of the ordinary, natural world.[23] Secularization then, from this Durkeim-influenced perspective, is merely a reversion back to the natural state of things before it was transformed by collective human action.

Many more recent scholars have been less assured of the "facts" of declining church authority and especially of a decline in individual Christian faith. Ann Braude argues that the decline in American Christianity seen by Perry Miller and Ann Douglas is

instead a history of the shift in authority from men to women in the church.[24] Braude shows that it is impossible to advance a narrative of declension if the religious practices, beliefs, and authority of women are considered. She demands recognition of women's role in the church and with this recognition, revision of the secularization thesis. Similarly, Anthony Pinn shows that no one who knows the history of African American religion can support a narrative of religious decline. And Robert Orsi's description of vigorous American Catholic practice amongst first and second generation American immigrants exposes still more cracks in the secularization thesis. The project of decentering and expanding the literary canon that runs parallel to these works of multicultural religious studies has been remarkably successful at bringing a more complex and a more accurate view of American religion, but the shift away from the old canonical writers has abandoned these writers to the old secularization narrative.[25] The deconstruction of the canon has, therefore, hardened the distinction between secular canonical writers and multicultural writers who have perhaps not yet become secular. With my choice of Herman Melville and T.S. Eliot as the two primary authors for my study, I directly engage the old canon, not reestablish its preeminence, but to demonstrate that these writers were moved by and responded to similar religious impulses that Braude, Pinn, and Orsi observe in women, people of color, the poor, and the marginalized. This project is already underway in British literary studies. Vincent Pecora reconsiders the works of Matthew Arnold and Virginia Woolf to contend that secularism doesn't unfold with modernity as linear Hegelian progress; instead the process unfolds by *verwindung,* that is, an "extended errant process of recollection, transformation, convalescence and emancipation, a process of constantly doubling back upon itself."[26]

Pericles Lewis similarly argues that modern novelists (Henry James, Proust, Woolf, and Kafka) were far more ambivalent about the facts of modernity's secularizing power than were contemporary social scientists (William James, Durkheim, Weber, Freud) and that they imagined a re-enchantment of the world, albeit a re-enchantment outside the bounds of traditional (or orthodox Christian) religious forms.[27]

Suzanne Kaufman's approach to modern French devotion to the Virgin Mary at Lourdes provides a model for my assessment of the modernity of Melville's and Eliot's pilgrimages.[28] In her study, Kauffman recognizes that the overwhelming display of religious devotion at Lourdes is a problem for those who associate modernity and secularism precisely because it occurred in nineteenth-century France. Critics who assume a parallelism between modern, secular, and France are faced with four options as they reckon with Lourdes devotion. First, they can reject or minimize the significance of religious devotion by marginalizing the participants. In this view, religious devotion at Lourdes presents no challenge to the concept of secular French modernity because the pilgrims, primarily rural peasants, women, and children, were not authentically French. Durkheim's separation of pure, true religion from the illicit and incoherent cultic practices that exist at its margins encourages this rejection of Lourdes as peripheral to the true French posture towards religion. The second option would be to simply subsume the sacred under the modern by arguing that the Lourdes pilgrims were not truly devoted to worship of the shrine as were medieval pilgrims. What is easily mistaken for devotion is simply mass tourism or some other secular end dressed up in the forms of religion.[29] Thirdly, one could recognize that the pilgrims' actions are authentic expressions of religious devotion, but then conclude with Bruno Latour that France, like the rest of the

world, is not, and has never been modern.[30] The final option is to allow both the reality of devotion at Lourdes and the modernity of France to stand. Kauffman accomplishes a union of "Religion and Modernity" by rejecting Durkheim's notion of the sacred as something set apart. Instead of regarding the sacred as completely divorced from the profane, Kauffman illustrates that everyday activities (commerce, transportation, bodily function) are, and likely always have been, caught up in the experience of the sacred.

Just as Kauffman chose France as an undeniably modern society for the subject of her study, I chose Melville and Eliot as subjects whose stylistic modernism and whose modernist sensibilities are unassailable. Because Melville and Eliot are benchmarks of early and high literary modernism and because they are also at the very center of the literary canon, they cannot be marginalized or conveniently forgotten as a group of poor French peasant women might be.

Like Kauffman, John Eade and Simon Coleman recognize a place for religious devotion in the modern world, but while she examines the pilgrimage to Lourdes, an experience that is described by strict definition of pilgrimage, Eade and Coleman stretch the term to cover not just historic religious journeys as pilgrimages, but also travels as diverse as a veterans' motorcycle tour to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, a return to Ghanian slave-trade castles, and a trip to find an ancestor's farm in the Scottish Highlands.[31] These editorial choices of varied pilgrimages reaffirm Eade and Michael Sallnow's earlier critique of Victor and Edith Turner's understanding of pilgrimage as a movement of individuals into *communitas,-* an intense form of egalitarian community oriented towards a common goal.[32] Eade, Sallnow, and Coleman reject the Turners' understanding of the gathering function of pilgrimage. They observe that the project of

the modern individual is the fashioning and stabilizing of an identity, but that the project of the postmodern individual is to avoid fixed identity and to keep his or her options open. Instead of pilgrimage's gathering and orienting role, Eade and Coleman argue for a dialectical understanding of the role of pilgrimage in identity formation: the pilgrim forms the pilgrimage at least as much as the pilgrimage forms the pilgrim.

Eade and Coleman are surely right to observe that the contemporary tendency is for people to avoid fixity, to keep their options open, and to exert more pressure on the world around them than it exerts on them. This is especially true of classic American pilgrims who resist the beaten track of the common pilgrimage routes in favor of open space. Though Eade and Coleman's definition of pilgrimage more accurately describes the majority of American pilgrimages, this dissertation draws on the Turners' much narrower definition, in part because it is uniquely anachronistic. Pilgrims of the Turners' type exist, but they just are not discussed very often. This dissertation corrects that oversight and recuperates the Turners' understanding of modern pilgrimage and adapts it to distinctly American and literary uses. For this study, the modifier "modern" in modern American pilgrimage distinguishes American place pilgrims from those who undertake pilgrimages in the mode of the Plymouth life pilgrims. They are modernists in the literary sense, in that they break with rather than exemplify the "supreme embodiment of Renaissance Enlightenment humanism." Moreover, in seeking out the muses of the Old World's pilgrimage sites, they break with American religious history and abandon an American tradition of life pilgrimage. Both Melville and Eliot do this in a poetic style that acknowledges a crisis of representation by shoring literary fragments against architectural ruin. In this sense, my use of "modern" in Modern American Pilgrims is

customary, but my use of it to describe Melville's and Eliot's pilgrimages in search of a stable spiritual dwelling place runs contrary to common usage. In describing an unsecular phenomenon as modern, I, like Kauffman, challenge the tight association of modern and secular.

Melville and Eliot as Modern American Pilgrims

In considering Melville and Eliot and Christianity, this dissertation revisits and reopens questions that have been thought settled for quite some time. From the 1940s to the 1970s, Melville and Eliot were the American authors to which critics turned when they wrote about literature and religion. Most every student of American literature knows that Melville had a "quarrel with God" and that Eliot began a "new life" when sometime around 1927 he became a "royalist in politics, a classicist in literature, and anglo-catholic in religion."[33] Many of these studies conclude that Melville was not a true pilgrim and that Eliot was not a real American writer.[34] In arguing that Melville and Eliot are Modern American Pilgrims, this dissertation participates in the reassessment of modernism's secular character and demands consideration of an alternate tradition of American pilgrimage.

Revision of twentieth-century views of Melville as an "irreverent pilgrim" and Eliot as an English writer is under way. Instead of seeing *Clarel* as a part of Melville's larger quarrel with God, Stan Goldman sees Melville engaging "the theological values of reverence, charity, hope and faith" in the poem, rather than "self-sufficiency, endurance, despair, pessimism, and agnosticism."[35] To Goldman, Melville used his spiritual crisis as a way to find personal faith under the pressure of doubt. William Potter argues that

Melville was thoroughly invested in a spiritual search by the time he traveled to the Holy Land. *Clarel*, in Potter's view is a work of comparative religion that synthesizes the "intersympathy of creeds" that Melville observed in Palestine.[36] Eric Sigg reaffirms Eliot's American origin and Lee Oser traces Eliot's debt to American writers throughout his poetic career.[37] Anita Patterson has taken a wider American view of Eliot, placing him in conversation with Caribbean and African American poets; like Oser, though, she shows Eliot preoccupied with American, rather than English, concerns.[38]

This dissertation extends the work that has been initiated by these more recent critics of Melville and Eliot by bringing an underexamined archive of primary source material to bear on their biographies and art. The literary, prose, and epistolary remains of Melville and Eliot are among the most well covered texts in American literary history. Melville's works, letters, and journals were published in authoritative editions by the Northwestern-Newberry press between 1968 and 1993.[39] Jay Leyda's famous *Melville Log* provides a day-by-day chronology of Melville's life; a similar, though online, chronology of Eliot's life is being produced by Loyola University.[40] Hershel Parker's massive and minutely detailed biography of Melville, and a similar, though shorter and less strictly historical, study of Eliot by Lyndall Gordon turn over every leaf that can be laid hold of with white-gloved hands.[41] No new Melville writing has been uncovered since the manuscript of *Typee* was found in 1982 in the garage of an old Berkshire home and was subsequently acquired by the New York Public Library. The second volume of Eliot's collected letters (1923-1925) was released in 2009, but it generated little fanfare because most of its most important letters had already been quoted or referenced in Eliot scholarship. Eliot scholars do eagerly await the release of Eliot's Emily Hale letters by

Princeton on January 1, 2020, and Melville scholars hold out hope for a chance discovery of another lost Melville manuscript – perhaps the long-sought *Southern Cross.* In the meantime, they revisit and reconsider the same material through different theoretical lenses.

Surprisingly, architectural artifacts and the geographical record have been less scoured by literary critics. This relative oversight is all the more surprising given the rise of ecocriticism in the past two decades. Ecocritics affirm the relevance of the environment (both the natural and built environment) in discussions of literature and pay close attention to the way that degradation of the environment affects writers and their art. While this dissertation is not strictly a work of ecocriticism, it does borrow a central understanding of that approach: the environment matters, not just as background or as a symbol, but because it exerts particular and identifiable pressure on writers and their art.

How Place Matters

I am not the first scholar to consider the particular places Melville's and Eliot's American homes and religious travels, but I bring a greater degree of particularity to my attention to architecture and geography than previous critics like Hershel Parker and Nancy Hargrove have brought to Melville and Eliot respectively.[42] Moreover, my approach to place differs from Parker's and Hargrove's approaches. Fundamental to my understanding of architectural and environmental place is my recognition that places change dramatically and quickly. Even the most casual literary pilgrims or tourists often recognize that the places they visit – be it a Frisbee-infested Walden Pond, the proximity of Melville's farm to an automobile-choked state highway, or the derelict parking garage

that stands on the lot that was once the boyhood home of T.S. Eliot – have been dramatically changed in the years since the writers encountered them. Though brass plaques, velvet ropes, preservation societies, and the National Register of Historic Places sometimes succeed in preserving a fiction of direct material access to the past through place, buildings and their contexts change dramatically. My method acknowledges this reality.

Instead of attempting to recreate an image of a past instant that never was, I document that the effacement of the structures that marked out the boundaries of the poets' homes was well underway during the authors' lifetimes. I do not consider built structures as ideal or merely designed synchronic artifacts; instead I consider the buildings as living (and in many cases, dying) structures whose patinas made claims that at times undermined or overwhelmed the rhetorical claims intended by their original designers.

A central claim of the dissertation is that these two authors lacked a stable dwelling place because of the tremendous pressures that came to bear on the structures and institutions that marked out the boundaries of their childhood homes. In considering these structures and institutions, I have in mind a concept of home that includes both built structures and the institutions that these structures house. Therefore, I am interested in the ways that houses and families, churches and congregations, schools and educations, offices and businesses formed Melville's and Eliot's sense of home and identity and view of the world. In the chapters that follow, I argue that the destruction of the material and institutional sources of Melville's and Eliot's identities led them not to wander aimlessly as exiles, but to journey purposefully to traditional sites of Christian pilgrimage. Unlike

many of their contemporaries and most of their antecedents, these two modern American pilgrims did not seek to make something new out of nothing; rather, they sought to recover something old that could both ground and transform them.

I find in Melville and Eliot the outlines of a four-part morphology of modern American pilgrimage. First, rapidly changing American society and culture destroyed the institutions and physical structures that mark out the boundaries of the author's home. This unsettling leads him or her to a search amongst sites of historical pilgrimage for an older, more original home to serve as a stable center.[43] The author's place pilgrimage fails to turn up this older, more original dwelling because the shrines have decayed. Finally, the writer responds to this failure by accommodating himself or herself to a more modest, but satisfactory poetic dwelling place amidst the ruins and fragments of the old shrine.[44]

How This Dissertation Is Organized

In the first part of the dissertation I seek to understand why Melville left his farm, family, and prose-writing career in 1856 for a long and uncomfortable journey to the Holy Land, and why seven years after the journey he was compelled to reckon with the experience in the form of an 18,000-line, 150-canto epic poem that he knew few readers would ever pick up. The first chapter shows how the project of self-fashioning that so effectively located Melville's ancestors in a family tradition, in a community, and within American history broke down in the face of early nineteenth-century urbanization and economic change. This first chapter concludes with an examination of Melville's short story "I and My Chimney" that contends that Melville's attempt to settle at the farm he named Arrowhead near Pittsfield, Massachusetts, was a rejection of his family's failed

projects of self-fashioning in favor of experimentation with a mode of life similar to what we now recognize as Heideggerian dwelling. This attempt, however, failed as well.

The second chapter considers Melville's 1856-57 journey to the Holy Land as Melville's response to his failed attempts to secure a satisfactory literary and spiritual place for himself. The barrenness of what was once the Land of Milk and Honey, the decay of Jerusalem, and especially the ruined Church of the Holy Sepulcher made the Holy Land (and by extension historic Christianity) just as inhospitable a spiritual resource for Melville as was his failed farm. Upon his return to the United States, and upon his abandonment of Arrowhead for a customs job in New York City, Melville responded to this inhospitality by returning poetically time and again to memorable geological and cultural features in the barren expanse of Judea in an attempt to construct poetically a coherent landscape out of the crumbling landmarks. I argue that the poem that followed the journey demonstrates Melville's engagement with, affinity for, and ultimate rejection of, religious discipline within an historical creed.

The second part of the dissertation turns to T.S. Eliot. In the third chapter, I reconsider T.S. Eliot's supposed rejection of the St. Louis world that his grandfather, William Greenleaf Eliot, and his parents, Henry Ware Eliot and Charlotte Champe Eliot, tried to construct. In this chapter, I argue that Eliot did not reject outright this world (a world landmarked by the Eliot home, St. Louis' Unitarian Church of the Messiah, and Smith Academy) as much as he fled its collapse. I show that between Eliot's departure for Harvard in 1909 and his return to St. Louis five years later, the city he knew was dramatically transformed. Not only had the Eliot family, the Church of the Messiah, and

Smith Academy relocated, the buildings that formerly housed the institutions were either demolished or dramatically transformed.

In the fourth chapter, I show that Eliot responded to the instability of the city of his youth by searching for a new home in London. Though London was manifestly more historically stable than the rapidly industrializing St. Louis, it too was being undermined. Like Melville, Eliot attempted to map a poetic dwelling with "The Waste Land" and, like Melville, this dwelling proved uninhabitable. Unlike Melville, Eliot responded to the spiritual devastation he encountered in London, Canterbury, and Walsingham by continuing to travel, ultimately finding a series of satisfactory dwelling places on what I describe as idiosyncratic pilgrimages. The Four Quartets are a record of these idiosyncratic pilgrimages.

The Relationship of Literature and Biography

This argument makes both biographical and literary claims; its biographical aspect demands explanation. For the critic of Melville—a man who staked his early literary career on a claim of the directly biographical nature of his imaginative writing—drawing connections between his literary works and his biography is complex. Nevertheless, it does not directly transgress Melville's instructions to his readers. In fact, Melville provides his readers with quite the opposite directive in the preface to his first novel, *Typee*:

> There are some things related in the narrative which will be sure to appear strange, or perhaps entirely incomprehensible, to the reader; but they cannot appear more so to him than they did to the author at the time. He

> has stated such matters just as they occurred, and leaves every one to form his own opinion concerning them; trusting that his anxious desire to speak the unvarnished truth will gain for him the confidence of his readers.

Melville obviously departed freely from the "unvarnished truth" of his experience in Polynesia, but he did present the living body of his companion Richard Tobias "Toby" Greene to double-down on his claim of the truth of his "peep at Polynesian life" when he was attacked as a liar in the popular press. After fending off savage attacks of the "unvarnished truth" of *Typee,* Melville understandably made fewer and less explicit claims of autobiography. As this dissertation shows, however, he returned time and again to the formula of turning his life into stories that he hoped would replicate the commercial success of *Typee*.

For the critic who engages Eliot's life and work, the relationship between biography and art is more fraught. Nearly directly opposite Melville, Eliot staked his early critical reputation on his contention that truly "valuable" literary art demanded the "continual self-sacrifice" of the poet and the "continual extinction of personality" from the poem. To a large extent, Eliot practiced what he preached. Either out of critical consistency or out of self-preservation, Eliot burned his letters throughout his life, determining again and again that "there would be no biography." To this day his legacy is closely guarded by his widow, Valerie Eliot, who frustrates would-be biographers by limiting access to his letters and by refusing permission to publish quotations from his work and unpublished writing.[45] In reconsidering Eliot's life and work together, I follow the example of Ronald Schuchard, who describes his task as a critical biographer as

"[probing] those aspects of the life that have exerted tremendous pressure on the art, the intersection or nodes where life events have become the material of art (or criticism) under intensive creative pressure and transformation." Schuchard uses the metaphor of cartography to illustrate the manner in which he "probes those aspects of [Eliot's] life:"

> The critic aims not only to record the unique complex of personal and artistic voices but to uncover the obscure figures and chart the forgotten events that once operated with significant effect on the artist's work. In effect, the critic becomes a kind of cartographer, constructing not a single map but a layered atlas of artistic and intellectual life, gradually erasing from terra incognita the grotesque emblems of reductive criticism.[46]

Because Schuchard draws primarily from Eliot's lectures and criticism to map Eliot's life, his atlas remains metaphorical. This dissertation charts and describes Eliot (and Melville) landmarks to sit beside Schuchard's figurative atlas as a literal gazetteer and field guide. This dissertation, then, is part biography, part critical study, and part field guide.[47]

A Literary Field Guide

Biographical and critical dissertations are familiar enough; a literary field guide demands some explanation. Two brief recollections help to explain how I came to write this hybrid genre and what I aim to accomplish with it. While many of my own experiences with literary places account for my interest in the relationship of place and literature, two encounters – an encounter with a book and an encounter with a place – are responsible for the subject and method of this study.

Just after I moved to a small apartment in the Crocus Hill neighborhood of St. Paul to begin my graduate studies at the University of Minnesota, I discovered John Koblas' *Guide to F. Scott Fitzgerald's St. Paul* while browsing Garrison Keillor's Selby Avenue book store, Common Good Books.[48] I bought the book fully intending to take my visiting relatives and friends on walking tours of the Fitzgerald sites that Koblas mapped in my neighborhood. Few of my friends were willing to follow me out on guided winter excursions down Summit Avenue, but I was fascinated by Koblas' book. In the guide, Koblas catalogues *all* of Fitzgerald's St. Paul haunts - buildings both standing and demolished, structures as significant as the home where Fitzgerald was born (481 Laurel Avenue) and as trivial as the drugstore where he occasionally bought cigarettes while he was writing *This Side of Paradise* (380 Selby Avenue, the building whose basement housed Common Good Books). At one point I contemplated a similarly comprehensive catalogue of Eliot's haunts, and had I been more daring or less ambitious, that project might have become this dissertation. But rather than provide empirical data for others to analyze, I decided to undertake that work myself, even though this new work meant that a truly comprehensive field guide would be impossible.

Koblas' book helps to explain my interest in the particularities of literary places, but an encounter with the City of London church, St. Mary Woolnoth, helped me work out a method to investigate the relationships between poet, text, and place. In the winter of 2002, as a young high school teacher, I chaperoned a group of thirty students on a tour of literary England and Ireland. One afternoon, while most of my students lunched at the McDonalds next to the Tower, I speed-walked half a mile across the City to St. Mary Woolnoth. I wanted to see the church whose bell "rang with a dead sound at the final

stroke of nine" in the first section of "The Waste Land," and I made my way to the church as a tourist, not as a scholar or as a pilgrim. When I came up King William Street from London Bridge, I saw a Starbucks built into what appeared to be the south front of the church. I was shocked - here bread and wine were literally turned into "toast and tea." And I was thrilled - corporate takeover is a perfectly poetic fate for a dead church in the heart of London's financial center. I snapped a few pictures, pondered an essay about the cultural afterlife of "The Waste Land," and then I ran back to McDonalds to catch my students before they scattered.

A few years later, I discovered that I was wrong about the Starbucks – it was built into a nineteenth-century building that was designed to blend into the church's façade, not into the church itself – but what I discovered about the history of the church at the architecture library at the University of Minnesota was far more disturbing. As I relate in chapter four, the church remains relatively whole above ground to this day, but its crypt was emptied in the nineteenth century to make way for an Underground station. My experience with the church, both on the streets of London and in a Minneapolis library led me to be both fascinated by the possibility of the architectural record and wary of it. My direct encounter with the place initiated a real but inaccurate sense of the building, but the historical record, along with my direct encounter led to a greater understanding than either one on their own could provide. This dissertation reverses the process for you, its reader. It introduces you to the facts of the places and invites you to go see them for yourself.

[1] Quoted in Alpert Matthews, "The Term Pilgrim Fathers and Early Celebrations of Forefather's Day," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts: Vol. XVII: Transactions 1913-1914* (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts Press, 1915), 317.
[2] The last phrase is Frederick Jackson Turner's, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner*, ed. John Mack Faragher (New York: Holt, 1994), 59.
[3] The phrase is William Bradford's in *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647*, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1952), 62.
[4] *Contemporary American Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 2000), *The Continuum Dictionary of Religion* (New York, 1994), *The Brill Dictionary of Religion* (Boston, 2006)
[5] Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 33.
[6] Anne Bradstreet, "As Weary Pilgrim" in *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. Jeannine Hensley (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap, 1967), 294.
[7] Dee Dyas, *Pilgrimage in Medieval English Literature700-1500* (Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 2, 246.
[8] Dyas, *Pilgrimage in Medieval English Literature,* 3-4
[9] Henry David Thoreau, "Walking," in *Excursions* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1893), 161.
[10] Stanley Cavell, *The Senses of Walden* (New York: Viking, 1974), 10.
[11] Bradstreet writes of the temptation to consider the earthly home a true abode in "Upon the Burning of Our House, July 10, 1666," *Works of Anne Bradstreet*, 292:

Thou hast an house on high erect
Fram'd by that mighty Architect,
With glory richly furnished,
Stands permanent tho' this bee fled.

[12] Cavell, *Senses of Walden*, 43.
[13] Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (New York: Norton Critical Edition,1992), 61.
[14] Cavell, *Senses of Walden*, 11
[15] Cavell, 29.
[16] Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1995), 325.
[17] Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*, 336.
[18] Buell, 336.
[19] Susan Stanford Friedman, "Definitional Excursions: The Meanings of Modern/Modernity/Modernism" in *Modernism / Modernity* 8:3 (September 2001), 497.
[20] Friedman, 505.
[21] J. Hillis Miller, *The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth Century Writers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1963), 1.
[22] Theodor Ziolkowski, *Modes of Faith: Secular Surrogates for Lost Religious Belief* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).
[23] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* trans. Karen E Fields. (New York: Free Press, 1995).
[24] Ann Braude, "Women's History *Is* American Religious History," *Retelling U.S. Religious History,* ed. Thomas Tweed (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 87-108.
[25] Louis Menand's Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Metaphysical Club* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2001) is a recent example of a book that locates white, male, Protestant writers (Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., William James, Charles Peirce, and John Dewey) into a linear narrative of secularization.
[26] Vincent Pecorah, *Secularization and Cultural Criticism: Religion, Nation, and Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 21.
[27] Pericles Lewis, *Religious Experience and the Modernist Novel* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2010).
[28] Suzanne Kaufman, "Religion and Modernity: The Case of the Lourdes Shrine in Nineteenth-Century France," *Disciplining Modernism,* ed. Pamela Caughie (New York: Palgrave, 2009).
[29] Ziolkowsky makes exactly this point in *Modes of Faith.*
[30] Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
[31] John Eade and Simon Coleman, *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion* (London: Routledge, 2004).

[32] Victor and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York: Columbia UP, 1978), 250.
[33] The quotations are taken from Lawrence Thompson's *Melville's Quarrel with God* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1952) and Lyndall Gordon *Eliot's New Life* (London: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1988). A. Rowland Sherrill observes a similar trajectory in his critical survey "Melville and Religion" in *A Companion to Melville Studies* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986). Eliot announced his political, literary, and religious outlook in the volume *For Lancelot Andrewes: Essays on Style and Order* (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1927), ix.
[34] See especially, Franklin Dickerson Walker, *Irreverent Pilgrims: Melville, Browne, and Twain in the Holy Land* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1974).
[35] Stan Goldman, *Melville's Protest Theism: The Hidden and Silent God in* Clarel (DeKalb, Il: Northern Illinois UP, 1993), 3.
[36] William Potter, *Melville's Clarel and the Intersympathy of Creeds* (Kent, OH: Kent State UP, 2004), xiii.
[37] Eric Sigg, *The American T.S. Eliot: A Study of the Early Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989). Lee Oser, *T.S. Eliot and American Poetry* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1998).
[38] Anita Patterson, *Race, American Literature, and Transnational Modernism* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2008).
[39] Volume one of the series is *Typee* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern-Newberry Press, 1968) and the last volume, number fifteen, is *Correspondence* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern-Newberry Press, 1993).
[40] Jay Leyda, *The Melville Log: A Documentary Life of Herman Melville 1819-1891* (New York: Harcourt, 1951).
[41] Hershel Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography*, 2 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1996 and 2002). Lyndall Gordon, *T.S. Eliot*: *An Imperfect Life* (New York: Norton, 1999).
[42] Parker, *Herman Melvile* and Nancy Hargrove, *Landscape as Symbol in the Poetry of T.S. Eliot* (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 1978).
[43] The assumption that a place of grounding or center is necessary or even desirable flies in the face of post-structuralist theory (valorization of exile, nomad, cosmopolitan, etc. It does matter that these are white men from distinguished families who have lost some of the material evidence of their distinction.
[44] I use this phrase "satisfactory place" throughout the dissertation to indicate a place that can adequately (if not perfectly) ground a person's identity. The phrase is Eliot's. In "Journey of the Magi" the speaker describes the moment of descending into the valley that holds Bethlehem and eventually finding the place of Christ's birth; he recalls that they ". . .arrived at evening, not a moment too soon/ Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory."
[45] Mark A. Fowler, "'The Quick in Pursuit of the Dead': Ian Hamilton and the Clash Between Literary Biographers and Copyright Owners," *Modernism and Copyright* ed. Paul K. Saint-Amour (New York: Oxford UP, 2010), 231.
[46] Ronald Schuchard, *Eliot's Dark Angel*: Intersections of Life and Art (New York: Oxford UP, 1999), 22.
[47] Though this dissertation perhaps opens the door to a wider historical argument, it does not offer Melville and Eliot as types or as representative men. The aims of the dissertation, then, are relatively modest. It is more of a documentary work than a survey.
[48] John Koblas, *A Guide to F. Scott Fitzgerald's St. Paul: A Traveler's Companion to His Homes & Haunts* (Minneapolis, Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2004). Sadly, the bookstore has planned to move from Selby Avenue to the corner of Grand and Snelling Avenues. While the new location is "larger [and] sunnier," it is well outside the center of literary mass in St. Paul.

CHAPTER ONE:

HERMAN MELVILLE AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN DWELLING

In late November, 1856, Herman Melville walked with Nathaniel Hawthorne along the barren sand dunes that fronted the Irish Sea near Southport, England. The intense friendship that the two writers had nurtured in the Berkshires four years earlier had been chilled by the circumstance of Hawthorne's appointment as U.S. Consul in Liverpool and his failure to secure a similar sinecure for Melville, but here on an English beach they quickly resumed their "former terms of sociability" and settled into "good talk."[1] As their friendship warmed, the early winter weather drove the two men to seek refuge in a trough between two sandy peaks where, out of the raw and howling wind, they sat and smoked and talked. Their conversation quickly became more intense than Hawthorne would have liked and he soon realized that his old friend was ill at ease. Melville, Hawthorne journaled,

> . . . has not been well, of late; he has been affected with neuralgic complaints in his head and limbs, and no doubt has suffered from too constant literary occupation, pursued without much success, latterly; and his writings, for a long while past, have indicated a morbid state of mind. So he left his place in Pittsfield, and has established his wife and family, I believe, with his father-in-law in Boston, and is thus far on his way to Constantinople. I do not wonder that he found it necessary to take an airing of the world, after so many years of toilsome pen-labor and domestic life, following upon so wild and adventurous a youth as was his.[2]

To Hawthorne, the cause of Melville's trouble was the "too constant literary occupation" that kept Melville clinched to his writing desk in an upstairs room of his farmhouse in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, a farmhouse whose mortgage Melville sought (unsuccessfully) to pay with his pen-labor. As Hawthorne saw it, Melville's writing bound him economically and geographically to a circumscribed, domestic life that grated against Melville's wanderlust. Hawthorne, perhaps reading a bit too much of Ishmael into Melville, seemed to think that a journey was exactly what Melville's soul needed.

As Hawthorne continues his assessment of Melville's malaise, however, he reveals his uncertainty about whether or not an "airing of the world" is what Melville really needs. Hawthorne continues,

> . . . Melville, as he always does, begins to reason of Providence and futurity, and of everything that lies beyond human ken, and informed me that he had "pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated"; but still he does not seem to rest in that anticipation; and, I think, will never rest until he gets hold of a definite belief. It is strange how he persists – and has persisted ever since I knew him, and probably long before – in wandering to-and-fro over these deserts, as dismal and monotonous as the sand hills amid which we were sitting. He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief; and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other. If he were a religious man, he would be one of the most truly religious and reverential; he has a very high and noble nature, and better worth immortality than most of us.[3]

In contrast to his initial assessment of Melville's Pittsfield life as busy and therefore circumscribed, toilsome and therefore altogether too settled, here Hawthorne observes that while Melville has been geographically restricted by the demands of professional writing, his mind has been in constant motion. Though Melville has been pent up in a house, he is far from at home there: "Still he does not seem to rest . . . and . . . will never rest," Hawthorne writes. Given Melville's geographic emplacement, it is "strange" that he "persists . . . in wandering too-and-fro." Though Melville's "airing of the world" makes sense to Hawthorne as a response to Melville's overly settled life, he is not nearly so certain that a journey is the solution to Melville's spiritual unsettledness.

Though Hawthorne was not sure of the precise nature of the relationships among Melville's writing, home, spiritual search, and the geographic journey that he undertook to the Holy Land, Hawthorne did recognize that these four aspects of Melville's life and art were bound intimately together. In this chapter I seek to untangle this web of relations to understand why Melville left his farm, family, and prose-writing career in 1856 for a long and uncomfortable journey to the Holy Land and why seven years after the journey he was compelled to reckon with the experience in the form of an 18,000-line, 150-canto epic poem. I conclude that Melville's pilgrimage to the Holy Land and the poem that came out of it were the culmination of a life-long inability to secure a satisfactory place within a family tradition, within a system of religious belief, within a national history, and within American letters. The first section of this chapter shows how the project of self-fashioning that so effectively located Melville's ancestors in a family tradition, in a community, and within American history broke down in the face of early nineteenth-century urbanization and economic change. The second section argues that

Melville's attempt to settle at the farm he named Arrowhead near Pittsfield, Massachusetts, was a rejection of his family's failed projects of self-fashioning in favor of experimentation with a mode of life similar to what we now recognize as Heideggerian dwelling. Despite the appeal of the combination of freedom and stability inherent in dwelling at Arrowhead, I show that Melville's experiment proved just as unstable as his family's self-fashioning. In the following chapter, I show that Melville responded by traveling to the Holy Land as a place pilgrim in 1856-57 to secure a satisfactory literary and spiritual place for himself. The journey, and especially the poem that followed the journey, demonstrate Melville's engagement with, but ultimate rejection of, an older, thoroughly pre-modern source of identity and meaning – religious discipline within an historical creed.

The task I undertake in this chapter amounts to a revision of the assessment of Melville's much-discussed religious views. Early assessments of Melville's attitudes towards religion emphasized his rejection of a stable, orthodox Calvinism in favor of a wholehearted skepticism that reached maturity in *Moby-Dick*. William Braswell argued that Melville lost a vigorous boyhood faith and then became in "the last portion of his life . . . [a] pathetic enigma of one who, unable to reconcile himself to the loss of his early faith, spent much time reasoning on the same old problems."[4] Lawrence Thompson rejected Braswell's assessment of Melville as a sorry figure in favor of him as a maturing creative genius, but retains Thompson's basic understanding of Melville as progressing in skepticism. Thompson considers the "thematic inconsistencies" and philosophical confusion in *Moby-Dick* to be "crafty and covert delight in skepticism." *Moby-Dick* then, in Thompson's view, is the culmination of Melville's progression into a "mature artistic

idiom" that couches his revulsion against Christian belief in rhetorical subterfuge.[5] T. Walter Herbert revised Thompson's argument to contend that the novel intentionally, manifestly, and irreparably "defaces" the "sacred image" of Christian doctrine in order to reshape its elements into a new tradition that is an entirely "original utterance."[6]

In this chapter, I break with all three of these critics by shifting attention away from the artistic triumph of *Moby-Dick* (1850) to the failures that haunted Melville during and after 1856-57. In shifting focus, I hope to shift understanding of Melville away from the view of him as a self-confident iconoclast, an irreverent pilgrim, or a modern comparative religionist to what I think is a much more accurate view, Melville as an earnest but wounded supplicant.

"Certain Shadowy Reminiscences": Melville's New York

In the twenty-one years between Herman Melville's birth in New York City in 1819 and his departure for life at sea aboard the whale ship *Acushnet* in 1841, Melville moved houses eight times and moved cities four times. Following these almost biennial removes were waves of urban redevelopment that razed most of the buildings that Melville inhabited. Melville's first house, however, bore no indication of the uncertainty and instability that would face him and his family in the coming decades. This house stood at No. 6 Pearl Street in New York City, just one block north of the Battery in lower Manhattan. In the second decade of the nineteenth century, the house was located in the middle of what had been for decades the most fashionable part of New York. The Melvills'[7] residence at this well-regarded address was made possible by the legacies of

Melville's grandfathers, Thomas Melvill and Peter Gansevoort, whose significant family wealth also made possible the wholesale import business that his father, Alan Melvill, owned on the corner of Pearl and Wall Streets. Within a year of Herman's birth, the Melvills moved one half mile north to a townhome at 55 Cortlandt Street. Both of the homes of Melville's early youth were located in dense, mixed use (commercial, industrial, residential) districts. Their close proximity to Allan's store on Pearl Street meant that Melville's father could move easily between work and home throughout the day and that he would regularly take his midday meal at home. Not only did Allan regard the boundary between work and home as relatively porous for himself, it seems that no clear line separated his children from the world in which he worked. In *Redburn*, Melville's semiautobiographical protagonist, Wellingborough Redburn, recalls "certain shadowy reminiscences of wharves, and warehouses, and shipping, with which a residence in a seaport during early childhood had supplied me," and he remembers walking the docks with his merchant father: "Particularly, I remembered standing with my father on the wharf when a large ship was getting under way, and rounding the head of the pier. I remembered the yo heave ho! of the sailors, as they just showed their woolen caps above the high bulwarks."[8] For Melville's mother, Maria Gansevoort Melville, who descended from one of the great Dutch families of colonial New York, the absence of a boundary between Allan's workplace and the family home was familiar and comfortable. Five generations of Dutch-American patricians who preceded Maria all lived under the same roof that covered the family's living quarters, a brewery, and a general store.[9]

Melville's reminiscences of life close to the docks and shops of New York are "shadowy" in part because he did not live in this commercial neighborhood for very long.

Melville was only four years old when the family left Cortlandt Street for a "handsome two Story house" at 33 Bleecker Street.[10] Practical considerations influenced the family's move out of the main commercial district of New York. While Allan Melvill recognized the economic advantages of living and working in New York, he also recognized that the very features that made New York so "unrivalled" a place to do business – the concentration of population and the constant arrivals of people and cargo from all corners of the world – also threatened his family. Just three months after extolling New York's commercial advantages to his old Boston friend Lemuel Shaw, Allan expressed grave concern about the city to his wife's brother, Peter Gansevoort: "New York is in a most deplorable condition," he wrote in the midst of an August cholera outbreak, "the Inhabitants south of Cortlandt St & Maiden Lane are flying off in all directions, & no one can anticipate the consequences of such a calamity . . . "[11] The Melvills moved north to escape filth and contagion. They succeeded in finding a healthier place to live, but this home proved no more permanent than their previous houses.

The newly-constructed home at 33 Bleecker Street into which the Melvills moved in 1823 was very different from the previous homes they had occupied. In her description of the home to her brother, Maria describes a wide hall and an open first floor plan that has the "pleasing effect" of ushering visitors through the home and out a door into the yard. This yard, she writes, is one hundred feet deep by twenty-six feet wide "With Grass Plot & flower beds." Maria also describes, "lofty ceilings," a "large space" in the garret with "large dormer windows comfortable for any Person" that provide a view of a "prospect extensive & pleasing . . . . " Allan too extolled the advantages of the home's location. In his own letter to Maria's brother Peter Gansevoort, Allan first

notes that two-story houses have "become fashionable strange as it may appear with any thing comfortable." He then explains that the vacant lot attached to the house "will be invaluable as a play ground for the Children" and the home's "open, dry, & elevated location" equidistant from Broadway and the Bowery "almost unite[s] the advantages of town & country." The advantages of town and country were most certainly clean air and open space for the children to play, far from the fumes, dirt and tumult of the commercial and increasingly industrial areas of town farther south. Instead of wandering the wharves and streets, the children were surrounded by the fields, forests, and ponds of Manhattan north of Bond Street. When the Melvills' four-year lease on the Bleecker Street home expired in 1828, they moved again to another newly built home, this time at 675 Broadway, one block north of their previous home on Bleecker Street. This home was situated midway between Bond Street and Jones Street on a 200-foot deep lot that extended all the way to Mercer Street. At the time when the Melvills occupied the house, their back door opened up directly to the fields and forests of undeveloped Manhattan. [12] Like her reaction to their previous home on Bleecker Street, Maria revels in the open space around her new home; she describes the house again in a letter to her brother:

> Mr Melvill has leased for five years at a reasonable rent a first rate 2 Story House in Broadway between Bond and Great Jones Street, on the Fashionable side of the Street being open in Front & no buildings on the side from Bond to Jones St which leaves a delightful opening & pure air for our boys to play. . .

The house on Broadway was the last house that the Melvills occupied in Manhattan. Allan's import business had long been hemorrhaging money and had

remained afloat only with loans from his father and against his wife's inheritance. In 1830, Allan had more than $20,000 in debt, was behind three months on his rent, and had closed his wholesale import storefront. A host of creditors hounded him. Fearing arrest for his unpaid and delinquent debts, Allan sent Maria, all of the children but Herman, and the majority of the family's possessions to Albany on October 8, 1830.[13] The next day Allan and his son gathered the remaining personal effects that they could carry in their hands and slipped out of the house on Broadway for the ferry to Albany. In making their way to the ferry, they surely passed by the family's earlier home on Cortlandt Street. It would not be difficult to imagine Allan too distracted to point out the home or for Herman's memories of the home to be too insubstantial for him to recognize it. If the young Melville did see the house, this would have been his last look at it. Between his departure for Albany and the time of his return to New York seven years later on the very same ferry dock, the house was torn down.

Hershel Parker insists that the Melvills' hasty evacuation from an incompletely packed-up home in the middle of the month tinted all of Melville's subsequent memories of his boyhood in New York, arguing that "his reminiscences of the Manhattan of his first decade were shadowy, blurred by the terror of fleeing the city with his father . . . ."[14] Though Parker is correct to point to the lasting effect of Melville's hasty departure on his impression of Manhattan, the blurring of Melville's memories of the New York of his childhood was not merely a result of departure under traumatic circumstances. Not only were the homes that he occupied razed to make way for more productive use of the real estate, but also the very features – grass, open space, clear air, the unique blend of town and country – that the family found remarkable disappeared as New York grew from a

town of 123,000 people in 1820 to a metropolis of more than 312,000 in 1840. In 1824, *The New York Evening Post* reflected on this growth, already well underway:

> We do not think that we can be charged with exaggeration when we state that there is not a city in the world which, in all respects, has advanced with greater rapidity, than the city of New York, in the last ten years. Whichever way we turn, new buildings present themselves to our notice. In the upper wards particularly, entire streets of elegant brick buildings have been formed on sites which only a few years ago were either covered with marshes, or occupied by a few straggling frame huts of little or no value.[15]

Even the solid brick buildings that displaced marshes or huts were far from permanent. Thirty years after the *Post* recognized the flattening of the natural topography of Manhattan into the grid system that was laid out in DeWitt Clinton's plan for the island, *Harper's Monthly* lamented, "New York is notoriously the largest and least loved of any of our great cities. Why should it be loved as a city? It is never the same city for a dozen years altogether. A man born forty years ago finds nothing, absolutely nothing of the New York he knew. If he chances to stumble upon a few old houses not yet leveled, he is fortunate. But the landmarks, the objects which marked the city to him, as a city are gone."[16] In 1849, Melville reflected on how much the city of New York had changed, and he imagined the course of these changes long into the future: Redburn observes,

> . . . the New York guidebooks are now vaunting of the magnitude of a town, whose future inhabitants, multitudinous as the pebbles on the beach,

> and girdled in with high walls and towers, flanking endless avenues of opulence and taste, will regard all our Broadways and Bowerys as but the paltry nucleus to their Nineveh. From far up the Hudson, beyond Harlem River, where the young saplings are now growing, that will overarch their lordly mansions with broad boughs, centuries old; they may send forth explorers to penetrate into the then obscure and smoky alleys of the Fifth Avenue and Fourteenth-street; and going still farther south, may exhume the present Doric Custom-house, and quote it as a proof that their high and mighty metropolis enjoyed a Hellenic antiquity.[17]

Melville anticipates a time when New York is so thoroughly changed that its residents will no longer recognize even its most prominent features.

The instability of home was all the more significant for Melville because of his family's association of home with faith. Melville was baptized at No. 6 Pearl Street two weeks after his birth. The day after the ceremony, Melville's father, Allan, inscribed a record of the baptism into the family bible, writing, "Herman Melvill born at New York at ½ past 11 PM Sunday August 1st 1819 – Baptized at home Thursday August 19th by the Rev Mr Matthews."[18] Matthews was the domine at New York's South Dutch Reformed Church, a congregation that Allan Melvill had not joined.[19] Allan's attention to the location of the ceremony in his description was therefore not inconsequential. While home baptism was not unheard of in Reformed churches in the early decades of the nineteenth century, public baptism of infants in the church was strongly preferred by church authorities. The Constitution of the Dutch Church that was adopted in 1815 directs, "The sacrament of baptism ought always to be administered in the Church at the

time of public worship . . . Baptising in private families, is therefore discountenanced and as much as possible avoided."[20] Beyond a few specific exceptions to the rule of public baptism in the Church, the Constitution of the Dutch Church ultimately left the decision to "the discretion of the Minister, to comply with the requests of parents for private baptisms or not." Given that no evidence suggests that the Melvills appealed for home baptism out of concern for either the health of the Maria Melvill or her newborn son, the Melvills likely appealed to the Reverend Matthews to baptize their son in their home so that they could exert some control over the sacrament. Allan and Maria's desire to mark the baptism as their own makes sense given their divided loyalties to the Dutch Reformed Church that Reverend Matthews served.[21] While Maria was brought up in Albany's First Dutch Reformed church, Allan was raised in Boston's First [Congregational] Church. A century before Allan's and Maria's marriage, these two branches of Protestantism would have seemed similar enough in doctrine for the couple to move relatively seamlessly between the denominations. Both branches affirmed Calvinist understandings of sin, calling, grace, and salvation. The ecclesiastical structure of the Dutch Reformed Church was far more hierarchical than the Congregational church's autonomous congregations, but both denominations gathered in spare worship spaces that softened distinctions between the priesthood and the laity and between sacred and secular space. Both denominations' churches reflected the Protestant Reformers' suspicions of material objects as potentially idolatrous and both denominations encouraged their faithful to consider all aspects of daily life a sacred calling. Both Allan's First Church and Maria's First Dutch Reformed Church sought to blend into the cityscape as meeting houses rather than to distinguish consecrated space as would a cathedral or a temple, and the churches'

absence of interior ornament, icons, shrines, and chapels reflected Reformed hostility towards practices of veneration specifically and sacramental life generally (figs. 3-4). By the nineteenth century, however, many Boston Congregationalists embraced Unitarianism with its less severe understanding of sin nature and its rejection of what it considered irrational elements of Christianity such as complete human depravity, the virgin birth and the atoning death and resurrection of Christ. In contrast to the Congregational church's move towards Unitarianism, the Dutch Church was, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the denomination that was most devoted to what it considered the "purity of the [Calvinist] doctrines as determined at [the Synod of] Dort."[22]

Though the denomination as a whole appears, to contemporary historians, to have changed very little over the course of its first two centuries in North America, Melville witnessed remarkable instability in particular churches within the denomination. Just after his baptism, his family left New York's South Dutch Reformed Church for a fellowship closer to their home on Cortlandt Street. The South Dutch Reformed congregation itself moved locations after a disastrous fire in 1837, then again in 1849 and yet again in 1890, each time following its migrating congregants ever northward. In 1799, Albany's First Dutch Reformed Church, the church that the Gansevoorts had attended since their arrival in Albany in the seventeenth century, moved from its original location on Market Street (where it stood as an impediment to commercial traffic) to a much larger structure on North Pearl Street. Unlike the Melvills' New York Dutch Reformed churches, Albany's First Dutch Reformed Church never relocated from this 1799 building; the congregation still meets in the same building today. Though the congregation remained geographically stable, its theology has shifted from the "purity of

Figure 3: Allan Melvill's church. First [Congregational] Church, Boston "Old Brick," Built 1712, Demolished 1808 (credit: Old State House Museum, Boston).
Figure 4: Maria Gansevoort's church. Dutch Reformed Church Albany. Built 1715, Demolished 1806.

the doctrines as determined at Dort." A composition written by Melville's younger sister Augusta in 1836 suggests the liberalization that was underway in the period of Melville's youth. In a composition saved by the family as perhaps exemplary, she wrote "Childhood is the happiest stage of our existence it is thin [then] if ever, that the cup of pleasure is sweet, then it is unpoisoned by sin and sorrow, and we may freely drink the draught unembittered with the thoughts and anxieties for the future." Augusta and her family managed to remain sufficiently orthodox to become members of the First Reformed Dutch Church while holding a view of human nature that is closer to Romantic notions of the pure child than to Dort's statement of original sin.[23]

Melville's experience of transience was neither unique nor all that tragic. Most nineteenth-century New Yorkers lost their homes, watched their neighborhoods change, and many probably cheered the development of vacant land; however, Melville's awkward relation to seemingly stable landmarks of his extended family in Albany and Boston reinforced his sense of his father's failure to make his own life out of the then blank map of Manhattan. After fleeing New York to escape creditors, Allan and his family moved into a house that Maria's brother Peter Gansevoort rented for them at 338 North Market Street in Albany. Whereas the Melvills' New York houses opened to the expanse of undeveloped Manhattan, their Albany home was hemmed in on three directions by well-established family institutions. South from the home was the Gansevoort mansion and the original Gansevoort homestead. Six blocks west on Steuben Street was Albany Academy, an institution that Peter served as a trustee and the school into which Herman and his brother Gansevoort were enrolled within four days of arriving in Albany from Manhattan. Albany's First Dutch Reformed Church, where six

generations of Gansevoorts had rented a pew, was five blocks northwest. Beyond one block of warehouses, wharves, and docks, the Hudson River formed the eastern boundary of the Melvills' Albany.

Of all these landmarks, the Gansevoort mansion in Albany stood most solidly against the instability and uncertainty that characterized the houses that Melville inhabited in New York. Located at 58 Market Street, the home was an imposing three-story brick structure that Peter and Maria's father, General Peter Gansevoort, built in 1801 to supplement (but not replace) the Dutch colonial home that had been the center of Gansevoort family and commerce since the seventeenth century.[24] In contrast to the houses where Melville grew up – new houses that were furnished and decorated with the latest imported fashions (acquired both by Maria and as closeouts from Allan's troubled import businesses), the Gansevoort mansion on Market Street was a museum of colonial Dutch New York and a shrine to General Gansevoort. The Gansevoorts displayed mementos of eighteenth-century Dutch Albany throughout the house: antique Dutch marquetry cabinets; mahogany wardrobes, desks, and bedsteads; and Dutch chairs, hall settles and old couches.[25] The house also contained cases and stacks of silver and china, including a prized silver tankard made by Peter Quintard (1699-1762) that bore both the Gansevoort coat of arms and the monogram of General Gansevoort's grandparents Leendert and Catarina Gansevoort.[26]

As much as the house testified to the Gansevoorts' long and prosperous history in Albany, the home was even more of a shrine to General Gansevoort himself. Before the Melville revival of the 1920s, General Gansevoort was by far the most famous person in a broad family tree that branched out amongst Gansevoorts, Lansings, Van Schaicks, and

Melvilles - all distinguished and wealthy families of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century New York.[27] Far beyond his own significant personal wealth and service to the city of Albany, Melville's maternal grandfather was renowned for his Revolutionary War defense of Fort Stanwix throughout a twenty-day siege. His determination protected Albany from advancing British forces and contributed to General Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga. Peter Gansevort's defense of Fort Stanwix was one of the few victories won by the beleaguered Continental Army and his heroism caught the eye of John Adams who wrote during the war, "Gansevoort has proven that it is possible to hold a fort."[28]

Even though General Gansevoort died in 1812, seven years before Herman's birth and eighteen years before the Melvills' flight to Albany, the home was filled with prominently displayed relics of his service to the early republic in the years of Melville's youth. General Gansevoort's widow, Catherine, and his bachelor son Peter served as votaries after his death. They preserved and displayed General Gansevoort's certificate of membership in the Society of the *Cincinnatus* that bore the signature of George Washington. They displayed swords, banners, and a drum that General Gansevoort had captured from the British in battle. They also proudly displayed portraits of Washington and Jefferson and a painting of Cornwall's surrender at Yorktown. Beyond these relics, Catherine kept trunks of uniforms and war paraphernalia including a camp bed and the large flag that General Gansevoort's regiment flew at Yorktown. The Gansevoort mansion became an even more hallowed place in 1825 when the Marquis de Lafayette visited the home to pay homage to General Gansevoort's memory during his celebrated American tour. Melville's uncle Peter recorded that when Lafayette was led to the painting of General Gansevoort, he "recognized our departed Fathers Portrait and bore

testimony to the accuracy" of the artist's representation of him.[29] All of this testified to and extended the patriarch's role in establishing the United States.

So significant were Gansevoort's relics and icons that they easily made the transition from private family mementos to artifacts of a public, national history. General Gansevoort's coat is one of the uniforms that the Smithsonian institution regularly exhibits as representative of a typical Revolutionary War officer's uniform.[30] The Henry Ford Musum in Dearborn, Michigan exhibits the camp bed that General Gansevoort presented to George Washington.[31] And today, the Quintard tankard is displayed in the silver collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. [32]

The history and tradition that was housed and actively cultivated in the Gansevoort mansion was not lost on Melville. In *Redburn*, Melville's protagonist, Wellingborough Redburn, contrasts the new construction he is surprised to find in Old World Liverpool with the historic homes he knew in Albany. Disappointed with the lack of history he sees in industrial Liverpool, Redburn observes, "Why, no buildings here look so ancient as the old gable-pointed mansion of my maternal grandfather at home, whose bricks were brought from Holland long before the revolutionary war! Tis a deceit--a gull--a sham--a hoax! This boasted England is no older than the State of New York: if it is, show me the proofs--point out the vouchers." Everything about the house suggested the long and stable history that Melville suggests in *Redburn*. The house's occupants consciously cultivated this sense, though perhaps the history was not so significant as the legends that grew out of the artifacts. Parker writes that in the years following the honor of Lafayette's visit, Peter "nurtured . . . a sense of the house as trophied and sacred" in Melville and his older brother Gansevoort. Parker observes, ". . .when they stood before

the portrait of the Hero of Fort Stanwix, they stood on the spot where General Lafayette himself had stood. That their own uncle and grandmother had entertained Lafayette meant that the children were in the presence, every visit, of blood kin freshly linked to the nation's earliest and most glorious epoch."[33] In Melville's family history, practices of devotion such as veneration of relics, icons, and shrines that had, in previous times and in other places, brought individuals under the authority of the church, were assumed by Melville's family to locate themselves within a family tradition and a national history.

Though the Gansevoort mansion appeared remarkably stable to Melville in his youth, even this landmark was not immune to the vicissitudes of change. The death of Melville's grandmother Catherine Van Schaick Gansevoort in 1830 left Peter alone in the house on Market Street. Freed from the care of his mother, Peter ended his self-imposed bachelorhood in 1833 by marrying Mary Sanford, the daughter of a wealthy and powerful New York City businessman and politician.[34] Peter's new wife was uncomfortable with the thought of living in the Gansevoort mansion, and just before the marriage, she wrote to her brother, "G[ansevoort] is going to sell his house as I will not live there." Beyond the discomfort of living in a shrine to a man who died before she was born, the Gansevoort mansion was no longer an appropriate residence for a person of Mary Sanford's social standing. In the 1830s, Albany was rapidly transformed by the trade that boomed as a result of the completion of the Erie Canal. The grand colonial Dutch homes of Market Street were being razed to build new hotels, saloons, and warehouses that supported the movement of goods and people from the river to the canal boats. Peter was at first unwilling to move, but in 1834 he relented, and he and Mary moved into a newly built townhouse on Clinton Square.

Peter did not sell the Gansevoort mansion as Mary had anticipated prior to their wedding; instead, he rented the house. His advertisement for the home in the Albany *Argus* testifies to the decay of the neighborhood that had worried his wife. The notice's suggestion that the "spacious dwelling house" possesses "every convenience for a private family, or a boarding-house" indicates that Peter recognized that it was unlikely that anyone would rent so grand a house in so busy a neighborhood for anything other than subdivision into a boarding house.[35] Peter and Mary's townhouse on Clinton Square was only a transitional residence; in 1838 they moved into a grand villa in a suburban location on Washington Avenue west of the center of Albany. Photographs of Peter and Mary's Washington Avenue residence from the 1870s reveal the proud display of the colonial Dutch china and silver, but none of the Revolutionary War artifacts. These relics were taken by Peter's brother Herman Gansevoort to his country home north of Saratoga, New York. [36] Contrary to his wife's expectation, Peter held the Gansevort Mansion until 1845, but when he sold the home, he must have known that it would be torn down to build the magnificent new Delevan House hotel which opened on the site that same year.[37]

Though Gansevoort's Albany home ceased to exist as a shrine after 1834 (Herman Melville's fifteenth year), material monuments to General Gansevoort's fame continued to emerge in the landscape of New York State throughout the nineteenth century. In the War of 1812, the people of New York built a fort on the Hudson River and named it Fort Gansevoort. The road that led to the fort was named Gansevoort Street and a Gansevoort Hotel was erected in the vicinity of the fort. In Albany, Melville's uncles Peter and Herman built Albany's finest hotel on the site of the original Gansevoort home after it burned down in 1834. They named it the Stanwix Hotel. When Melville's

second son was born in 1851, Melville and Elizabeth named him Stanwix as well. The small town north of Albany where General Gansevoort built his country home was incorporated in the nineteenth century as Gansevoort, New York.[38] When the property was sold out of the family in 1888, a local newspaper found the property's transfer newsworthy enough to announce its sale:

> "Estate of Miss Priscilla Melville, yesterday at Ganzevoort [*sic*] Station, eleven miles northwest from Saratoga Springs, sold the old mansion of Gen. Peter Ganzevoort of Revolutionary War fame . . . The old mansion was built by Gen. Ganzevoort about 1803 and was afterwards owned by his son Gen. Herman Ganzevoort from whom it descended to the late Miss Melville. The house is a quaint old structure, somewhat resembling that at Mt. Vernon. In it yet remains the bedstead and bookcase of Gen. Ganzevoort, but the furniture has been otherwise removed."[39]

Seventy years after General Gansevoort's death, the newspaper considers him something of a Yankee George Washington. In 1907, sixteen years after Melville's death and nearly a century after General Gansevoort's death, a bronze statue of General Gansevoort was unveiled in Rome, New York, near the former site of Fort Stanwix. In 1935, President Roosevelt signed a bill that established Fort Stanwix as a national monument, and in 1973 the fort was reconstructed after archaeologists uncovered its foundation.

Melville's grandfather remained a local, upstate hero well into the nineteenth century, but Melville was troubled by how quickly his fame faded from the national scene. In 1870, when Melville was fifty years old, he wrote his mother to tell her that he stopped into New York's Gansevoort Hotel at the corner of Twelfth Street and West

Street to test his grandfather's legacy. When he asked the desk clerk if anyone in the hotel could tell him "what this word Gansevoort means," a man in the lobby overheard his question and responded, incorrectly, "Sir . . . this hotel and the street of the same name are called after a rich family who in old times owned a great deal of property hereabouts." Melville described his outrage to his mother, "The dense ignorance of this solemn gentleman – his knowing nothing of the hero of Fort Stanwix, aroused such indignation in my breast, that disdaining to enlighten his benighted soul, I left the place without further colloquy." Melville further explained to his mother that when he returned to the "philosophic privacy of the Distric [Customs] office, [he] . . . moralized upon the instability of human glory and the evanescence of ---------- many other things." It is not insignificant that Melville had these thoughts of "evanescence" and the "instability of human glory" in 1870, the year that he began writing *Clarel*: *A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land.*

Melville's paternal grandfather, Thomas Melvill, was also a famous Revolutionary War patriot and, like General Gansevoort, his memory was enshrined in his home. By the time of Melville's boyhood, both his grandfather and his grandfather's home were visibly anachronistic relics of the Revolutionary era. The Melvill home was a large, three-story clapboard colonial building that stood on Green Street in the warren of old Boston. Though the house was built in a prosperous neighborhood, the vast majority of Melvill's wealthier neighbors had since relocated to newly developed areas like the airy lots of Beacon Hill. Thomas Melvill, however, chose to stay in his home even though the neighborhood had changed, and even though he could have afforded a much grander house. Though Melvill was less concerned with using his house to display his

wealth and stature than was General Gansevoort, the interiors of Melville's grandfathers' homes told remarkably similar stories.

Like Gansevoort's Market Street shrine, the furnishings and decorations of Thomas Melvill's Boston home projected an image of Melville's grandfather as a hero of the American Revolution. Where Gansevoort displayed arms captured from the British, Thomas Melvill displayed a small glass vial of tea from the Boston Tea Party. Like all good relics, the provenance of the tea is clouded by intrigue. Because the Tea Party participants engaged in a purely political protest and therefore disclaimed any tea as spoil, Thomas Melville explained his possession of a pinch of tea by showing guests the boots that caught the bits of tea from the wind as he poured crates of it into Boston Harbor. Like Gansevoort, Thomas Melvill announced his relation to the nation's founding fathers with an icon-like painting; where Gansevoort proudly displayed a portrait of Washington, Melvill displayed a copy of John Singleton Copley's famous portrait of his friend and fellow Tea Party conspirator, Samuel Adams. In addition to the Copley copy, the Melvill house contained paintings of Thomas and his wife Priscilla Scollay Melvill by Francis Alexander. Parker writes that these paintings became "objects of intense and reverent curiosity" to Melville and his older brother Gansevoort.[40] Today, the paintings hang in Boston's Old State House Museum.

Unlike Melville's maternal grandfather, Thomas Melvill was still alive when Melville was born, and he lived until 1832, his grandson's thirteenth year. In 1829, Melville visited his grandparents in Boston and Thomas took him on a walking tour of old Boston. Thomas recreated with his grandson the historic walk from the Old South Church (where Samuel Adams's anti-tea tax meeting was held the night of the Tea Party)

down Marlborogh and Milk Streets to Fort Hill and Griffin's Wharf, where tea was tossed into the harbor.[41] Though the plan and appearance of Boston had changed significantly in the fifty years since the Tea Party, Thomas Melville had changed very little. He still wore the fitted clothing and tricorn hat of the previous generation. A young Oliver Wendel Holmes canonized Thomas Melvill in his early poem, "The Last Leaf," a nostalgic poem that uses the aged Thomas Melvil as a metaphor for the passing of old Boston itself.

I saw him once before,
As he passed by the door,
    And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
    With his cane.
They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
    Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
    Through the town.
But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
    Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,

That it seems as if he said,

"They are gone!"

The mossy marbles rest

On the lips that he has prest

In their bloom,

And the names he loved to hear

Have been carved for many a year

On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said--

Poor old lady, she is dead

Long ago--

That he had a Roman nose,

And his cheek was like a rose

In the snow;

But now his nose is thin,

And it rests upon his chin

Like a staff,

And a crook is in his back,

And a melancholy crack

In his laugh.

I know it is a sin

For me to sit and grin

At him here;

But the old three-cornered hat,

And the breeches, and all that,

Are so queer!

And if I should live to be

The last leaf upon the tree

In the spring,

Let them smile, as I do now,

At the old forsaken bough

Where I cling.[42]

The poem proved an enduring reminiscence of both Thomas Melvil and old Boston; after its immediate popularity, it was reprinted frequently throughout the 1830s. In 1885, fully fifty years after its first publication, Houghton Mifflin reissued the poem as a book with illustrations by George Wharton Edwards and F. Hopkinson Smith. Holmes' appendix "The History of This Poem" names the elderly Thomas Melvil as the inspiration for the poem:

> The Poem was suggested by the sight of a figure well known to Bostonians of the years just mentioned, that of Major Thomas Melville, 'the last of the cocked hats,' as he was sometimes called . . . He was often pointed at as one of the 'Indians' of the famous 'Boston Tea Party' of 1774. His aspect among the crowds of a later generation reminded me of a withered leaf which has held to its stem through the storms of autumn

> and winter, and finds itself still clinging to its bough while the new growth of spring are bursting their buds and spreading their foliage all around it."

The book's illustrations heighten the sense that Melvill was the last link to the old Puritan Boston by illuminating the text of the poem with dozens of scallop shells, which, as the Plymouth Rock canopy indicates had become, by the nineteenth century, the sign of the Plymouth pilgrims. While the illustrations subtly establish the link between Melvill and the Plymouth founders with the scallops that are scattered throughout the text, the illustrations signal that the passing of Melville causes a break from this past by illustrating the last shell as shattered. The death of Thomas Melvill in 1832 combined with the death of Melville's father, Allan, the year before to cut Melville off from Boston, but because Melville's uncle Thomas owned a farm in Pittsfield, Massachusets, about forty miles east of Albany, Melville's separation from Boston did not cut him off from all Melvill connections.

As significant as the Gansevoort homes on Market Street were for the Maria and her children in the 1820s and 1830s, Thomas Melvill's farm, named Broadhall, was, for the young Herman Melville, the most hospitable place he knew (fig. 5). In the summer of 1832, a devastating cholera epidemic swept the Hudson River valley, and all families that had the means to flee, left the city. Maria took her children to Broadhall, and it was during this summer visit that Melville began to develop the deep affection for his uncle's farm that would later cause his cousin to write of Melville's "*first love* our *Berkshire* farm."[43] It is not difficult to see why Melville was captivated by life at Broadhall. It was, and to a large degree still is, surrounded by forests, streams, ponds, and mountains. Maria's description of life at Broadhall during the cholera summer leaves little question

Figure 5: Broadhall c. 1873, Pittsfield, Massachusetts (credit: Berkshire Athenaeum).

Figure 6: New York State Bank, Albany, New York. When the skyscraper was built in the 1920s, the architects incorporated the bank's original eighteenth century façade into the design.

as to why Melville - and later, in the 1840s, Emerson, Longfellow, and Hawthorne - found the area around Pittsfield so idyllic:

> The Family are very kind, the Children live on bread & milk, look brown & healthy – all have gained flesh . . . The air is delightful, we literally breathe sweets,
> the atmosphere is fill'd with fragrance from the new-mown hay, all around us, Gansevoort is employed, in raking & turning Hay, Fishing, rowing the Ladies across, & around a large pond back of the house, & in doing ample justice to the excellent Milk & delicious Butter of the Farm we are happy here . . . .[44]

Melville's affection for the farm was perhaps increased by his limited time there. Maria describes Gansevoort's activities in the letter but makes no mention of Melville's. This omission occurs because Melville's uncle Peter demanded that Melville to return to his clerk job at the New York State Bank. Peter was on the board of directors of the New York State Bank, and he arranged the job that pulled the twelve year old Melville out of the Albany Academy in 1832.[45]

If Broadhall was the most hospitable landmark in Melville's early life, the New York State Bank was by far the most stable. Located at 69 State Street, the bank was an imposing classical edifice that was designed to give the impression of solidity, stability, and security (fig. 6). The rhetoric of the building's façade was by no means dishonest. Unlike many other Albany banks, the New York State Bank weathered panics in 1819, 1837, and 1857. In 1881, the bank reflected on its seventy-five-year history in a promotional flyer. It announced,

> While hundreds of other moneyed institutions throughout the state have changed front, changed locality, and many of them have changed everything except for their bills, the old State Bank has for nearly a century preserved and maintained not only its unsullied repute as a high-toned and honorable banking house, but still occupies the very home in which its well-earned reputation has been made.[46]

In addition to this promotional history, the bank advertised its unchanging nature with a permanent brass plaque affixed to the exterior wall next to one of the arched doorways. The plaque similarly announced, "The oldest bank in the city of Albany, and the building is the oldest one erected for and continuously used as a banking house in the United States." While his mother, brothers, and sisters spent the rest of the summer at Broadhall, Melville copied documents and ran errands in the stifling city.

Thomas Augst's investigation of young, nineteenth-century white-collar workers provides context for Melville's situation at the New York State Bank and reveals that his tedious and stifling workday was hardly unique in nineteenth-century American cities. Augst shows that thousands of young men responded to the drudgery and boredom of clerical work by actively cultivating themselves through practices of reading, writing, and intellectual self-improvement.[47] These projects of self-improvement were undertaken in commercial situations no less sprit-crushing than Melville's. To be sure, Melville did experiment with some of the practices of self-fashioning that Augst recognizes in his clerks -- Melville did participate in a literary and debating society, and he read widely from Albany's subscription library as a replacement for formal education at Albany Academy – but what separates Melville from Augst's clerks, however, is Melville's

relation to his family's once-proud but suddenly crumbling history. Any attempt by Melville to rise like Augst's clerks would have been an act of reclamation and recuperation, not an act of heroic self-invention. Any project of self-invention would have been undercut by the crumbling and disappearing family landmarks that surrounded Melville. Melville was caught between his fellow clerks and his former patrician classmates at Albany Academy. With neither the freedom of self-invention nor the resources of family wealth, Melville began in 1839 the period of movement that Hawthorne describes as his "wild and adventurous . . . youth" when he signed on for a four-month voyage to Liverpool, England as a "boy" with the packet ship *St. Lawrence.*

Fifteen months after his return from Liverpool, Melville signed on with the *Acushnet* for what proved to be, for him, a three-year Pacific voyage.[48] The year before Melville sailed for Liverpool, Maria left Albany for a relatively busy and industrial portion of the small town of Lansingburgh, nine miles up the Hudson River. After the relocation, Herman's younger brother Allan reflected, "Economy was the object of this change of location, and the only one which influenced my mother to forsake the 'place of her heart,' her early companions and old friends. But what ties are so sacred as not to be broken, or in some manner effected by the agency of 'gold &silver.'"[49] For all of Lansingburgh's deficiencies, it was the place where Maria lived the longest since she had left the Gansevoort mansion in Albany in 1815 to marry Allan Melvill. She remained in the home for nine years, from 1838 to 1847, but Melville was away for much of this period of stability.

Melville brought the period of "wild and adventurous youth" to a close in 1845. Two related events contributed to his mooring. In the summer of 1845, Melville finished

Typee in an upstairs room of Maria's Lansingburg home. The subsequent publication and popular success of the novel provided Melville a solid enough financial footing and future prospect to win the approval of Justice Lemuel Shaw's approval of Melville's marriage to his daughter Elizabeth in August 1847. The next spring Melville, Elizabeth, Maria, and his brother Allan's family left the house in Lansingburg for a rented house in New York City.

Melville's "Eastern Jaunt"

In the fall of 1849, Melville left this New York home that he had established with his wife, brother, sister-in-law, mother, niece, and son and sailed for London with the proofs of *White Jacket,* intending to begin negotiations with an English publisher of the book. While journeying across the Atlantic, Melville met and struck up conversations with George A. Adler, "a German scholar . . . [and the] author of a formidable lexicon, (German & English)" and Dr. Franklin Taylor, "cousin to James Bayard Taylor the pedestrian traveler." Five days into the burgeoning friendship, Melville and Taylor "sketched a plan for going down the Danube from Vienna to Constantinople; thence to Athens in the steamer; to Beyroot & Jerusalem – Alexandria & the Pyramids." Confident that the tour could be completed at a "comparatively trifling expence," under the leadership of so accomplished a world traveler as Taylor, Melville exclaims in his journal, "I am full (just now) of this glorious *Eastern* jaunt. Think of it! - Jerusalem & the Pyramids – Constantinople, the Egean, & old Athens! –"[50] Three days later Melville was still so excited about the possible eastern jaunt that he "Spent the entire morning in the

main-top with Adler & Dr. Taylor, discussing our plans for the grand circuit of Europe and the East" (8).

Melville landed in Dover on November 6, 1849, and his visit to Canterbury Cathedral on the way from the port to London provides a sense of the way that Melville might have gone to the East in 1849 had he been able to realize his plan. His method of travel was hardly a pilgrimage; instead, his journey was a combination of business trip and touristic excursion. While awaiting landing at Dover, Melville decided to "get to London via Canterbury Cathedral" (12). Rather than a destination unto itself, Melville considers Canterbury a wayside attraction (albeit a significant site) en route to his primary destination, the great London publishing houses where he sought to secure favorable terms for the copy of *White Jacket* he carried with him. Melville was impressed by the cathedral, but his reaction is that of the interested traveler not the penitent pilgrim. He writes, "The cathedral is on many accounts the most remarkable in England. Henry II, his wife, & the Black Prince are here - & Beckett. Ugly place where they killed him. Fine cloisters. There is a fine thought expressed in one of the inscriptions on a tomb in the nave" (13). Melville's description of the Cathedral accounts for the important sights in objective, guidebook fashion, but he allows the Cathedral little more spiritual or emotional weight than the "fine specimen[s] of the old Elizabethan architecture" that he finds abounding in Kent or the beautiful views of Canterbury and "its numerous old churches" that he saw from the "fine promenade" provided by the old city walls. Though he makes no mention of pilgrims in his journal, Melville was struck by a history of pilgrimage so long-established and significant that the pavement around the location of Beckett's martyrdom was worn away by millions of pilgrim feet, knees,

and lips. One year after visiting Canterbury Cathedral, Melville compared the "worn and wrinkled" decks of the *Pequod* to the "pilgrim-worshipped flag-stone in Canterbury Cathedral where Becket bled."[51]

Upon his arrival in London, Melville found few publishers interested in *White Jacket* and no publisher willing to give him an advance for the book. Only Bentley's Publishing Company made Melville an offer, and they offered just £200 for first 1000 copies without an advance. Knowing that his failure to secure an advance doomed his planned "eastern jaunt" with Adler and Taylor, Melville conceded on November 17, "Bad news enough – I shall not see Rome – I'm floored – appetite unimpaired however – so down to Edinburgh Castles . . . " (20). One week later, as he waited for offers from other publishers, Melville took off on a truncated version of his grand tour – this two-week excursion taking him to Paris, Brussels, and Cologne and Coblentz on the Rhine. On this journey, Melville observed and remarked about a number of cathedrals and pilgrimage sites and toured them the same way he toured Canterbury Cathedral. Melville notes in his journal that he passed by Amiens as he traveled by train from the steamer terminal at Boulogne-sur-Mer to Paris, but he writes that he "Did not stop at Amiens to see the Cathedral there – no time" (30). In Paris, Melville visited Notre Dame, saw that it was under repair and considered it "A noble old pile" (31). So unmoved was Melville by Notre Dame that he devotes fewer words in his journal to the Cathedral than he gave to the description of the meal he took in the Rue Viviene the previous evening.

Melville was far more attentive to Cologne Cathedral than he was to Notre Dame, though this attention was likely the result of his being stranded in Cologne for a day longer than he anticipated. Melville writes that he found his way to the Cathedral, early

on Sunday morning and instead of participating in or observing the Mass, Melville remarks that he was “accosted” by a local tour guide intent upon showing him the “curios” of the cathedral. Melville left the cathedral, but returned after booking his hotel room for the evening, this time with the aid of a hotel tour guide. Instead of narrating the rushed and pestered experience of his first visit, Melville carefully describes the most important features of the building. He writes that he “saw the tomb of the *Three Kings of Cologne* – their skulls” and he continues, “The choir of the church is splendid. The structure itself is one of the most singular in the world. One transept is nearly complete – in new stone, and strangely contrasts with the ruinous condition of the vast unfinished tower on one side.” Like Canterbury Cathedral, the cathedral in Cologne becomes a footnote in *Moby-Dick*.[52] Though Melville was obviously interested in these sites of pilgrimage, he was not compelled to reckon with them. They are inert artifacts, aesthetic triumphs, picturesque ruins, and architectural curiosities, but they are not contemporary sites of devotion. While in Europe, he gathered up discrete features of these sites and incorporated them into his writing as ornamental flourishes; they neither penetrate the heart of his writing as primary subjects nor compel reorganization of his spiritual or philosophical outlook.

Melville’s journal is not solely concerned with superficialities. When Melville does ruminate in the continental portion of his journal, he ponders thoughts of home.[53]

Though Melville longed for home throughout his journey, at the very end of the tour, he considered extending his departure by three full weeks to accept an invitation to visit a duke at his manor home. Just after writing that he “is in all eagerness to get home,” Melville writes

> Yet here I have before me an *open prospect* to get some curious ideas of a style of life, which in all probability I shall never have again. I should much like to know what the highest English aristocracy really & practically is. And the Duke of Rutland's cordial invitation to visit him at his Castle furnishes me with just the thing I want. If I do not go, I am confident that hereafter I shall upbraid myself for neglecting such an *opportunity of procuring "material."* And Allan & others will account me a ninny. – I would not debate the matter a moment, were it not that at least three whole weeks must elapse ere I start for Belvoir Castle --- three weeks! (41-42, emphasis added)

Melville's deliberations about the visit indicate that he considered his journey a business trip. As much as an opportunity to sell the manuscript he had already produced, the journey was a search for more raw "material" for more stories. Ultimately, Melville decided against extending his trip and returned home as planned. Melville closes his journal of his 1849 European travels with the description of his departure from England on Christmas:

> Upon boarding [the ship bound for America], we at once set sail with a fair wind , & in less than 24 hours passed the Land's End & the Scilly Isles - & standing boldly out on the ocean, stretched away for New York. --- Five days have elapsed – the wind has still continued favorable, and the weather delightful. --- No events happen -- & therefore I shall keep no further diary. – I here close it, with my departure from England, and my pointing for home. ---- (47-48)

Just after a month later on January 30, 1850, he recorded one final entry as the ship neared New York harbor, “Got sight of a pilot boat, this morning about 12.M.” For all of Melville’s thoughts of home while away, his journal ends suddenly. The journal ends not at home but merely “pointing for home;” similarly, his ship ends neither in the security of the docks that ringed Manhattan, but merely in sight of the harbor pilot who will guide the ship to its home.

All Melville’s thoughts of home while across the Atlantic were idealized. As he neared the actual house where his mother, brother, wife, and children resided in New York, the realization of the instability of the house he left four months previously seems to have come back to him. Melville does not narrate a homecoming because there was not much of a story to tell. The first letter that Melville wrote upon his return to New York (to Evert Duyckinck), dwells upon exile, not happy homecoming. The letter accompanies a copy of Melville’s flop *Mardi*; in it, Melville wrote,

> Again: (as the divines say) political republics should be admitted the asylum for the persecuted of all nations; so, if Mardi be admitted to your shelves, your bibliographical Republic of Letters may find some contentment in the thought, that it has afforded refuge to a work, which almost everywhere else has been driven like a wild, mystic Mormon into shelterless exile.[54]

Beyond the experience of stepping back into the crowded and chaotic house at 103 Fourth Avenue that he shared with his mother and his brother’s family, Melville’s sense of homecoming was muted by his failure to secure adequate payment for his labor of the

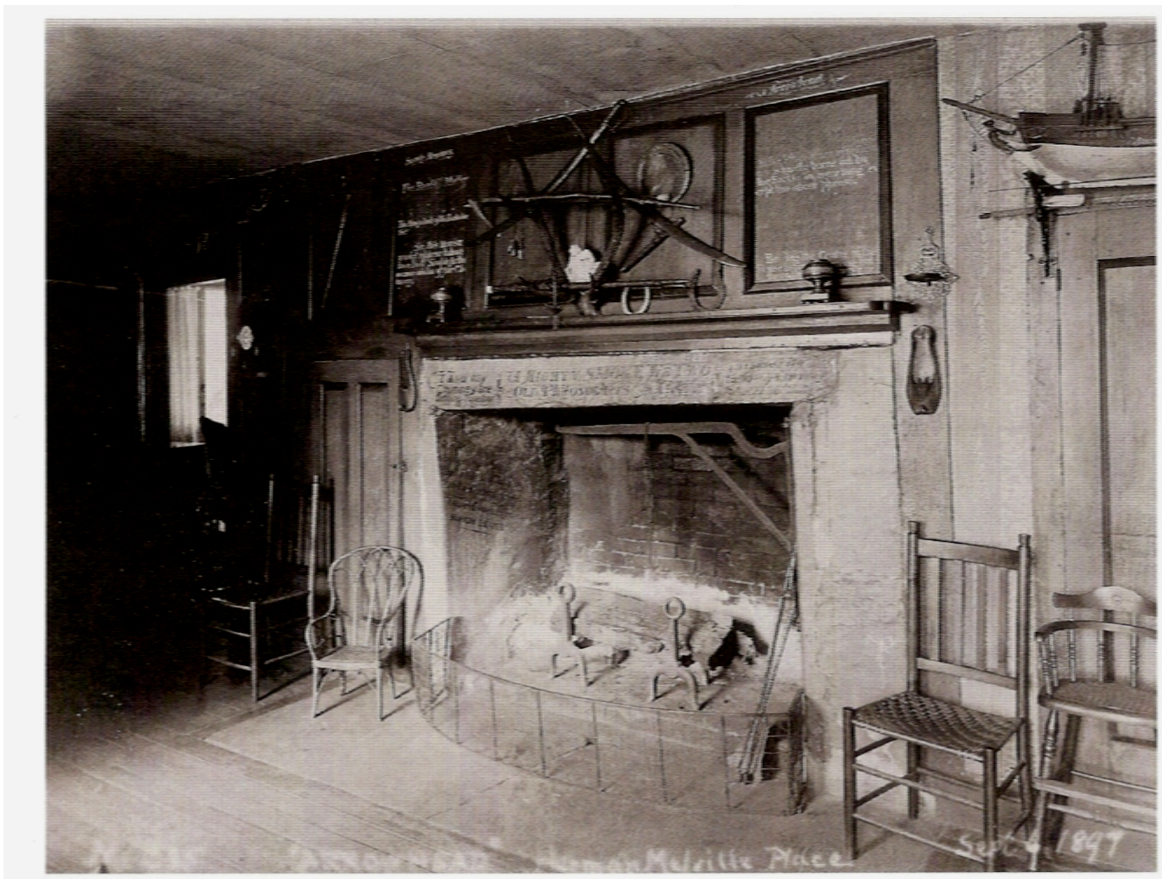
past year, *White Jacket*. Far from providing financial security, Melville signed over the note for £200 due him after the publication of the first 1000 copies for immediate cash in the amount of £180. Though he wrote *White Jacket* and the previous year's *Redburn* as "two jobs which [he did] for money—being forced to it as other men are to sawing wood," they seemed doomed to the same shelterless exile as his much more ambitious novel *Mardi*. At the time of his return from Europe, neither Melville's pen labor, nor his family, nor his travels, had brought him to a point of satisfactory stillness or rest.

Dwelling at Arrowhead

Melville's sense of dislocation upon his return to New York was compounded by his cousins' sale of his uncle's Pittsfield estate, Broadhall. The loss of the farm was devastating to Melville both because of his great affection for it and because it was the last remaining home that rooted Melville to a particular place in his family's history. Had Melville been in the country at the time of the sale, he would certainly have tried to purchase the farm and home, but he was away and the farm was lost.[55]

Failing to secure this treasured piece of land, Melville impulsively began work on acquiring a surrogate. With the aid of his wealthy father-in-law, Massachusetts Supreme Court Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw, Melville purchased a farm and house just over a hill from Broadhall. Melville did not spend much time shopping around, and he apparently did not negotiate the price of the farm. This property that Melville bought for sixty-five hundred dollars (exactly the price that the Morewoods paid for a stately house and 260

Figure 7: Herman Melville's Arrowhead as it appears today (photo by author).
Figure 8: Chimney room (kitchen) of Arrowhead farmhouse. Melville's brother Allan had the opening line of "I and My Chimney" Painted onto the fireplace mantle after he took possession of the house in 1863.



acres) consisted of 160 acres of farmland, an eighteenth-century inn converted into a farmhouse, and a handful of outbuildings (fig. 7).[56]

Melville's short story "I and My Chimney" contains his most sustained literary treatment of the Arrowhead farm and the idea of home. Originally published in *Putnam's Monthly Magazine* in March, 1856, the story details the experience of an elderly farmer whose wife wishes him to remove a substantial brick chimney that stands in the middle of their farmhouse. The man initially resists all appeals by his wife and their two daughters, but he finally acquiesces and hires a local stonemason and architect to examine the home in the hope that he would find remodeling impossible without bringing down the entire structure. To the man's dismay, the mason tells the man and his family that the chimney might be removed without destroying the house. Despite this turn, the old man prevails over his family's protests and the story ends with him "standing guard over [the] mossy old chimney" lest anyone undertake the remodeling while he was away.[57]

Critical assessments of the story and especially the chimney vary widely. Merton Sealts published the first extended analysis of the story in 1941. Sealts's essay, which provided the standard assessment of the story for nearly two decades, argues that the story "is Melville's subtle comment on a major spiritual crisis of his life."[58] More specifically, Sealts concludes that the story is "Melville's account of the examination of his mind made a few years before the story was written at the instigation of his family." Sealts observes that this mental examination, like the architect's assessment of the chimney, found no unsoundness. Twenty years later, Stuart Woodruff rejected Sealts' "private, autobiographical" understanding of the story and instead contended that the story dramatizes Melville's "anti-transcendental bias" and conservative notion of the

sources of identity.[59] Allan Emery follows Woodruff's rejection of Sealts' "private" reading to conclude that the story is Melville's comment on political disunion and the coming Civil War. For Emery, the farmhouse is the Union, the Chimney is the Constitution, the old man narrator is Daniel Webster, and the wife and architect are the abolitionists and secessionists intent upon tearing down the house and union (Emery leaves it to his readers to decide which character is the abolitionist and which is the secessionist).[60] Though they arrive at opposing conclusions, both Sealts and Emery make the same mistake of reaching too far beyond the particular artifact of the chimney to advance their precise allegorical readings.

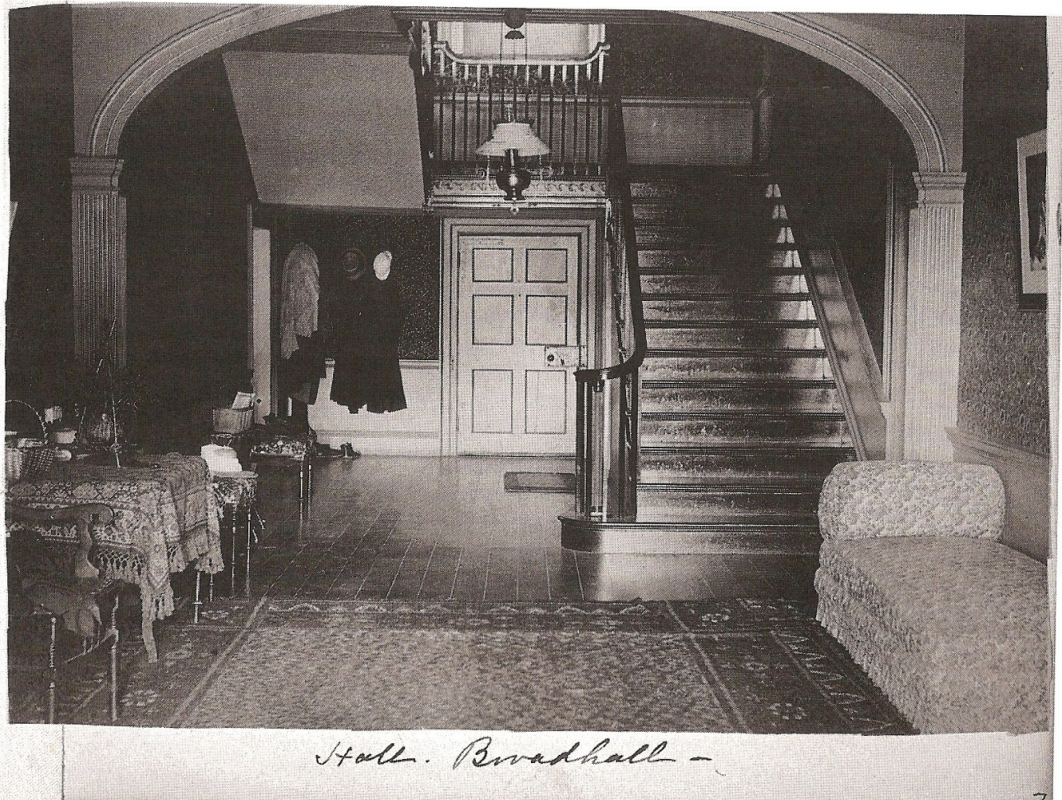
John Allison eschews Sealts's and Emery's allegorical approaches for historical study of the story that considers influences at once more manifest and closer to Arrowhead. [61] Allison considers the "resonances" between Hawthorne's "Peter Goldthwait's Treasure" and Melvile's "I and My Chimney" suggestive of "Melville's concurrence with at least two ideas implied by Hawthorne's tale: the traditional and familial origins of identity, and the visible representation of identity in material culture, especially architecture."[62] Melville's descriptions of the house in "I and My Chimney" is indeed a record of his engagement with the ideas of the familial and architectural sources of identity, but the story does not indicate Melville's concurrence with Hawthorne's views as Allison has argued. Instead, the story – read in its material context - demonstrates Melville's outright rejection of both the familial source of identity and architecture's power to represent identity.[63]

In the story, the narrator expresses his preference for his house's central fireplace and chimney to what he considers modern "double houses – that is, where the hall is in

the middle - the fire-places usually . . . on opposite sides." The narrator considers modern "double houses" to be "egotistical, selfish" and "treacherously hollow . . . weak"; this "style of chimney building originated with some architect afflicted with a quarrelsome family," he concludes (353). Far from being a simple matter of taste, the narrator's scorn for "double houses" is a thinly veiled critique of the two country houses that stood for Melville's maternal and paternal ancestors. Both Broadhall (figs. 5 and 10) and the Gansevoort estate (fig. 9) in Gansevoort, New York are "double houses" with broad entry halls that divide the main first floor living space into two halves. The farmhouse and chimney that are described in the story are in complete accord with the material facts of Melville's own home and chimney at Arrowhead, though the story of the pestering wife, interfering architect, and obstinate old husband was apparently the creation of Melville's imagination.[64]

Both houses have fireplaces along the outside walls and Broadhall's fireplaces are at the four corners of the house. The narrator's dislike of this type of house and Melville's own affection for the plan of his more modest home demonstrates that by 1856, he had broken free from his "first love [his uncle's] Berkshire farm." Beyond Melville's aesthetic break with these particular family homes, his narrator's outright rejection of architectural fashion demonstrates his decision not to trade in the cultural economy of architecture. In the story, the narrator rejects whatever cultural capital his house might be made to project by embracing its unfashionability and by savaging the architect who proposes a plan to bring the home up to date. The narrator loves the very feature – the central chimney – that makes his house so unfashionable. The architect's own home contrasts with the narrator's as a model of architectural fashion that the narrator's wife

Figure 9: Gansevoort Estate, Gansevoort, New York
Figure 10: Hall, Broadhall c. 1873, Pittsfield, New York (Credit: Pittsfield Athenaeum)



and daughter swoon over. To the narrator, the architect's home embodies the absurdity and inauthenticity of its name "New Petra." As its name implies, the architect's home is a contrived assemblage, a "griffin-like house of wood and stucco, in the highest style of ornamentational art, graced with four chimneys in the form of erect dragons spouting smoke from their nostrils . . . " The architect built this "elegant modern residence," the narrator explains, "for the purpose of a standing advertisement, not more of his taste as an architect, than his solidity as a master mason" (368). In contrast to the architect who regards his home as a billboard, Melville was notoriously unconcerned about what his home advertised about him. Hershel Parker observes that Melville's Pittsfield neighbors "took contemptuous note of his letting the property . . . deteriorate to the point that even the conspicuous plot of ground immediately north of the house, between the already famous piazza and Mt. Greylock, had become an eyesore."[65] The property had become so tumbledown by 1862 that when Melville advertised the property for three months during the summer - the best selling months according to Parker - he was unable to attract any reasonable offers.[66]

Melville's failure to maintain his pasture and farmhouse to the standards of his neighbors should not be interpreted as disregard for the farm; both "I and My Chimney" and "The Piazza" (a short story written the same year, 1856, as "I and My Chimney") reveal Melville's deep interest in the farm and its potential for being a source - rather than a representation - of his identity. The narrator of "The Piazza," the second story that Melville wrote about Arrowhead in 1856, considers the farmhouse perfectly placed.[67] It stands in a "very paradise of painters," but the farmhouse's perfect placement is not merely the result of its location in a picturesque scene. Rather the home's perfect

placement results from its situation within what the narrator describes as "[t]he circle of the stars cut by the circle of the mountains." This circle of stars is revealed by the place of the house: the narrator continues, "At least, so looks it from the house; though, once upon the mountains, no circle of them can you see. Had the site been chosen five rods off, this charmed ring would not have been." Far from accounting for the social or monetary value of the home's view and setting, the narrator is concerned with the way the home's placement actively produces the circle made by the meeting of the star-filled sky and the mountain tops, even as the landscape and sky actively construct the home: "Whoever built the house," the narrator opines, "he builded better than he knew, or else Orion in the zenith flashed down his Damocles' sword to him some starry night and said, 'Build there.' For how, otherwise, could it have entered the builder's mind, that, upon the clearing being made, such a purple prospect would be his? -- nothing less than Greylock, with all his hills about him, like Charlemagne among his peers."[68]

With the benefit of hindsight, we can see in Melvile's descriptions of the placement of the farm much of the same impetus that drives Heidegger's thoughts of dwelling. Dwelling, in Heidegger's conception, is not a static concept, a once-and-for-all founding of a house. Rather, Heidegger considers dwelling - in its gerund form - as a fluid and ongoing process of meaning making through the unconcealing of meaningful relations. Dwelling, Heidegger writes, is the "stay of mortals on the earth," but this "stay" is not a simple cessation of movement.[69] It is a continual "set[ting] at peace," a "sparing," and a remaining "at peace within the free, the preserve that safeguards each thing in its essence." "The stay of mortals on the earth" demands recognition of human beings' relation to the earth as the "serving bearer, blossoming and fruiting, spreading out in rock

and water, rising up in plant and animal" as well as to the sky, "the vaulting path of the sun, the course of the changing moon, the wandering glitter of the stars, the year's seasons and their changes, the light and dusk of day . . . ." As the opening of "The Piazza" indicates, in 1856, Melville was meditating on the house's relationship to the sky and to the surrounding mountains, not on its relationship to the value of his neighbors' properties. He states this explicitly in "I and My Chimney" when he reflects on house building competition in cities:

> In towns there is large rivalry in building tall houses. If one gentleman builds his house four stories high, and another gentleman comes next door and builds five stories high, then the former, not to be looked down upon that way, immediately sends for his architect and claps a fifth and a sixth story on top of his previous four. And, not till the gentleman has achieved his aspiration, not till he has stolen over the way by twilight and observed how his sixth story soars beyond his neighbor's fifth—not till then does he retire to his rest with satisfaction.
>
> Such folks, it seems to me, need mountains for neighbors, to take this emulous conceit of soaring out of them. (354)

In addition to considering his house's relationship to the sky, Melville considers its place on – and in – the earth. The primary appeal of the house and especially its chimney for Melville's "I and My Chimney" narrator is not that it is old and settled, but that it is old and *settling*. He begins the story with the description, "I and my chimney, two grey-headed old smokers, reside in the country. We are, I may say, old settlers here; particularly my old chimney, which settles more and more every day" (352). The

chimney is so substantial that it moves downward deeper into the earth. The narrator senses that the chimney becomes more rooted with each passing day, but to gain a better understanding of exactly how deep the chimney has dug itself into the land, the narrator descends into the cellar with a light and shovel in hand:

> Large as the chimney appears upon the roof, that is nothing to its spaciousness below. At its base in the cellar, it is precisely twelve feet square; and hence covers precisely one hundred and forty-four superficial feet. What an appropriation of terra firma for a chimney, and what a huge load for this earth! . . . The dimensions given may, perhaps, seem fabulous. But, like those stones at Gilgal, which Joshua set up for a memorial of having passed over Jordan, does not my chimney remain, even unto this day?
>
> Very often I go down into my cellar, and attentively survey that vast square of masonry. I stand long, and ponder over, and wonder at it. It has a druidical look, away down in the umbrageous cellar there whose numerous vaulted passages, and far glens of gloom, resemble the dark, damp depths of primeval woods. So strongly did this conceit steal over me, so deeply was I penetrated with wonder at the chimney, that one day--when I was a little out of my mind, I now think--getting a spade from the garden, I set to work, digging round the foundation, especially at the corners thereof, obscurely prompted by dreams of striking upon some old, earthen-worn memorial of that by-gone day, when, into all this gloom, the light of heaven entered, as the masons laid the foundation-stones

> peradventure sweltering under an August sun, or pelted by a March storm. (357)

In this passage, the narrator ascribes both religious and political meaning to the chimney's settling. In a later passage, he describes the chimney as a "grand high altar . . . right worthy for the celebration of high mass before the Pope of Rome, and all his cardinals" (359). Here though, the narrator draws his referents from times before the foundation of the western church. To him, the chimney is "like those stones at Gilgal, which Joshua set up for a memorial of having passed over Jordan." Finally, the chimney stands as a pre-historic and pagan monument. It has a "druidical look" that is reminiscent of the "dark damp depths of primeval woods" (357). The narrator's layering of religious traditions upon one another as he reaches far back to establish a sacred history of the site into which the chimney is sinking does not suggest religious contest; rather an ongoing accumulation of meaning.[70]

Because the chimney is old and settling, it makes demands on the inhabitants of the house and enforces a particular style of life. Far from resenting this, the narrator appreciates the way it gathers his family. In contrast to "double houses" like his uncles', whose fireplaces at the outer walls allow one family member to warm his feet at one fireplace while another can hold his feet to the blaze along another wall, "the two of them fairly sitting back to back," the narrator's home with its chimney in the center of the house, causes all family members and guests warm themselves facing the middle of the house "so, all their faces mutually look towards each other, yea, all their feet point to one centre; and, when they go to sleep in their beds, they all sleep round one warm chimney . . . " (353). The chimney's gathering role is not apolitical; its political

significance is manifestly anti-democratic, and monarchical imagery suffuses throughout the story. The narrator introduces the chimney as an "old Harry VIII of a chimney" and later admits that "It is the king of the house. I am but a suffered and inferior subject" (352, 358). As the reference to Henry VIII indicates, the chimney is a particular type of king. Like the "sacred majesty of Russia," it is an autocrat. The man's relation to this monarchical chimney is overwhelmingly positive because he, like Cardinal Wolsey whom he references, gains power from his proximity to the chimney. Despite the chimney's bulk and firm foundation, the man believes that both the chimney's precedence and his own authority within the house are tenuous. The narrator acknowledges that "the chimney excepted, I have little authority to lay down" (362).

As much as the man feels attached to the chimney, his wife and daughters detest it. On the surface, the women's dislike of the chimney is a matter of architectural fashion. Because the chimney stands in the very center of the house, the front door opens almost directly into it. Beyond causing an immediate cramped feeling upon entering the house, the chimney's bulk makes the addition of a proper hall for receiving guests impossible (fig. 11). However galling the aesthetic shortcomings of the house may be to the women of the story, their objections to the chimney are not simply matters of taste. Inversely proportional to the man's affection for the chimney's "preeminence" is his wife's view that the chimney "like the English aristocracy casts a contracting shade all around it"(359). While the man considers the chimney majestic like the Russian Tsar, the wife regards it the "bully of the house" (363). Failing to prevail upon her husband to allow the architect to remove the chimney, the narrator's wife takes control of the farmyard. One day the man finds some new boards laying in a corner of the property and says to his wife,

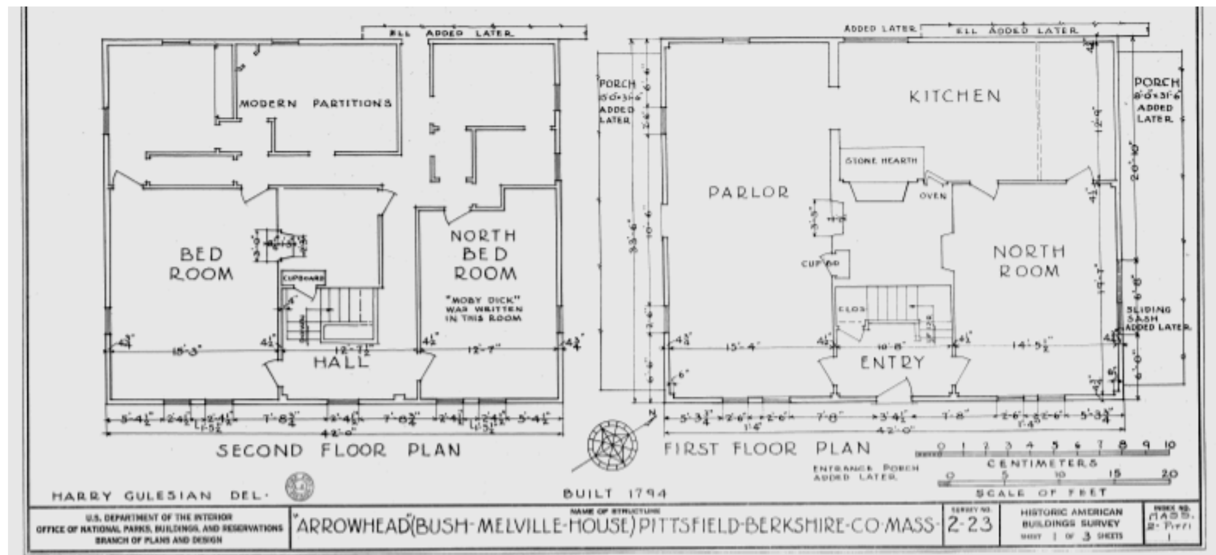


Figure 11: Reconstructed plan of Arrowhead Farmhouse as it appeared under Melville's ownership. (credit: Historic American Building Survey, 1934, HABS no. 2-23).

"Wife . . . whose boards and timbers are those I see near the orchard there? . . .You know I do not like the neighbors to use my land that way; they should ask permission first." The wife responds to his question and his claim of ownership by saying, "Why, old man, don't you know I am building a new barn? Didn't you know that old man?" The man claims that he is "through his easy compliances, insensibly stripped by degrees of one masculine prerogative after another," but he does not verbally respond to his wife's declaration. Instead, he appeals silently to his reader: "This is the poor old lady who was accusing me of tyrannizing over her" (363).

For all the chimney's girth, mass, and rootedness, the man recognizes that it is threatened and fragile. He knows that without his vigilant watch and care, the chimney will be pulled down. The story ends with the man shut up in the house with all his friends wondering why he no longer comes to the city to visit them. He rejects their conclusion that he has become a "mossy old misanthrope," and instead explains that "the fact is, I am simply standing guard over my mossy old chimney; for it is resolved between me and my chimney, that I and my chimney will never surrender" (377). The story ends with a Heideggerian tautology: the chimney upholds the man and the man preserves the chimney.

Compared to previous periods of his life, Melville's time at Arrowhead must have seemed rooted and stable. As his two short stories about the farm suggest, a set of meaningful relations to family history (his uncle's farm was just over the hill), to American literature, and to the cosmos (instead of a church, a the farm's beautiful placement under the sky and mountains orders everything) seemed very much within his

reach. But these meaningful relations ultimately proved elusive. This realization lies buried underneath the enthusiasm of the stories' depictions of life at Arrowhead.

After reviewing the manuscript of "I and My Chimney" for *Putnam's Magazine* in the early fall of 1856, editor George W. Curtis forwarded the story along to the managing partners with the recommendation, "I & My Chimney is a capital, genial, and humorous sketch by Melville, thoroughly magazinish . . . "[71] The humor of the story comes from the hyperbole of the man's descriptions of the chimney. Though uniquely structured and vaguely historic, the chimney is, after all, only a chimney. Attempts to link the chimney to a high altar, to the stones at Gilgal, to a pagan monument (or to a gigantic phallus or to Melville's mind, as previous literary critics have done) come across as absurd because no definable, observable meaning lies beneath or within it. While solid, no inscription or hidden history announces its significance. The man digs around the chimney in his cellar, looking for "some old, earthen-worn memorial of that day gone by when into all this gloom the light of heaven entered, as the masons laid the foundation stones . . . " but he comes up from the cellar empty-handed (357). Similarly there is no Pirate treasure within the chimney as the stone mason speculates. For all of the man's bluster and for all the vigor of his defense of the chimney, it appears at the end of the story as a "blank tower" whose significance is arbitrarily assigned and whose power to order the inhabitants' patterns of life is illegitimate.[72] The narrator's wife knows this, Curtis knew this, and Melville knew it. The search for meaning that "I and My Chimney" dramatizes, a search for meaning that moves from dwelling at peace within something similar to a Heideggerian background of meaningful relations to excavation in search of a solid and stable foundation, provides immediate context for Herman Melville's Holy

Land journey. Within eight months of the story's publication in the March 1856 issue of *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*, Melville was on board a steamer bound for the Mediterranean. He hoped to find certainty and stability and he was almost ready to lose himself to find it.

[1] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The English Notebooks*, ed. Randall Stewart (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1941), 432. Melville's recollection of the meeting was, characteristically, much more taciturn, "At Southport. An agreeable day. Took a long walk by the sea. Sand & Grass. Wild and desolate. A strong wind. Good Talk." Herman Melville, "Journal 1856-57," in *The Writings of Herman Melville, Volume 15: Journals* (Chicago: Northwestern-Newberry, 1989),

[2] Hawthorne, *English Notebooks,* 432.

[3] Hawthorne, 432.

[4] William Braswell, *Melville's Religious Thought: An Essay in Interpretation* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1943), 107.

[5] Lawrence Thompson, *Melville's Quarrel with God* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1952), 44.

[6] T. Walter Herbert, *Moby-Dick and Calvinism: A World Dismantled* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1977), 1-3.

[7] Herman Melville's mother Maria Gansevoort Melville changed the spelling of the family name from "Melvill" to "Melville" after the death of her husband Allan in 1831. To avoid confusion, in this chapter, "Melville" always refers to Herman Melville regardless of whether I am referring to him before or after Maria changed the family's name.

[8] Herman Melville, *Works of Herman Melville, Volume Four: Redburn, His First Voyage* (Chicago: Northwestern-Newberry, 1972), 4-5. While the passages from *Redburn* about wandering the docks with a merchant father may well be romanticized, the particular facts of the passage are consistent with Melville's biography. The passage continues, "Added to these reminiscences my *father*, now dead, had several times crossed the Atlantic on business affairs, for he had been an importer in Broad-street. And of winter evenings in New York, by the well-remembered sea-coal fire in old Greenwich-street. . ." (5). Allan Melville was an importer of fine French goods before his early death in 1832 and the family's home at 55 Cortland Street was closest to the corner of Cortland and Greenwich Streets. In *Melville's Early Life and Redburn* (New York: NYU Press, 1951), William Gilman cautions against reading *Redburn* as straight autobiography. He writes, "The author of *Redburn* was a great illusionist, a master of literary legerdemain. It has been fashionable for some time to consider his book autobiography with elements of romance. It is more correct to call it romance with elements of autobiography" (204).

[9] Maria's father, Peter, was the first of the Gansevoorts to move his manufacturing away from the family home; however, his use of the home as a headquarters for commercial, political, and military activity maintained continuity with the tradition of his ancestors, Alice P. Kenney, *The Gansevoorts of Albany: Dutch Patricians in the Upper Hudson Valley* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP, 1969), 184-185. Peter's forests and sawmill were located forty miles north of Albany near the town that now bears his name, Gansevoort, New York. After Peter's death, his son Herman (Melville's namesake) took up residence near the mill and left his father's Albany home in the sole possession of his younger brother Peter.

[10] Jay Leyda, *The Melville Log: A Documentary Life of Herman Melville, 1819-1891* (New York: Harcourt, 1951), 17. Hershel Parker, *Herman Melville: A Biography, Volume 1, 1819-1851* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 27.

[11] Leyda, 11.

[12] Parker, *Herman Melville*, 39.

[13] This was of course a time when debtor's prison was a real danger. Allan knew the humiliation of debtor's prison well. His brother Thomas had been in and out of prison throughout the decade prior to Allan's own bankruptcy.

[14] Parker, 40-41.

[15] Quoted in Rick Burns and James Sanders, *New York: An Illustrated History,* ed. Lisa Ades (New York: Knopf, 1999), 61.

[16] Quoted in Burns, *New York*, 71. Michel de Certeau expresses a sentiment similar to these nineteenth century sources when he observes that, "[u]nlike Rome, New York has never learned the art of growing old by playing on all its pasts. Its present invents itself, from hour to hour, in the act of throwing away its previous accomplishments and challenging the future," *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 91.

[17] Melville, *Redburn,* 149. The Customs House by Alexander Jackson Davis was completed in 1842. It still stands today - just across Wall Street from the New York Stock Exchange – as the Federal Hall National Memorial.

[18] Leyda, *The Melville Log*, 4.

[19] From 1693 to 1837, South Dutch Reformed Church stood on exchange place between Broad Street and William Street, just across Wall Street from the Customs House Melville references in his description of New York. Even if Melville had known that this was the church he was baptized into (though not in), it is with good reason that he does not mention it when he describes the Customs House. The church burned in 1837 and its congregation chose to rebuild on a different site - one half mile north at Murray Street – because so many of its congregants had relocated out of the southern tip of Manhattan.

[20] *The Constitution of the Reformed Dutch Church in the United States of America* (New York: Forman, 1815), 230. Though home baptism was not expressly forbidden, it was typically reserved for situations when the health of the child or its mother prevented her or him from leaving the house; for instance, during times of the year when carrying an infant into an unheated church would have been dangerous or for situations where a mother recovering from childbirth could not leave the home to participate in the baptism. Charles D. Cashdollar, *A Spiritual Home: Life in British and American Reformed Congregations 1830-1915* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 69.

[21] Herman Melville's father Allan's mention of the "intensely hot" August weather, the city being "as healthy as could reasonably be expected," and his wife's movement about the house and her quick recovery of "her usual strength" suggest that the Melvill's decision to hold the baptism in the home had little to do with concerns about the ability of the mother and child to survive the four-block journey to the church and back home again. Moreover, the purchase of four gallons of rum and four gallons of Holland gin the day before the baptism by Maria's mother, Catherine Gansevoort, does not suggest that the celebration following the baptism was either a small or a subdued affair, Leyda, *Melville Log*, 3-4.

[22] Firth Haring Fabend, *Zion on the Hudson: Dutch New York and New Jersey in the Age of Revivals* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2000), 4.

[23] Cf. *Canons of Dort* First Main Point, Article I: "Since all people have sinned in Adam and have come under the sentence of the curse and eternal death, God would have done no one an injustice if it had been his will to leave the entire human race in sin and under the curse, and to condemn them on account of their sin. As the apostle says: 'The whole world is liable to the condemnation of God' (Rom. 3:19), 'All have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God' (Rom. 3:23), and 'The wages of sin is death' (Rom. 6:23)."

Augusta's more liberal view of sin seems to be in line with the First Church's domine of the period, Reverend Thomas E. Vermilyea (1835-1839) a Presbyterian and a graduate of Princeton. He resigned his position at the First Church in 1839 to accept a position with the Dutch Reformed Collegiate Church in New York City, Robert Alexander, *Albany's First Church and its Role in the Growth of the City 1642-1942* (Delmar, New York: Privately Printed, 1988), 200-204.

[24] The Gansevoorts' and Melvill[e]s' practices of naming children after relatives makes discussing family affairs across generations very confusing. To distinguish between the elder and the younger Peter Gansevoorts, I will use "General Gansevoort" to refer to the father and "Peter" to refer to the son.

[25] Parker, *Herman Melville* 31.

[26] Kenney, images 5 and 7 following page 123.

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[27] The Lansing scrapbooks in the Gansevoort-Lansing Collection at the New York Public Library testify to this relation. Page after page of photographs, drawings, postcards, and artifacts precede the just one mention of Herman Melville. His photograph and autograph is pasted inconspicuously amongst his brothers and sisters in the corner of a page, titled "Children of Maria Gansevoort."

[28] Quoted in Kenney, *The Gansevoorts of Albany*, 105.

[29] Quoted in Parker, *Herman Melville,* 33.

[30] Smithsonian Institution, "Continental Army uniform coat worn by Brigadier-General Peter Gansevoort Jr. during his command of Fort Stanwix, New York, in 1777," *Legacies: Collecting America's History at the Smithsonian*, 2001, accessed 25 June 2010. <http://www.smithsonianlegacies.si.edu/objectdescription.cfm?ID=101>

[31] "Exhibits: George Washington Camp Bed," The Henry Ford Museum. http://www.hfmgv.org/museum/exhibits.aspx.

[32] Peter Quintard, Tankard, Silver, Metropolitan Museum of Art 01.3.2.

[33] Parker, 33.

[34] Kenney, 180.

[35] Quoted in Parker, 91.

[36] The photographs of Peter and Mary's Washington Avenue villa are collected in the "Albany Book," Gansevoort-Lansing Collection, New York Public Library. Before Peter and Mary moved out of the home, Peter invited his brother Herman to come to Albany to take what he wanted of their father's relics. Herman took some of the artifacts and the shrine was from this point forward divided between Peter's Albany homes (first Clinton Square and then Washington Avenue) and Herman's Gansevoort, New York farm.

[37] George Rogers Howell and Jonathan Tenney, *History of the County of Albany, N.Y. from 1609 to 1886* (New York: W.W. Munsell, 1886), 652.

[38] The inscription on the historical marker in front of the Gansevoort Mansion (erected by the New York State Education Department in 1942) reads: "GANSEVOORT MANSION General Peter Gansevoort a hero of the Revolution Received title in 1783 to this tract confiscated from Hugh Munro, Tory"

[39] Untitled newspaper clipping in "Albany Book" (p. 37), Gansevoort-Lansing Collection, New York Public Library.

[40] Parker, 44-45.

[41] Parker, 45.

[42] Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Last Leaf; Poem* (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1895). The poem was originally published in the *Amateur*, March 1831.

[43] Parker, 70.

[44] Quoted in Parker, 73.

[45] Parker, 68.

[46] New York State Bank promotional materials, "Albany Book," Gansevoort-Lansing Collection, New York Public Library.

[47] Thomas Augst, *The Clerk's Tale: Young Men and Moral Life in Nineteenth Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 14.

[48] Melville famously jumped the *Acushnet* in the Marquesas Islands, spent three weeks with the Typee, caught a ship to Hawaii, worked as a clerk in Honolulu for four months, and then sailed for Boston with the *USS United States*. In total, he was overseas from January 1841 to October 1844.

[49] Leyda, 79.

[50] Herman Melville, "Journal 1849-50" in *The Writings of Herman Melville, Volume 15: Journals*, ed. Howard C. Horsford and Lynn Horth (Chicago: Northwestern-Newberry, 1989), 7. Subsequent references will be in the text.

[51] Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (Chicago: Northwestern-Newberry, 1988).

[52] See *Moby-Dick* chapter 32, "Finally: It was stated at the outset, that this system would not be here, and at once, perfected. You cannot but plainly see that I have kept my word. But I now leave my cetological System standing thus unfinished, even as the great Cathedral of Cologne was left, with the crane still standing upon the top of the uncompleted tower. For small erections may be finished by their first architects; grand ones, true ones, ever leave the copestone to posterity. God keep me from ever completing anything. This whole book is but a draught -- nay, but the draught of a draught. Oh Time, Strength, Cash, and Patience!"

[53] Surprisingly for as seasoned and footloose a world traveler as Melville, nearly all of his daily journal entries end with a statement about home. In many of the entries Melville writes of return to his hotel room at the end of the day as a homecoming: on December 4, 1849 in Paris for example, Melville concludes his entry with "Then home & wrote up journal, as above. And now to bed. ---" The next day he writes, ". . .smoked a cigar & crossed the river home& to bed early." Back in London after the excursion, Melville writes of breakfasting in his familiar "old place," and going "home early & and to bed" in his familiar "old chamber" (37,39). Just as often as he considers hotel rooms a sort of temporary refuge – and especially while he sits in these often "cold" and "vacant" rooms at the end of the day – Melville reflects on his New York home. Especially in their description of Melville's time on the continent, Melville's entries end with a profound sense of homesickness. In the early morning of December 9, his last few hours in Cologne, Melville reflects,

> At nine o'clock (3 hours from now) I start for Coblentz – 60 miles from hence. – I feel homesick to be sure – being all alone with not a soul to talk to – but then the Rhine, is before me & I must on. The sky is overcast but it harmonizes with the spirit of the place" (36). Back in London one week later, Melville writes, "It is now 3. P.M. I have had a fire made and am smoking a cigar. Would that One I know were here. Would that Little One were here. ---- I am in a very painful state of uncertainty. I am all eagerness to get home – I ought to be home – my absence occasions uneasiness in a quarter where I must beseech heaven to grant repose.

[54] Herman Melville, *Correspondence: The Writings of Herman Melville, Volume Fourteen* (Chicago: Northwestern-Newberry, 1993), 154.

[55] "Very possibly Melville had spent the last several weeks chastising himself for not having known in time that the Melvill farm was to be sold; more likely if he coveted the farm and old mansion from the moment he learned the Morewoods were buying it for sixty-five hundred dollars, he was realistic enough to acknowledge that even if he had learned earlier that it was for sale he could not have afforded to buy it." Parker, 778. Just before his voyage to England and the Continent, Melville's cousin Priscilla wrote of his demonstrating "so much constancy toward the object of his first love, our Berkshire farm – as to *tear* himself from the idol of his heart" (his bride of less than a year Elizabeth Shaw Melville), Parker, 733.

[56] Joseph Smith quoted in Parker, 778.

[57] Herman Melville, "I and My Chimney," in *Works of Herman Melville, Volume Nine: The Piazza Tales and Other Prose Pieces 1839*-1860 (Chicago: Northwestern-Newberry, 1996), 352-377. Subsequent references will be in the text. Lest any future reader get the wrong impression of her from the story, Melville's wife, Elizabeth Melville, wrote a note of clarification on her printed copy of the story, "All this about his wife, applied to his mother – who was very vigorous and energetic about the farm, etc." Beyond deflecting the negative personality traits from herself to her mother-in-law, Elizabeth wrote unequivocally on the same copy of the story, "The proposed removal of the chimney is purely mythical." Merton Sealts, "Melville's 'I and My Chimney'," *American Literature* 13.2 (May 1941): 144.

[58] Sealts, 142.

[59] Melville's conservatism concerning identity is evident in his belief, interpreted by Woodruff, that "man is more likely to discover his identity through a sympathetic assessment of his past than by a naïve attempt

to project himself into an immediately submissive Utopian future." Stuart C. Woodruff, "Melville and His Chimney, "*PMLA* 75:3 (1960): 285.

[60] Allan Moore Emery, "The Political Significance of Melville's Chimney," The New England Quarterly 55:2 (1982): 201-228.

[61] John Allison, "Conservative Architecture: Hawthorne in Melville's "I and My Chimney," *South Central Review* 13:1 (1996): 17-25.

[62] Allison, "Conservative Architecture," 19.

[63] In addition to the architectural evidence that I bring to bear in the coming pages, the timeline of Melville and Hawthorne's relationship suggests argues against Allison's claim that Melville concurred with Hawthorne in "I and My Chimney." Allison's article does not address the problem of Melville and Hawthorne's strained relationship. 1856, the year that Melville wrote "I and My Chimney," was four years after Hawthorne left the Berkshires and two years after Hawthorne's consular appointment drove a deep wedge between the former friends.

[64] Both houses have fireplaces along the outside walls and Broadhall's fireplaces are at the four corners of the house. The narrator's dislike of this type of house and Melville's own affection for the plan of his own home demonstrate that by 1856 he had broken free from his "first love [his uncle's] Berkshire farm."

[65] Hershel Parker, "The Melville House at 104 East 26th Street," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 8.4 (1997): 37-46.

[66] Parker, "The Melville House," 37.

[67] Like the house in "I and My Chimney," the farmhouse in "The Piazza" accords with the architectural details of Arrowhead – most especially, the north-facing porch that Melville built onto the side of the house to take advantage of the view of Mount Greylock.

[68] Herman Melville, "The Piazza," *Works of Herman Melville, Volume Nine: The Piazza Tales and Other Prose Pieces 1839*-1860 (Chicago: Northwestern-Newberry, 1996), 1.

[69] Martin Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" *Basic Writing* ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1993), 351.

[70] Victor and Edith Turner. *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 17. The Turners write that Christian religious shrines were often established on previously significant pagan sites both in an attempt to efface the power of the earlier pagan religion but also to make use of the power by redirecting it to orthodox Christian ends. They cite Glastonbury, England; Croagh Patrick, Ireland; and Chalmas, Mexico as examples. See especially the Turners extended description the development of archaic pilgrimages in Mexico in chapter two, "Mexican Pilgrimages: Myth and History."

[71] Leyda, *Melville Log*, 507.

[72] The phrase "Blank Tower" is Melville's own from *Clarel* (Chicago: Northwestern-Newberry, 2008), 1.1.61.

Chapter Two: Melville's Holy Land Pilgrimage and Poem

In Hawthorne's recollection of his time with Melville on the beach near Southport, he observed that Melville's wandering to and fro was strange; he might have also recognized that his friend's specific journey to the Holy Land in search of definite belief was also very strange in the context of American literature. There is, of course, a long American tradition of pilgrimage, but Melville's journey was directly opposed to this tradition. Unlike the Plymouth Pilgrims, Thoreau, and American life pilgrims who sought (and continue to seek) open, untracked, and ahistorical space to fashion themselves into new and exemplary creations, Melville went to the Holy Land in the winter of 1856-57 to find a specific site of definite belief to which he could submit his life. What he found upon his arrival to the Holy Land, however, was even more decay than he had known in New York. The experience, in Melville's words, was "heart-sickening."[1] Fifteen years after his journey to Palestine, Melville began returning to the Holy Land; this time the visit was a poetic pilgrimage made from in the confines of a dark study in his New York City townhome. The themes and descriptions of the Holy Land in *Clarel: A Poem and a Pilgrimage in the Holy Land* (a work Melville began in 1870 and published in 1876) generally accord with the journal he kept while in Palestine, but whereas the journal emphasizes the degradation of the land and the hopelessness that is a result of encountering this decay, the poem considers (and ultimately rejects) solid places of refuge amongst the accretion and ruin of the Holy Land. This subtle difference in focus between the journal and the finished poem is the result of Melville's persistent engagement with the sites of the Holy Land as he found them and his attempt to find a satisfactory dwelling place among them.

Recent critical assessments of *Clarel* have either overlooked or neglected these stable and hospitable landmarks that Melville or his characters encountered in the Holy Land. Jenny Franchot argues that attempts to "bring Melville's wandering to rest" at a particular theological (or atheological) position are unwise. She contends that Melville sought not a stable god as a fixed point but a "traveling god," a Christian deity freed from the strictures of nineteenth-century Protestantism and made viable by its very inaccessibility and authentic otherness. According to Franchot, Melville restores Judeo-Christian viability by exposing the "hypocrisies and impracticalities" of nineteenth-century Protestantism to finally kill its decadent body. Melville then raises, indeed resurrects, Christianity to a "new ontological register" by reengaging and remobilizing scriptural and theological discourse through fragmentary citation, recurrent metaphorization, and willful misreading.[2] Contrary to Franchot, William Potter argues that Melville did not seek to make something new with *Clarel*; rather, he recovered something original. In Potter's view, Melville was a proto-comparative religionist who sifted through the various broken religious he encountered in the Holy Land to find whatever original truth they, together, might offer.[3] Potter contends that Melville believed that he could "discover and maintain faith in the materialistic and rationalistic nineteenth century . . . Only by shedding the now-useless shells of religious doctrine and orthodoxy, by recovering the true sources of belief: the great myths and patterns that animate all religious beliefs beneath their discrete exteriors." Potter makes Melville into his contemporary,Thoreau, who commands his readers to work their way down through "the mud and slush of opinion . . . to a hard bottom and rocks . . . which we can call reality."[4] Though Franchot sees sublation above the poem and Potter sees a

transcendental manifold behind or a hard bottom beneath its confused fragments of doctrine and practice, both Franchot and Potter see syntheses in *Clarel*.

I do not see such synthesis in *Clarel.* Instead, I see Melville wandering amongst whole and discrete material elements and religious systems that resisted the few feeble attempts he made to break them into manageable and useable pieces that he could appropriate and refashion according to the orientalist impulse that Edward Said sees in so many of Melville's pilgrim contemporaries. Said begins his analysis of "Pilgrims and Pilgrimages, British and French" with the statement, "Every European traveler or resident in the Orient has had to protect himself from its unsettling influences." In Said's view, Holy Land pilgrims are more interested in preserving themselves as figures and in imaginatively remaking the Orient than they are in "seeing what there is to be seen." Said's pilgrims are closed to the landscape and its people and remain unaffected by it.[5] Melville was not this type of modern pilgrim.

By 1856, Melville had come to believe that finding rest in a definite belief required him to relinquish control of himself as an autonomous, buffered subject.[6] Melville's comment to Hawthorne that he had "pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated" indicates that he had contemplated the necessity of submitting to whatever demands belief may make on him and that he was *nearly* willing to allow himself to cease to exist.[7] Melville's journal supports this reading of his comment to Hawthorne and reveals that he arrived in the Holy Land nearly ready to submit himself to the demands that definite belief may make on his life. In a section of the journal devoted to Jerusalem, Melville reflects on his method of investigating and engaging the Holy Land: "In pursuance of my object, the saturation of my mind with the atmosphere of Jerusalem,

offering myself up a passive subject, and no unwilling one, to its weird impressions, I always rose at dawn and walked without the walls."[8] Like his statement to Hawthorne, this reflection on his relationship to the environs of Jerusalem reveals his willingness to give himself up to something – here, it is the landscape. The statement "In pursuance of my object, the saturation of my mind with the atmosphere of Jerusalem" indicates that Melville desired not mere observation of the landscape; rather, he "pursued" the atmosphere of Jerusalem to the point of being overtaken by it through the saturation of his mind. This is very different from the mere collection of knowledge that comes from matching sites and sights with guidebook or tour guide descriptions. To achieve this saturation of mind, Melville recognized that he must abandon his remote and objective stance and instead "offer himself up," that is, willingly sacrifice himself as "a passive subject" to be moved both bodily and intellectually wherever the landscape's "weird impressions" may push him. The impressions that Melville records in his journal immediately after his statement of self-sacrifice to the landscape are consistent with his stated method. "Daily," Melville writes, I could not but be *struck* with the clusters of townspeople reposing along the arches near the Jaffa Gate . . . and the groups always *haunting* the neighboring fountains, vales & hills." Here, "struck" and "haunting" indicate that he is affected by the city and that he sympathizes with its inhabitants who "seemed to share [his] impatience at the insalubriousness of so small a city pent up by lofty walls" (86).

However, just as the "pretty much" of Melville's statement to Hawthorne suggests, Melville's decision to "offer himself up as a passive subject" was hedged and ambivalent. Melville vacillated between subjecting himself to the landscape and removing himself to

a position of objective observation, as is indicated by his methodological statement "[i]n pursuance of my object." While he uses the word "object" to mean "objective" rather than "object" in its strict Cartesian sense,[9] Melville's use of the term in combination with his recognition of the need to pursue the object suggests that he regards the "atmosphere of Jerusalem" as something exterior to himself. Oddly, he also states that he pursues the atmosphere of Jerusalem by walking outside the city walls at dawn. Lurking within this statement of submission to the landscape of the Holy City, then, is a statement of objectivity.

Objective observation was, of course, Melville's method of investigating the cathedrals he toured in Canterbury, Paris, and Cologne in 1849. It was also the mode he assumed initially upon arrival in Palestine. The first entries of his journal describe panoramic views of the Holy Land from various high points.[10] Melville's first recorded impressions of Jerusalem come from the "platform in front of [his] chamber" at the Mediterranean Hotel. From this private hotel balcony, Melville "command[ed] [a]view of [the] battered dome of Church of Sepulchre & Mount Olivet . . . open space, ruin of Old Latin Convent, destroyed by some enemy centuries ago & never since rebuilt" (79). Just after recalling the feeling of being "struck with the clusters of townspeople," Melville records that from Mount Zion, he "*survey*[ed] the tomb stones of hostile Armenians, Latins, and Greeks," he "*looked* along the hill side of Gihon over against me, and *watched* the precipitation of the solemn shadows of city towers" and his "eye rested on the cliff-girt basin." Moments like this of pulling back for a panoramic view from a high, remote point (often a roof top or a city tower on top of a hill) punctuate Melville's

journaled recollections of Jerusalem and indicate that he had only "*pretty much*" offered himself up.

Melville's descriptions of his encounters with the Church of the Holy Sepulcher suggest that he remained ambivalent about opening himself up to the landscape and its shrines because he was deeply suspicious about the authenticity of the sites. Like his survey from Mount Zion, the description of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is organized schematically and provides a groundplan sketch of the church from the entrance to the very center of the Aedicule, the structure that stands under the center of the Church's main rotunda as a representation of Christ's original rock-hewn tomb. Melville writes,

> At the entrance, in a sort of grotto in the wall a divan for Turkish policemen, where they sit crosslegged & smoking, scornfully observing the continuous troops of pilgrims entering & prostrating themselves before the anointing stone of Christ, which veined with streaks of mouldy red looks like a butcher's slab. – Near by is a blind stair of worn marble, ascending to the reputed Calvary where among other things the showman point you by the smoky light of old pawnbrokers lamps of dirty gold, the hole in which the cross was fixed and through a narrow grating as over a cole-cellar, point out the rent in the rock! On the same level, near by is a kind of gallery, raised with marble, overlooking the entrance of the church; and here almost everyday I would hang, looking down upon the spectacle of the scornful Turks on the divan, & the scorned pilgrims kissing the stone of the anointing.

While Melville disdains the Turkish policemen for their distant, unaffected, and unsympathetic assessment of the pilgrims who fall to kiss the stone where Christ was laid after his crucifixion and before his burial, he quickly assumes their posture. Instead of joining the continuous troop of pilgrims in their veneration of the slab, Melville separates himself from the faithful and ascends a balcony where he can watch the "spectacle" from above. From this objective position, Melville rejects the authenticity of both the anointing stone and Golgotha. The anointing stone's butcher-slab sheen and "mouldy red" veining is far too clichéd to be authentic. Melville had already seen far too many Palestinian stones (" . . . grotesque rocks – all perforated & honey combed – like rotting bones of mastodons. Everything looks old. Compared with these rocks, those in Europe or America look Juvenile") to be convinced that this polished, red-veined piece of marble was the actual stone upon which Christ was laid.

Despite Melville's own scorn at the pilgrims' unsophisticated and credulous fawning at sites he considers obviously invented, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher exerts enough of a pull to bring him back again and again. Even though Melville, like the Turkish guards, is scornful of the church and its pilgrims, he notes that he would "hang" from the gallery that overlooked the entrance of the church "almost everyday." Moreover, despite the long pause at this gallery in his description of the church, Melville continues in his journal to penetrate deeper into the Church, finally entering into the Aedicule, the structure that Crusaders and subsequent generations of caretakers of the church built to represent the tomb of Christ after Roman builders and early pilgrim relic-seekers had destroyed the original.[11] "In the midst of all, stands the Sepulcher; a church in a church," Melville describes the structure:

> It is of marbles, richly sculpted in parts & bearing the faded aspect of age. From its porch, issues a garish stream of light, upon the faces of the pilgrims who crowd for admittance into a space which will hold but four or five at a time. First passing a wee vestibule where is shown the stone on which the angel sat, you enter the tomb. It is like entering a lighted lanthorn. Wedged & half-dazzled, you stare for a moment on the ineloquence of the bedizened slab, and glad to come out, wipe your brow glad to escape as from the heat & jamb of a show-box. All is glitter and nothing is gold. A sickening cheat. The countenances of the poorest & most ignorant pilgrims would seem tacitly to confess it as well as your own. After being but a little while in the church, going the rapid round of the chapels & shrines, they either stand still in listless disappointment, or seat themselves in huddles about the numerous stairways, indifferently exchanging the sectarian gossip of the day.

Here, Melville's detailed description of the conditions of the interior of the Aedicule – "a wee vestibule . . . the stone where the angel sat . . . bedizened slab . . . " - shows that he himself entered the structure and that he felt the press of pilgrims "wedging" him into the space. Moreover, he twice mentions the faces of the pilgrims rather than simply their body positions as he did in his previous description from the balcony. Melville's encounter with the "countenances of the poorest & most ignorant pilgrims" does not elevate him above the credulous or push him away from these pilgrims; rather, their faces mirror or sympathize with his own disappointment. Despite his close encounter with the heat & jamb of the Aedicule and despite his moments of sympathy with his fellow

wedged, Melville's odd phrasing of the description in the second person removes him from the scene. Rather than narrating his own experience in the tomb, he describes the site in hypothetical terms.

Melville's description of the accretion and ruin of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre provides some explanation for his ambivalence about giving himself over to its shrines, grottoes, and chapels as do the pilgrims he observes. The Aedicule is characterized by an accretion of ornament and decay that both explains Melville's separation from the original material of the site of Christ's resurrection and calls into question the reliability of the church as a marker of the particular ground of Christ's passion. Melville describes the Aedicule as "richly sculpted;" it reflects a "garish stream of light;" it is "ineloquent" and "bedizened." So overwrought is the tomb that Melville considers it a "show-box," and he concludes, "All is glitter and nothing is gold." It is "A sickening cheat."

In *Clarel*, Melville's protagonist is similarly disappointed with the Aedicule, but unlike the assessment that Melvile wrote into his journal, the poem's narrator anticipates the question of whether the poem's protagonist's disappointment and discomfort at the tomb might be merely the result of his encounter with the unfamiliar aesthetic and iconography of Catholic and Eastern church architecture: " . . . Might it be," the narrator asks,

> That Clarel, who recoil did here,
>
> Shared but that shock of novelty
>
> Which makes some Protestants unglad
>
> First viewing the mysterious cheer

In Peter's fane? (1.5.53-58)

The narrator answers his own question negatively, "Nay, 'twas no novelty at all . . . /Another influence made swerve / And touched him in profounder nerve" than his Protestant preference for unadorned worship spaces (1.5.64-68). The cause of Clarel's doubt at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is not merely a matter of taste; rather, the real stimulus is that he, like Melville, is separated from the original site of the foundation of Christianity.

Like Melville himself, Clarel retreats from the rotunda and the "showbox" Aedicule into the chapel of Mary Magdalene in search of a more authentic encounter with the place of Christ's resurrection. The narrator observes that this is the chapel that marks the site of Christ's appearance to Mary after the resurrection and remembers that this appearance took place in the garden that surrounded the tomb (" . . . in a garden's bound / Our Lord was urned. On that green ground / He reappeared, by Mary claimed").[12] In the chapel that Clarel enters, however, the biblical garden's "Arbors [have] congealed to vaults of stone." This potent symbol of the original living setting of the biblical narrative petrified into human-wrought ornament compounds Clarel's discomfort and causes him to flee the church in search of a still more original and more authentic ground that could testify to the definite truth or fallacy of biblical history.

For Melville, visiting Jerusalem in the middle of the nineteenth century, before much of the work of archaeological excavation had been done, encountering anything original to the time of Christ was nearly impossible.[13] Melville observes in his journal, "There are *strata* of cities buried under the present surface of Jerusalem. Forty feet deep lie fragments of columns &c." (90). Not only did forty feet of rubble separate him from a

direct encounter with the sites of biblical action, what lay beneath these strata was unrecognizable – mere "fragments of columns &c." In the journal, Melville simply observes the distance between him and the ground Christ walked; in the poem, however, he directly connects the accretion of ruin and tradition to Clarel's spiritual crisis. After wandering aimlessly out of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and after stumbling out of the city through the Jaffa Gate, Clarel asks aloud, "Christ lived a Jew: and in Judea / May linger any breath of him?" He responds to his own question by wondering, "If nay, yet surely it is here / One best may learn if all be dim" suggesting that if encountering the risen, living Christ is impossible ("May linger any breath of him?") perhaps he can find some definite proof of the truth or fallacy of his historical existence. For days after leaving the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Clarel "rove the storied ground – / Tread many a site" but found that

> . . . serial wrecks on wrecks confound
> Era and monument and man
> Or rather, in stratifying way
> Bed and impact and overlay. (1.10.1-6)

In *Clarel,* Melville imagines three potential guides to lead the poem's protagonist out of his confusion. These three guides represent three different responses to the confounding landscape of the Holy Land. Nehemiah, the first guide Clarel encounters, is an itinerant evangelical missionary who disregards the material facts of the landscape and simply lays the biblical narrative over it. Even though the water of the Jordan River is brackish, to Nehemiah it is "As sugar sweet!" (2.24.70). Later, while traveling in the desert between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, Clarel meets Margoth, a "Hegelized" German Jew, a

"convert to science," who challenges the legends of the temptation of Christ and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by submitting the Mount of Temptation and the Dead Sea Plain to his geologist's hammer. He rejects the Gospel account of the temptation because he finds no tracks of Lucifer impressed in the rocks of the mount; all he can safely conclude about the site is that it is "Jura limestone, every spur." Clarel's third potential guide is Rolfe, a wanderer and world traveler who refuses to disregard either the material facts of the Holy landscape or the biblical account of history.

Clarel meets Rolfe on the Mount of Olives and finds him orienting his guidebook (not his Bible) to the panorama of Jerusalem across the Kedron Valley. Rolfe echoes Clarel's bewilderment among the layers of ruins in Jerusalem and challenges Nehemiah's application of biblical text to the distant landscape: Rolfe recognizes that Nehemia's "word/ Is Jeremiah's," and that the panorama of Jerusalem across the Kedron Valley and below them "tallies with [Nehemiah's biblical] text," but he questions the value of such easy application of minute bits of scripture to distant swaths of landscape in general. "How then?" Rolfe continues,

> Stays reason quite unvexed?
> Fulfillment here but falleth cold.
> That stable proof which man would fold,
> How may it be derived from things
> Subject to change and vanishings?
> But let that pass. (1.34.13-17)

Rolfe's question "How may [stable proof] be derived from things subject to change and vanishings?" is the primary question of the poem's first canto, "Jerusalem." Though the

question remains open (Rolfe simply lets the question pass after raising it) the first canto shows that the landscape of Jerusalem had been so thoroughly transformed by two millennia of veneration, desecration, neglect, and disregard of holy sites that in the nineteenth century it was impossible to find any site in the environs of Jerusalem true enough that a pilgrim as sensitive and honest as Melville could give himself up to. Failing to find anything definite in Jerusalem, Melville turns, both in the journal and in the poem, to the wilderness between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea as a site sufficiently unchanged that it might provide either a stable proof or a definite belief.

It is perhaps tempting to view Melville's turn to the Judean wilderness as a repudiation of place pilgrimage and a reentry into the American tradition of life pilgrimage. This would be a mistake. Melville undertook his brief errand into the Judean wilderness with a very different purpose from that of the Plymouth pilgrims and their descendants. Rather than seeking a "brave new world" or an encounter with "the planet in its nakedness" as a romantic hero, Melville sought in the wilderness of Palestine an encounter with a pristine biblical landscape as a way to find "stable proof."[14] But, just as with his similar hope for the city of Jerusalem, Melville found direct encounter with the stuff of biblical history impossible in the Judean wilderness. Though the landscape of the wilderness lacked Jerusalem's strata of "serial wrecks upon wrecks" that disgusted Melville and confounded Clarel, the Judean wilderness also proved to be a landscape dramatically transformed, indeed ruined, by human failure and divine judgment.

Melville's journal reveals his great disappointment with the landscape he encountered after leaving Jerusalem. As he rode to the Dead Sea, he found the valleys and hills "all barren"; the Kedron Valley, the main thoroughfare to Jericho, is "black and

funereal," and its opening to the Plain of Jerico "looks like Gate of Hell." From a distance, Melville thought the Plain of Jerico might offer some relief; it appeared to him "green, an orchard," but when he entered the plain, he found "only trees of the apple of Sodom," an appealing looking fruit tree whose apple-shaped seed pods secrete a noxious ooze and explodes into dust when touched.[15] From Jerico, Melville rode "over mouldy plain to Dead Sea" which struck him as like New York's Adirondacks stripped of vegetation: " Lake George – All but verdure," he observes. The "foam on beach & pebbles" of the Dead Sea reminded him of the "slaver of mad dog." After making the mistake of tasting the "smarting bitter of the water" of the sea, he "carried the bitter in [his] mouth all day." He can think of nothing other than "bitterness of life . . . of all bitter things . . . Bitter is it to be poor & bitter, to be reviled, Oh bitter are these waters of Death."

Melville's disappointment at the landscape of the Judean wilderness and his equation of moral failure with its barrenness is, from a twenty-first-century perspective, naive. The region is, after all, one of the driest regions on earth, and he could well have seen a stark beauty in the landscape instead of intimations of death and destruction. Melville's disappointment is not that the landscape is barren it is that it has *become* barren. By the time he had finished the poem, Melville, like many of his archaeologist and geographer contemporaries, had become certain that the Holy Land had been changed from its original state as the land of milk and honey.[16] The view across of a dry and barren wadi causes *Clarel*'s narrator to consider what it may have looked like in previous times:

When Joshua met the tribes in fray,

What wave here ran through leafy scene

Like uplands in Vermont the green;

What sylvan folk by mountain-base

Descrying showers about the crown

Of woods, foreknew the freshet's race

Quick to descend in torrent down

. . .

Or, earlier yet, could be a day,

In time's first youth and pristine May

When here the hunter stood alone--

Moccasined Nimrod, belted Boone;

And down the tube of fringed ravine

Siddim descried, a lilied scene?

But crime and earthquake, throes and war;

And heaven remands the flower and star.

(3.1.99-117)

The narrator represents the Holy Land's disastrous climatic shift in moral terms as a fall, but he leaves open the question of direct responsibility for the devastation he sees all around him. Human evil ("crime" and "war"), divine punishment ("heaven remands the flower") and natural geologic processes ("earthquake") all seem to bear some responsibility for the landscape's fall "from the banks of grace / Down to the sand pit's sterile place."

Melville's journal similarly leaves open the question of responsibility for the devastation of the landscape:

> Whitish mildew pervading whole tracts of landscape – bleached – leprosy – encrustation of curses – old cheese – bones of rocks, -- crunched, knawed & mumbled – mere refuse & rubbish of creation – Like that laying outside Jaffa Gate – all Judea seems to have been accumulations of this rubbish. So rubbishly, that no chiffonier could find any thing all over it. -- -- You see the anatomy – compares with ordinary regions as skeleton with living & rosy man. – No moss as in other ruins – no grace of decay – no ivy – The unleavened nakedness of desolation – whitish ashes – lime kilns Crossed elevated plains, with snails, that tracks of slime, all over – shut in by ashy hills – wretched sleep & black goats. – Arab hearses – Brook Kedron – two branches –

The imagery of disease and decay (mildew, leprosy) as well as unnatural elements like rubbish and the ashy slag heaps of lime kilns suggest that landscape is not merely barren; it is ruined. Moreover, "Arab hearses" as well as the journal's description of a "wretched Arab village" and the poem's "tent-lapped hills" suggest that the current Arab and Bedouin inhabitants are either responsible for the devastation or are the instrument and evidence of divine judgment.

Because the landscape has been so thoroughly changed since it was the setting for the events narrated in the bible, Melville and his characters cannot draw any definite conclusions, positive or negative, about the biblical record from the landscape. The

argument that Margoth and Rolfe take up at the shore of the Dead Sea reveals the irresolvability of their competing claims about the biblical record. Margoth challenges the tradition that the biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah sank "in reprobation" into the Dead Sea by explaining that the legend of the cities must be false because the Jordan River and five other streams flow into Dead Sea basin which is surrounded on all sides by mountains. "Where emptied Jordan?" Margoth demands, to make his point that the story must be untrue because the sea must always have filled the basin. Rolfe attempts to engage Margoth on his own geologic terms and poses the possibility that the "water levels high and low / Have undergone derangement when / The cities met their overthrow." Whether Margoth is factually correct about the Mount of Temptation or the Dead Sea basin, he offers little help for Rolfe and Clarel's discomfort and disorientation. Margoth's claim of "All's mere geology" does nothing to explain why the "beslimed . . . mildewed . . . and unclean" plain "intimates a hell" of human failure and disorientation. Rolfe moves beyond a scientific challenge to the Margoth's facts and explains the insignificance and irrelevance of his empirical observations:

> . . . Science but deals
> With Nature; Nature is not God;
> Never she answers our appeals,
> Or, if she do, but mocks the clod.
> Call to the echo--it returns
> The word you send . . .
> . . . Shall Science then
> Which solely dealeth with this thing

Named Nature, shall she ever bring

One solitary hope to men?

'Tis Abba Father that we seek,

Not the Artificer.

As with most important questions and debates in the poem, the argument between Rolfe and Margoth is left unresolved; here their conversation is interrupted by a braying ass.

Like the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the city of Jerusalem, the Judean Wilderness remained for Melville a radically inhospitable place and a landscape that offered up neither authentic site of pilgrimage nor conclusive evidence that could lead to secure unbelief. This is not to say, however, that the landscape was completely absent of places of rest. In the midst of the Kedron Valley, a "sepulchral ravine, smoked as by fire," Melville encountered the Greek Orthodox monastery of St. Saba. The monastery was and is the oldest active monastery in the Holy Land and has been continually inhabited since 450 CE. Entry into the monastery is difficult. Melville explains that he gained admission to Mar Saba after the leader of his group presented a letter of introduction from the Bishop in Jerusalem to the monks via a basket lowered over the monastery's wall. After the letter was accepted, Melville and his companions were led through a "small door of massive iron in high wall" where they were welcomed inside by the "salaam of monks." Inside, Melville finds "Place for pilgrims – divans – St Saba wine – *"racka"* comfortable . . . Good bed & night's rest." Everything about Melville's description suggests peace, contentment and security. He sums up this sentiment in his closing description; the "Monastery [is] a congregation of stone eyries, enclosed with wall" (84). Though Melville took just 150 words to record his thoughts of Mar Saba in

his journal,[17] the experience made so significant an impression on him that he devoted one full part of *Clarel*, thirty-two cantos, to the monastery.

This greatly expanded treatment of Mar Saba as well as the addition of a lengthy engagement with Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity (which Melville all but completely disregarded in his journal) point to the reason for Melville's failed pilgrimage in 1856-57 and to his consideration of the poem itself as a second attempt at pilgrimage. Like Melville's journal, the poem represents Mar Saba as a peaceful, stable dwelling place in the midst of inhospitable waste. Derwent, the poem's Broad Church Anglican minister, accesses the peace and stability of the place through an encounter with the monastery's abbot, Christodolus ("which means / *Servant of Christ").* Derwent is granted an audience with the abbot and finds him sitting on a Persian rug "cosy" and "at ease" (3.23.11, 19, 21). His aspect and posture reveals a "Senior complacency of calm-- / A settledness without alloy." The rugs and cushions upon which he sits suggest his calm and comfort, but the cause of his settledness is his belief. The firmness of his belief comes from its situation within a long apostolic tradition:

> In tried belief how orthodox
> And venerable; which the shocks
> Of schism had stood, ere yet the state
> Of Peter claimed earth's pastorate.
> So far back his Greek Church did plant,
> Rome's Pope he deemed but Protestant--
> A Rationalist, a bigger Paine--
> Heretic, worse than Arian;

He lumped him with that compound mass

Of sectaries of the West, alas! (3.23.28-40)

Just as Derwent recognizes the calm settledness of the abbot, Clarel sees peace in the face of "the Celibate," one of St. Saba's Orthodox monks. "What stillness in the almoner's face," Clarel observes, "Nor Fomalhaut more mild may reign/ Mellow above the purple main / Of autumn hills. It was a grace / Beyond medallions ye recall" (3.30.74-78). The stillness, mildness, and grace causes Clarel to "murmur" to the monk, "Father . . . / Here, sure, is peace" (3.30.79-81).

Vine (the poem's character that is based loosely on Hawthorne) also seems settled in the monastery. A monk observes Vine across the valley alone upon a desolate peak and remarks to Derwent:

Your friend there, see,

Up on yon peak, he puzzles me.

Wonder where I shall find him next? . . .

I saw him there, yes, quite at home

In long-abandoned library old,

Conning a venerable tome,

. . .

Kedron well suits him, 'twould appear:

Why don't he stay, yes, anchor here,

Turn anchorite?"

Vine does not stay, though the peace and stability of the monastery are attractive to him. None of the characters chooses to remain either; they all move on when the group decides to leave.

When confronted with places that seem to be places of genuine dwelling, none of the characters choose to stay because remaining in the place comes at a cost. Vine's decision to move on with the group is not explored in the poem, but Derwent's decision is. Derwent likewise is affected by the abbot's calm, assured life, but he tells him, "This is a lone life; / Removed thou art from din and strife; / But from all news as well" (3.23.42-44). For Derwent, the appeal of life at peace is undercut on one side by its loneliness and on the other by its detachment from knowledge of the world outside the circumscribed monastic seclusion. The canto begins with Derwent musing, "'Tis travel teaches much that's strange" and he is unwilling to give up his wide range of experiences for the peace and authority that the abbot clearly enjoys. When the abbot responds that nothing newsworthy has happened since Christ came eighteen centuries ago and that five minutes of conversation would bring up to speed a person who spent ten years' seclusion in the monastery, Derwent presses him, asking, "But new books, authors of the time?" For much of the poem, it is clear that Melville despises Derwent (and Broad Churchmen like him) for his inability and unwillingness to say anything definite about crucial matters of faith, but here in the priest's concern about the loss of books in monastic seclusion and submission, Melville's own voice comes through. Melville's insatiable appetite for all kind of books new and old is well documented[18] and to him, the prospect of giving up both reading and travel (which he knows "teaches much that's strange") to remain physically or intellectually in a place such as the monastery is not a live option.

Clarel's reservations about giving himself over to a life like the ones lived by the monks he encounters at St. Saba and the Church of the Nativity are less intellectual than Derwent's. Clarel qualifies his admission that "Here, sure, is peace" by observing "Yet . . . / Father if Good, 'tis unenhanced: / No life domestic do ye own / Within these walls: woman I miss" (3.30.84-89). Clarel's concern about the absence of women in the monastery is obviously sexual, and many recent critics have pointed to Clarel's sexual search in the poem. He negotiates same- and opposite-sex desire throughout the poem and here contemplates giving up "domestic comforts" for a life of exclusively male companionship. Beyond showing Clarel's search for clarity concerning his sexuality, however, Clarel's concern about the absence of "domestic life" is related to his hope that he and Ruth, the Jewish daughter of an American emigrant in Jerusalem, can redeem the Holy Land through their combined youth, vitality, and fertility. Early in the poem, prior to his departure from Jerusalem, Clarel looks forward expectantly to the transformation that he and Ruth will effect on the ruined landscape of the Holy Land:

> Clarel and Ruth--might it but be
>
> That range they could green uplands free
>
> By gala orchards, when they fling
>
> Their bridal favors, buds of Spring;
>
> And, dreamy in her morning swoon,
>
> The lady of the night, the moon,
>
> Looks pearly as the blossoming;
>
> And youth and nature's fond accord
>
> Wins Eden back, that tales abstruse

> Of Christ, the crucified, Pain's Lord,
>
> Seem foreign--forged--incongruous.
>
> (1.28.1-11)

In giving up "domestic life" Clarel would not only relinquish sex (heterosexual sex that is), he would also have to abandon his hopes of "win[ning] Eden back" by making the land bloom again. Clarel, of course, chooses to hold out hope for redemption of the land with Ruth's help, only to find at the end of the poem that she is dead. The result is that the poem ends with Clarel wandering aimless and helpless to change the sterile landscape he wanders.

In *Clarel*, Melville does, through his characters, honestly investigate a range of viewpoints (Catholic, scientific, Eastern Orthodox, Islam, Judaism), and he does allow them to stand on their own in the poem. The poem is, as Brian Yothers and Stan Goldman have shown, authentically dialogic; points of view are presented in their own voices.[19] While religious traditions do come into conversation and contest with each other, at no point is "inter-sympathy" the result of these conversations. More often than not, irreconcilable contest is solved by changing the subject. Similarly while the poem's characters come to inhabit the structures of foreign religious beliefs and practices, they move on from these places without any token or memorial of their temporary residence. The poem comes to the conclusion that no synthesis or inter-sympathy among these creeds is possible. There is neither Emersonian manifold above nor solid rock of truth beneath expression in a particular creedal system. This is what Clarel finds so difficult and why at the end of the poem he chooses to continue to wander rather than submit to any particular system.

Far from seeking a transcendental synthesis beneath the rubble and accretion laid down after millennia of contest and transformation, Melville concluded that there is no religious belief apart from its practice in particular faith traditions, but he also recognized that these traditions made exclusive claims and demanded obeisance. Melville understood this clearly by the time he finished the poem in 1876, but he found no one of these traditions satisfactory. He chose to eschew them all, neither because they promised indefinite belief nor because their authority was suspect, but because he found their demands too great to bear. His poetic pilgrimage was therefore as incomplete and inconclusive as his physical pilgrimage. Clarel's geographic wandering at the end of the poem is little different from Melville's own religious ambivalence at the end of his life.

Melville seemed not to find security in any religious tradition, the act of writing *Clarel* became itself a discipline of relinquishment. Not only did his choice of the epic form demand that he accommodate himself to a rigid meter, a rhyme scheme, and an expansive theme, his wife Elizabeth's hushed comment to her sister that Melville was struggling with an "incubus of a poem" suggests that the poem took on a penitential aspect for the failed novelist. Beyond its penitential aspect, the poem displays neither the hubris that accompanied the completion of *Moby-Dick* nor the crass commercial disappointment that followed *Redburn* and *White Jacket.*[20] Instead, Melville regards the poem as a failed sacrifice, and he neither expected reward nor hoped for riches from the work. Between the poem's title page and the first canto, Melville scrawled a brief prefatory note: "If during the period in which this work has remained unpublished, though not undivulged, any of its properties have by a natural process exhaled; it yet retains, I trust, enough of original life to redeem it at least from vapidity. Be that as it

may, I here dismiss the book – content beforehand with whatever future awaits it."

Melville's note indicates both resignation and an eagerness to release the poem, not into exile like *Mardi,* but instead into its own literary peregrination. He could neither bring the poem to rest nor find rest himself.

[1] Herman Melville, "Journal 1856-1857," in *Works of Herman Melville, Volume Fifteen: Journals* ed. Howard C. Horsford and Lynn Horth (Chicago: Northwestern-Newberry, 1989), 91.
[2] Jenny Franchot, "Melville's Traveling God," *Cambridge Companion to Herman Melville*, ed. Robert S. Levine (New York: Cambridge UP, 1998), 157-159.
[3] William Potter, *Melville's* Clarel *and the Intersympathy of Creeds* (Kent, OH: Kent State UP, 2004).
[4] Henry David Thoreau, *Walden, Or Life in the Woods* (New York: Norton, 1992), 66.
[5] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 166-197.
[6] Charles Taylor follows Stephen Greenblatt in recognizing the autonomous, self-fashioned subject (what Taylor calls the "buffered self") as a key feature of modern, secular society. *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2007), 112, 135-136.
[7]Franklin Walker surveys the range of critical responses to Melville's decision to be annihilated. See *Irreverent Pilgrims: Melville, Browne, and Mark Twain in the Holy Land* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 110. Walker argues disagrees with critics who have argued that Melville was suicidal or that he was contemplating his death as a writer. I think Melville was contemplating the destruction of self, just not in a bodily sense.
[8] Herman Melville, "Journal 1856-57," 86. Subsequent references will be in the text.
[9] O*bjective:* "A goal, purpose, or aim; the end to which effort is directed; the thing sought, aimed at, or striven for" (OED). O*bject:* "something placed before or presented to the eyes or other senses. Now (more generally): a material thing that can be seen and touched" (OED).
[10] Cf. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 91-93.
[11] The most recent reconstruction of the Aedicule took place after the 1808 fire. Pieces of the rotunda fell during the fire and destroyed the Aedicule's exterior ornamentation. In 1927, a scaffold was erected by the British around the Aedicule in the Mandate period to stabilize it after an earthquake.
[12] cf. John 20:15 "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."
[13] Writing in 1856, the year Melville visited the Holy Land, British explorer A.P. Stanley reflected, "When I first visited Palestine in 1852, I felt constrained to express what has doubtless occurred to many others, that, when we pass from the comparatively secure knowledge of what may be called the external situation of the city to its internal relations, we exchange a sphere of perfect certainty for a mass of topographical controversy, unequalled for its extent, for its confusion, and for its bitterness. . .The data exist, perhaps in abundance, but they are inaccessible. When Jerusalem can be excavated we shall be able to agree; till then the dispute is for the most part. . . hopeless. . ." Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, "Introduction," *Sinai and Palestine: In Connection with their History* (London: John Murray, 1856), 176.
[14] Not *pristine* as "something natural: unspoilt by human interference, untouched; pure," but "Of or relating to the earliest period or state; original, former; primitive, ancient" (*OED*).
[15] "The fruit resembles externally a large, smooth apple, or orange, hanging in clusters of three or four together, and when ripe is of a yellow color. It was now fair and delicious to the eye and soft to the touch; but on being pressed or struck, it explodes with a puff, like a bladder or puff-ball, leaving in the hand only the shreds of the thin rind and a few fibers. It is indeed filled chiefly with air, which gives it the round form. . ." Edward Robinson, *Physical Geography of the Holy Land* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1865), 236-237.
[16] "Within historic times the geological structure and topographic form of Palestine cannot have changed appreciably. The climate, on the contrary, may have changed notably. . . Some writers hold that two or three thousand years ago the climate of Palestine differed from that of to-day. To this change, primarily,

they ascribe the present poverty-stricken condition of the country. Others, with equal positiveness, declare that this is impossible. Nothing, they say, demands such an hypothesis: the decay of Palestine and of the neighboring countries is clearly due to human greed, misgovernment, and folly." Ellsworth Huntington, *Palestine and its Transformation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), 250.

[17] The entire entry is as follows: "*St. Saba* – zig-zag along Kedron, sepulchral ravine, smoked as by fire, caves & cells – immense depth – all rock – enigma of the depth – rain only two or 3 days a year – wall of stone on ravine edge – Monestary (Greek) rode on with letter – hauled up in basket into a hole – small door of massive iron in high wall – knocking – opened – salaam of monks – Place for pilgrims – divans – St Saba wine – *"racka"* comfortable. – At dusk went down by many stone steps & through mysterious passages to cave & trap doors & hole in wall – ladder – ledge after ledge – winding – to bottom of Brook Kedron – sides of ravine all caves of recluses – Monastery a congregation of stone eyries, enclosed with wall – Good bed & night's rest – Went into chapel &c – little hermitages in rock – balustrade of iron – lonely monks. black-birds – feeding with bread – numerous terraces, balconies – solitary date palm mid-way in precipice ---"

[18] Merton Sealts, *Melville's Reading* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988).

[19] Brian Yothers, *The Romance of the Holy Land in American Travel Writing* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2007). Stan Goldman, *Melville's Protest Theism: The Hidden and Silent God in Clarel* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993).

[20] Concerning hubris, cf. Melville to Hawthorne, November 1851: "I felt pantheistic then -- your heart beat in my ribs and mine in yours, and both in God's. A sense of unspeakable security is in me this moment, on account of your having understood the book. I have written a wicked book, and feel spotless as the lamb. Ineffable socialities are in me. I would sit down and dine with you and all the gods in old Rome's Pantheon. It is a strange feeling -- no hopefulness is in it, no despair. Content -- that is it; and irresponsibility; but without licentious inclination. I speak now of my profoundest sense of being, not of an incidental feeling." Concerning crass commercial disappointment, cf. Melville's letter to Lemuel Shaw, October 6 1849: "[*Redburn* and *White Jacket* are] two jobs which I have done for money—being forced to it as other men are to sawing wood."

CHAPTER THREE: T.S. ELIOT'S ST. LOUIS

"My poetry . . . shows traces of every environment in which I have lived."

-T.S. Eliot, "The Influence of Landscape Upon the Poet" (1960)

Despite the separation of more than half a century and despite many hundreds of miles between the principal places of the setting, the story of T.S. Eliot's St. Louis youth and his poetic reckoning with an English pilgrimage is remarkably similar to the story of Melville's journey from lost New York homes to the Holy Land. In the following two chapters, I trace a similarly unstable beginning of Eliot's life and his similar disappointment with sites of historic Christian pilgrimage. The first of the two chapters on Eliot shows that the degradation and destruction of the three most important structures (church, home, and school) that his grandfather, Rev. William Greenleaf Eliot, created in nineteenth-century St. Louis set him adrift in his young adulthood. This chapter shows that Eliot – like Melville - did not so much reject the world that his grandfather and his parents inhabited as he was exiled by its destruction. In the second of these Eliot chapters, I consider to Eliot's early experiences in London, a city whose monuments to a Christian tradition appeared to stand solidly amid the hustle and bustle of twentieth-century commerce, but in reality were rapidly being both undermined and overwhelmed. After showing Eliot's disappointment with City churches that proved to be unsatisfactory dwelling places, I turn to Eliot's pilgrimages outside of London, using *Murder in the Cathedral* and *Four Quartets* to show how his idiosyncratic, quotidian pilgrimages rather

than England's national pilgrimages to Walsingham and Canterbury provided him with a satisfactory dwelling place "here and in England."

Rev. Greenleaf Eliot, the Symbol of Church, Home, and School

In June 1953, T.S. Eliot left the home he had made in South Kensington, London, to travel to St. Louis, the city of his boyhood, to deliver an address at Washington University. Before proceeding to the main topic of his address – "American Literature and the American Language" – Eliot reflected on what it meant for him to be back in St. Louis and to be speaking at the centennial celebration of Washington University, an institution that was once named Eliot Seminary after his grandfather. Eliot began his account of his upbringing in St. Louis by orienting his childhood and family's life to three key landmarks: a church, a house, and a university. For Eliot and his family,

> The Church meant . . . the Unitarian Church of the Messiah, then situated in Locust Street, a few blocks west of my father's house and my grandmother's house; the city was St. Louis – the utmost outskirts of which touched on Forest Park, terminus of the Olive Street streetcars, and to me, as a child, the beginning of the Wild West; the University was Washington University, then housed in a modest building in lower Washington Avenue. These were the symbols of Religion, the Community, and Education . . . .[1]

All three of the physical landmarks that Eliot considered the symbols of religion, community, and education were directly the product of the life work of his grandfather,

the Reverend William Greenleaf Eliot. Eliot's grandfather was, by all accounts, a giant presence in both the Eliot family and the history of nineteenth-century St. Louis. The eulogy that Reverend Henry W. Foote delivered from the pulpit of King's Chapel, Boston, in 1887 makes clear Greenleaf Eliot's mark on the city of St. Louis:

> What the great city owes to him, which he watched through all its growth from a trading town to its stately dimensions to-day, it would be impossible to overstate. To thousands of people all over this country, Dr. Eliot is St. Louis, and St. Louis means simply Dr. Eliot. If the greatness of a man's work is to be measured not by the noise which he may make for a little space, but by the extent to which he has impressed himself upon a whole community, and shaped its institutions and enlarged and deepened its true life, then our time has seen fewer greater than he.[2]

Greenleaf Eliot was significant enough a figure in nineteenth-century St. Louis to warrant mention in Ralph Waldo Emerson's and Charles Dickens' travelogue sketches of St. Louis, but T.S. Eliot had no direct memories of him. "I never knew my grandfather: he died a year before my birth," Eliot told the Washington University audience. "But," he continued

> I was brought up to be very much aware of him: so much so, that as a child I thought of him as still the head of the family—a ruler for whom in absentia my grandmother stood as vice gerent. The standard of conduct was that which my grandfather had set; our moral judgments, our decisions between duty and self indulgence, were taken as if, like Moses, he had brought down the tables of the Law, and any deviation from which

> would be sinful. Not the least of these laws, which included injunctions still more than prohibitions, was the law of Public Service: it is no doubt owing to the impress of this law upon my infant mind that, like other members of my family, I have felt, ever since I passed beyond my early irresponsible years, an uncomfortable and very inconvenient obligation to serve upon committees.[3]

Most biographies of T.S. Eliot cite these lines from Eliot's Washington University address as rationale for directly relating Greenleaf Eliot's work in St. Louis to an assessment of Eliot's early life and poetry. What passes unnoticed or unmentioned in most of these accounts, however, is the ambivalence (not simple respect) towards Greenleaf Eliot that is present in Eliot's reckoning. Russell Kirk, Lyndall Gordon, and Eric Sigg focus on Eliot's straightforward admission that he was "brought up to be very much aware" of Greenleaf Eliot to suggest that Greenleaf Eliot's life work as a pastor, philanthropist, and university president directly influenced the young Eliot's view of the world.[4] But in the longer quotation, Eliot distances himself from such a direct line of influence with his hyperbolic description of his grandmother as "vice-gerent" and his grandfather as "Moses." Eliot similarly undercuts the significance of his grandfather's life-work by reducing Greenleaf Eliot's moral standard to a series of "injunctions" – the most weighty of these being the "uncomfortable and very inconvenient obligation to serve upon committees." This chapter considers Eliot's ambivalence about his grandfather's legacy and reexamines Greenleaf Eliot's influence on Eliot's work. It does so by considering not just the institutional work Greenleaf Eliot did while he was alive, but also the fate of the buildings that housed the church, the homes, and the schools he

founded. This previously unexamined architectural and geographic evidence reveals that Greenleaf Eliot's life did indeed have a significant effect on T.S. Eliot, but that this effect was far more negative than positive.

In 1904, Eliot's mother, Charlotte Champe Eliot, published a 376-page biography of Greenleaf Eliot, her father-in-law, and dedicated the work "To [her] children, lest they forget."[5] Charlotte Eliot had good reason to fear that her children (particularly her youngest child) might forget her father-in-law and his life's work. Because T.S. Eliot never met his grandfather, his knowledge of the preacher's standards of conduct, his laws, and his progressive Unitarianism came through his vice-gerent grandmother and his biographer mother. In addition to these matrilineal histories, Eliot apprehended his grandfather's legacy through the institutions that Greenleaf Eliot left to carry on his work. St. Louis's Church of the Messiah, Smith Academy (Washington University's preparatory department), and the Eliot homes stood for a short time as material monuments to Greenleaf Eliot's achievement and to the vitality of his progressive Unitarian worldview. But by the time his grandson was beginning to form his earliest impressions of these institutions, all of their physical manifestations were showing signs of decline. This decline rapidly accelerated just after Eliot left St. Louis for the East to begin his studies at Milton and Harvard. While Eliot was away in New England, the city he knew as a boy was suddenly and dramatically transformed. Within two years of his departure from St. Louis in 1905 at the age of 16, the home where he had been born and raised was sold by his family, the church where he was baptized was sold to an African American Episcopal congregation, and the school he had attended was combined with a manual training school in a new suburban location. Greenleaf Eliot's legacy, therefore,

was already profoundly altered by the time of Eliot's early childhood. By the time Eliot left Harvard for Europe, almost nothing that his grandfather built still stood in its original form. The physical decay of the monuments of Greenleaf Eliot's achievements directly challenged the mode of life that his widow sought to enforce and the narrative that Charlotte Eliot sought to codify in her biography. The transformation and destruction of Eliot's boyhood St. Louis effectively exiled him and set him off on a search for a more durable and more stable dwelling place.

T.S. Eliot's St. Louis Church

More than any other structure, the church into which T.S. Eliot was baptized demonstrated William Greenleaf Eliot's belief that "the institutions of religion . . . exist not for the glory of God but for the elevation of humanity."[6] The church building that once stood at the corner of Locust and Garrison Streets (fig. 12) was the third structure that the congregation of the Church of the Messiah had occupied since Greenleaf Eliot founded it upon his arrival to St. Louis in 1831.[7] Unlike the first two buildings which were designed and constructed by St. Louis builders, the congregation commissioned an architecture firm with a national reputation when it came time to build the Locust Street church. Under the leadership of Greenleaf Eliot, the church chose the then up-and-coming Boston firm of Peabody and Stearns.[8]

The beauty of Peabody and Stearns's design was not lost on its occupants. A book published by the church in 1881 to record the church's dedication ceremony

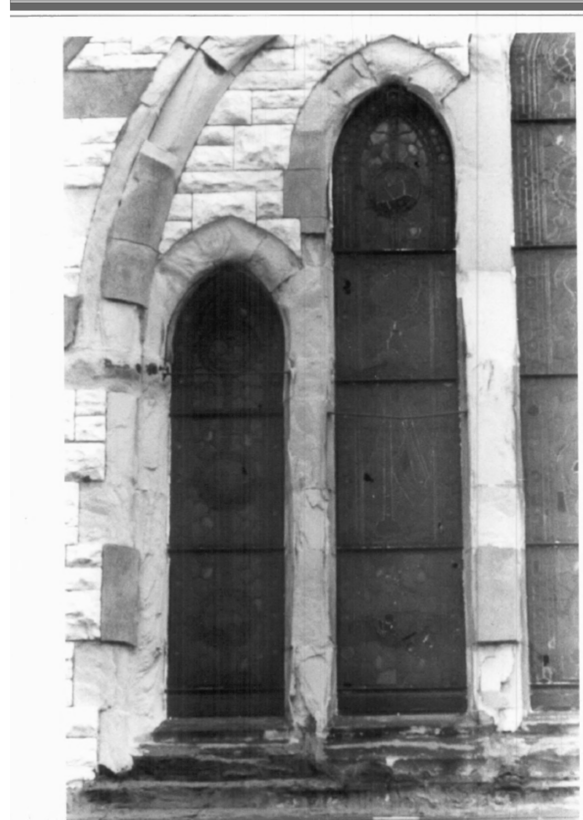


Figure 12: Peabody and Stearns' Church of the Messiah. Credit: *L'Architecture Américaine*

Figure 13: Detail of window, Church of the Messiah.

includes a detailed description of the church by James S. Garland, president of the church's board of trustees. Garland writes:

> It is built in the Early English Gothic Style. The material employed is chiefly blue lime-stone, quarried within the limits of St. Louis, laid in ashlar, and relieved by horizontal string-courses of smoothly-rubbed sandstone of drab color obtained from Warrensburg, Missouri, which is also used to face the openings of doors and windows. The massive yet graceful stone spire rises to the height of one hundred and forty-two feet, and about it the different parts of the church are picturesquely arranged to give the appearance of a group of buildings.[9]

Garland's description of the interior of the church similarly emphasizes a natural but colorful beauty:

> The wood of the interior is of native yellow pine, unspoiled by the painter's brush, and whose rich, natural grain and beautiful color lend an added charm to the wainscot and columns, beams, and arches into which it is fashioned. With the yellow hues of the wood is finely harmonized the dark red of the faced bricks which line the walls above the wooden dado; while the frieze and about and above the points of the arches and window heads are others of light yellow laid in masses or simple patterns. The sharply pitched roof, divided longitudinally by the clerestory into two parts, and separated vertically into bays by massive braces, tie-beams, and framing-timbers is of open timber work, and in design and execution revives the traditions of the best period of old English carpentry,

> resembling in the graceful forms of its curves and arches the great roof of the famous Westminster Hall.[10]

While Garland's thorough description of his church building is invaluable today, now that the building has been lost to fire and the wrecking ball, the appearance of so detailed a description in a church publication is a bit odd. The descriptions seem excessive for an audience who sat each Sunday amidst and within plain sight of all of the features that Garland describes. Garland's true purpose in writing the description is betrayed by his liberal use of architectural jargon: "ashlar;" "string-courses;" "wainscot and columns, beams and arches;" "dado;" "frieze;" "clerestory;" "bays;" "braces, tie-beams and framing timbers" at once demonstrate Garland's knowledge of the architectural significance of the building and foster a similarly educated appreciation in the congregation. This church is no pearl before Midwestern swine; rather, the building is an appropriate expression of the congregation's social stature.

The demand for complete understanding of the artistic and aesthetic significance of the building is a result of the congregation's view that the building was a fitting monument to their achievement. In the sermon that visiting divine Dr. Henry W. Bellows of New York preached at the service that officially dedicated the building, the eastern reverend told the congregation of the Church of the Messiah, "It is unbecoming of those who live in ceiled houses themselves to leave the Lord's house bare: and none of the taste and elegance we covet in our homes should be lacking in our temples of public worship."[11] In Bellows's view, the problem with a church that lacks "taste and elegance" is not that it testifies to the sinful selfishness or misplaced devotion of its congregation – Bellows sees no problem with "coveting" things for the home. Rather, the problem with

a spare, threadbare, or dated church is that it is “unbecoming:” it does not adequately testify to the status of its congregation. Bellows continues,

> Thank God . . . we are now safely reinstating much that for generations serious and earnest Christians were pulling down and pushing out. The last half century . . . has spent an incredible sum in erecting and beautifying churches; in sustaining costly church music; in supporting the ministry; and in enriching and diversifying the ritual of worship; and, no doubt, this tendency will increase our wealth, our freedom, and our general culture. The social, the aesthetic, the ethical sides of religion have for a time, doubtless, superseded in interest the dogmatic and the pietistic.[12]

Bellows’ promise of the increase in “our wealth, our freedom, and our general culture” is shockingly explicit. While he perhaps imposes the view of the church as an investment and while he perhaps overstates the congregation’s desire to demonstrate its status through the display of wealth and culture, Bellows rightly understood the congregation’s desire for recognition.

The prominence that the Locust Street church symbolized and projected was understood throughout St. Louis. In 1885, four years after the dedication (and three years before T.S. Eliot was born), the *St. Louis Republican* editorialized, “The congregation . . . in culture, standing, and wealth, as well as in earnest and the more important qualities, zealous work, and devotion to duty, is not excelled in St. Louis. It numbers men and women who have achieved distinction in business, in the professions, in literature, and in art.”[13] Beyond this local recognition of the church’s stature, the flurry of reviews and

photographs of the church in national architecture journals in the decades following its construction testified to the enduring aesthetic success of the building.[14] Perhaps the strongest case for the church's cultural significance (and by proxy the congregation's reserve of cultural capital) was made by its inclusion in the 1886 French study of developing American architecture *L'Architecture Américaine*.[15] This important photographic survey was one of the first French books to seriously investigate American architecture, and the presence of the Locust Street Church of the Messiah in the book is striking. Not only does Church of the Messiah's plate precede the plate of H. H. Richardson's Trinity Church; it is the first of only five photographs of churches. Of the book's 110 plates of buildings, the photograph of Church of the Messiah is one of only three that stood west of the Mississippi River.

The dedication address that Greenleaf Eliot preached after Bellows strikes a less overtly capitalistic note than his Boston colleague's sermon, yet Greenleaf Eliot affirms a similar faith in his congregation's ability to transform the gritty urban world of Gilded Age St. Louis through good works. "You have endeavored," Eliot told his congregation, "to assert your claims to Christian recognition, not by theological tests of orthodoxy, which continually change; not by disputations which engender anger and strife; not by sectarian attacks upon others, nor even by answering such attacks upon ourselves; but by the surer method of doing your part, much or little, as best you could, within your reach, and in advocacy of whatever principles of truth and righteousness have stood most in need of defence [*sic*]."[16]

If Peabody and Stearns' façade and interior projects the congregation's cultural capital, and if Garland's commentary on the building represents a claim to that cultural

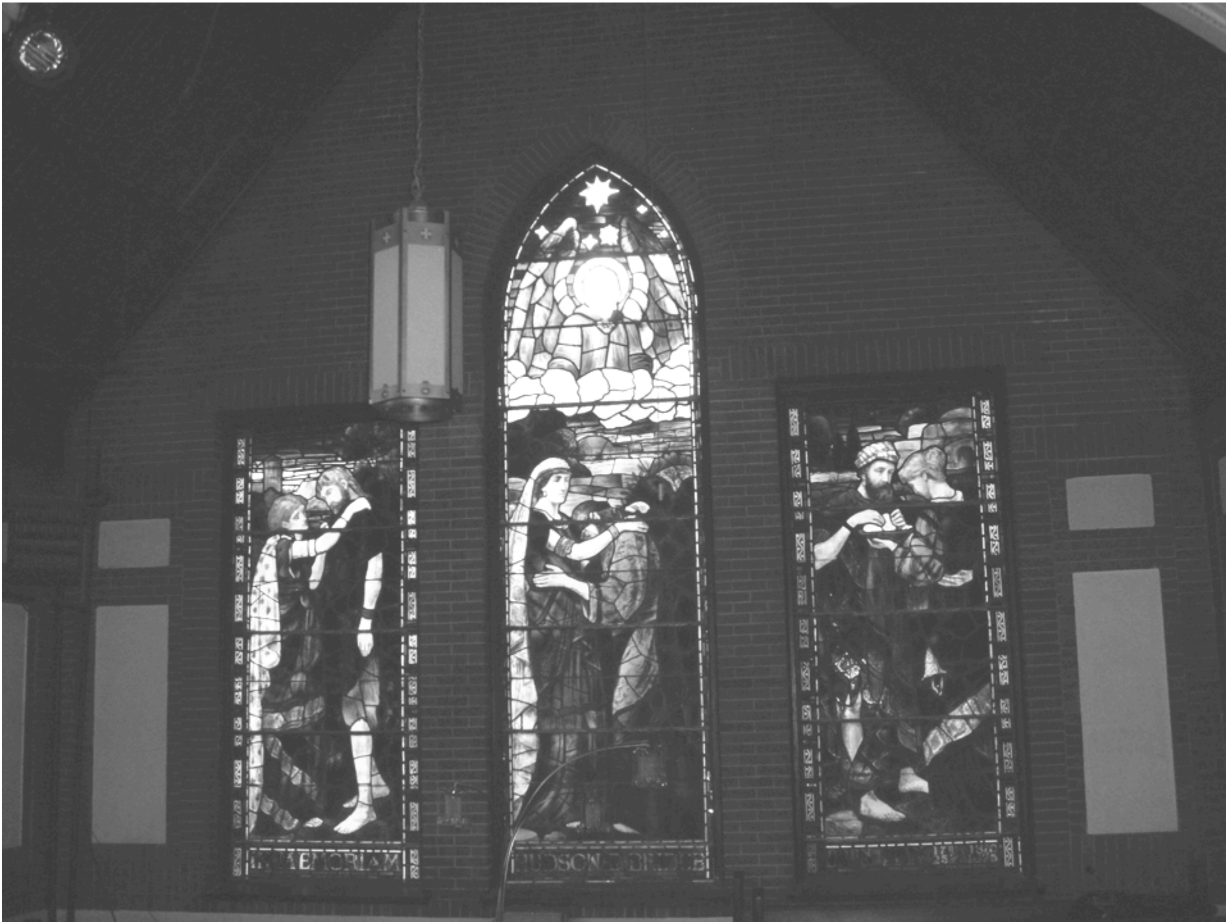


Figure 4 – Stained glass windows from the Church of the Messiah. The dedication reads “IN MEMORIUM --HUDSON BRIDGE.” Photo by author.

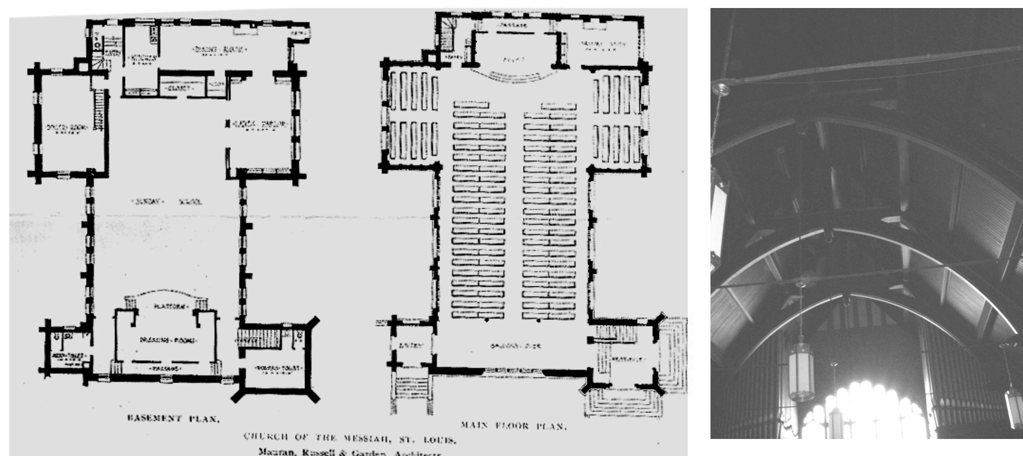
capital, the church's stained glass windows reflect precisely the social capital that Greenleaf Eliot suggests the congregation is right to boldly claim. Instead of depicting stories from the Old and New Testaments or works of historic saints, the windows in the Church of the Messiah honored and showcased the works of prominent members of the congregation (fig. 14). These windows connected specific congregation members with acts of charity and other virtues. The north transept windows, for example commemorated the life of one Hudson E. Bridge, with figures "of heroic size, illustrating the following words, 'I was hungry and ye gave me meat, sick and ye visited me; naked and ye clothed me.'" Other windows linked deceased parishioners to Jesus at the Well, the Good Samaritan, the Sower, and Charitable Dorcas.[17] By the time of T.S. Eliot's boyhood, the congregation had also begun to hang memorial plaques and portraits. Portraits of Seth A. Ranlett, "for thirty-two years Superintendent of the Sunday-school" and Henry Glover, "for an equal period greatly beloved in the relations of scholar, teacher, and librarian" were hung in the Sunday school room adjacent to the sanctuary. Of course, the most prominently displayed plaque remembered the church's founder. Though there was no cross at the front of the church, Greenleaf Eliot's brass memorial plaque hung on the east wall of the church just to the right of the altar.[18] In a similar shift from attention to the work of God to the works of humanity, the font in which the infant T.S. Eliot was baptized was engraved with a memorial not to Christ but to the "Loving Memory of Our Mother Isabella E. Bridge."[19]

If the church was originally built as a monument to its congregants' faith in their ability to transform themselves, their neighborhood, and their city through education, culture, and philanthropy, the young T.S. Eliot saw little of this hope realized. By the

time of Eliot's early experiences with the church, the neighborhoods around the church had begun to turn to slum. If any institution had the power to transform the cityscape of St. Louis, it was the factories that continued their westward creep from the Mississippi River. In 1906, the Church of the Messiah found that the changing character of its neighborhood had made its location so inconvenient for its members that the church conceded defeat to its increasingly industrial context by selling the Locust Street building and by building a new structure farther west.

It is impossible to know how the sale of the Locust Street church affected the young T.S. Eliot; however, the church's move from Locust Street to a new building at Union and Enright Streets (fig. 15) was weighted by the congregation with tremendous significance. Though the Locust Street building remained standing, and though its façade remained apparently unchanged despite significant interior renovations, the racial and class politics of turn-of-the-century St. Louis would certainly have made the church – after 1906, an African American Episcopal church[20] - inaccessible to Eliot and his family. An unpublished pamphlet written by T.S. Eliot's brother, Henry Ware Eliot Jr. entitled "A Short History of the Church of the Messiah," subtly testifies to this inaccessibility. Though the Locust street church was still standing in 1916 when Ware Eliot Jr. wrote his pamphlet – and would continue to stand until it was razed after a disastrous fire in 1984 – Ware Eliot Jr. writes about the church entirely in the past tense. He reminisces, "The Locust Street church *was* one of the most beautiful churches in the city. It *had* a very lofty ceiling and very beautiful timber work . . . it *had* no galleries and the church itself *held* only 700 people . . ." [emphasis mine].[21] To Ward Eliot, the Church ceased to exist as Greenleaf Eliot had built it.

Figure 15: Church of the Messiah at Union and Enright, St. Louis. John Lawrence Mauran, architect. Credit: Landmark Association.
Figure 16: Plan, Church of the Messiah, Union and Enright.
Figure 17: Detail of trusses, Church of the Messiah, Union and Enright



The Church of the Messiah's congregation was cognizant of this rupture with its past and, as a result, it attempted to incorporate as much of the old church as it could into its new structure, a "modified Gothic church" designed by the local architect and member of the congregation John Lawrence Mauran. Like the Locust Street church, this new building (which stands today) is situated on a northeast street corner rising slightly above the street level. Because of the building's similar siting and because of a similar massing of the nave, south transept, and tower, this church would have felt much like the congregation's previous structure. The interior of the church also echoes the Locust Street building; most noticeably, a similar post-and-beam truss structure holds up the roof (fig. 17). The congregation attempted to further a sense of continuity by installing many (but not all) of the stained glass windows from the Locust Street building into the walls of its new Union and Enright church. The congregation also brought its memorial plaques with them when it moved.

Despite these similarities, much about the new church testifies to a change in vision and expectation. Most obvious is the reduction in the size of the church. The seating capacity of the new church is reduced to 500 from the 900-person capacity of the Locust Street building. In the new church's plan (fig. 16), there is also a far more distinct separation of the church's functions. While the Locust Street building allowed for, and indeed encouraged, movement between the sanctuary, the Sunday school rooms, and the pastor's study by clustering all of these interior spaces around the tower, the new building locates all of the church's social and educational functions in the basement. Also, the pastor's study was moved from its prominent and central location in the Peabody and Stearns building to a more private area between behind the pulpit and southern transept.

While this separation of functional spaces on different levels is certainly a result of the church trying to maximize a smaller lot, the separation also reflects the changing mission of the church. Instead of the church's spaces and corresponding functions bleeding into each other and into the community, this new church's spaces—and, presumably, its functions—are compartmentalized. The exterior of the building also suggests a more modest vision than did the Locust street building. Peabody and Stearns's high, pointed tower has been reduced to a much less prominent rectangular parapet that does not rise higher than the church's roofline. The previous structure's limestone and sandstone façade has been replaced by brickwork similar in color and style to that of neighboring homes and apartment complexes. Far from standing apart from its neighborhood as a beacon, this more modest building blends into the streetscape. In 1916, ten years after the congregation dedicated the church at Union and Enright, Ware Eliot Jr. observed that "St. Louis is now too large a city for any one institution to play as large a part in public affairs as our church did in its early days."[22] While the design for the new church does not repudiate Greenleaf Eliot's vision, neither is this building an impressive monument to his life's work.

Henry Ware Eliot's assessment of the church's limited capability to influence its city contrasts sharply with the doctrine his grandfather had proclaimed a generation earlier. In an 1871 sermon entitled "Christian Work in the City," Greenleaf Eliot objects to the notion that the city is "a place full of corruption, a sink of iniquity, a place of Satan's own contrivance, full of snares and temptations." While he recognized that "the aggregate [of crime and sin] seems so much greater where the masses congregate," Greenleaf Eliot also recognized that "all the great centres of Christian philanthropy are

found in large cities and the opportunities for doing good are far more numerous and far greater in the city." Greenleaf Eliot continues, " . . . whether for large or small works, in charity or education or religion, the city offers us the proper field of working, with sympathetic appreciation of all we can do." Though "every Christian church and congregation should be made the centre of sympathetic charity and benevolence," Greenleaf Eliot observes that "there is not church in the city which is doing its full duty in this respect." Because he recognizes that his own church's charitable "attainments" and "attempts" compared with their "opportunities and means" have been "very small," Greenleaf Eliot closes the sermon with a challenge to consider a plan of "greater concentration and effort in Christian philanthropy than we have ever yet shown." As an initial suggestion, Greenleaf Eliot asks his congregation to consider opening up the church to its community. "It seems to me," he said, "too bad that a church like this, with a library room and library attached, should be shut up all the week, here right in the heart of the city, as if all our religious [labor?] were confined to a few hours of the Lord's day. Surely, without great expenditure of money or labor, something might be done to utilize so large an invested capital as this."[23]

The congregation seemed to have responded to Eliot's vision. Ten years later, at the dedication of the Locust Street Church of the Messiah in 1881, William Greenleaf Eliot observed, "there is no 'charity' in the city, Protestant, Catholic, or secular, as I believe, to which the members of this congregation have not been liberal contributors . . . A large part of the charitable and philanthropic institutions now extant in our city . . . have found [in the Church of the Messiah] many of their most earnest supporters."[24][16] Progress had surely been made in Greenleaf Eliot's lifetime; however, it is not difficult to

see how the contraction of Greenleaf Eliot's vision for the transformation of the city of St. Louis, and indeed the failure of his church to secure the gains he made, affected his grandson's view of the church. Indeed, it is not difficult to see the failure (or at least the diminishment) of the Church of the Messiah behind T.S. Eliot's comments to a group of Anglo-Catholics in 1933:

> For I say that all ambitions of an earthly paradise are informed by low ideals. I am not condemning all schemes for the betterment of mankind which are not the product of Catholic thinking; but only in affirming that all such schemes, as well as our own when we are occupied with immediate temporal emergencies, must be submitted to such examination as only Catholic wisdom can supply. Confronted with any definitely anti-Christian system of society, we are sure that such a system, because founded on falsehood, cannot ever work properly.[25]

Eliot's St. Louis Home

Like the peregrinations of the Church of the Messiah, the Eliots' move from T.S. Eliot's boyhood home contributed to Eliot's sense of dislocation from St. Louis. At the time when the home at 2635 Locust Street was built, it was without question one of the more fashionable homes on what was a solidly upper-middle-class street. Built on a double lot, the Eliot's home was a large, three-story brick house with a Second-Empire mansard roof. While most of the other homes on the street were built right up against their neighbors' houses, the Eliots' home benefited from the open land of the adjacent schoolyard of the Mary Institute for girls. Today, the property is fully five miles inside

the city limits of St. Louis and nearly twenty miles east of the farmland that marks the end of the metro area. But when the home was built in the mid-nineteenth century, its location was distinctly suburban. The home was also well within the sphere of William Greenleaf Eliot's influence. Greenleaf Eliot's house stood at 2660 Washington Avenue, across the alley from, and just one half block west of, T.S. Eliot's boyhood home. The adjacent Mary Institute was founded by Greenleaf Eliot in 1858. T.S. Eliot's school, Smith Academy, and Washington University were eight blocks east at Washington and 17th. Both of these institutions were also founded by Greenleaf Eliot. The Church of the Messiah was just four blocks west.

Already, by the time of Eliot's birth in 1889, the neighborhood around the home had begun to change, and the exodus of prominent families from the neighborhood directly influenced Eliot's boyhood. Eliot's mother cited the lack of neighbors as a chief reason for sending him to Milton Academy. In a letter dated 1905, Charlotte Eliot frets to the Milton headmaster, Mr. Richard Cobb, "We have lived twenty-five years on the old Eliot place while all of our friends have moved out, and Tom desires companionship of which he has been thus deprived. I talk with him as I would with a man, which is perhaps not so good for him as if he had young people about him."[26] Beyond Charlotte's worries about the neighborhood's lack of boys her son's age, her description of her home as the "Eliot place" is telling. William Greenleaf Eliot occupied a number of homes in the St. Louis over the course of his fifty years in the city, but no record shows that he ever occupied the home at 2635 Locust prior to his son's purchase of it in 1880. Her reference to the home as the "Eliot place" seems, rather, an acknowledgement of the reach of Greenleaf Eliot's influence even after his passing.

Charlotte's description of the place as "old" is telling as well. The neighborhood's homes were rapidly being either subdivided into tenements or razed to make room for industrial development. The 1909 Sanborn map that covers the area provides a picture of the transformation that was causing the Eliots' friends to flee. Less than four years after Charlotte wrote Mr. Cobb to secure her son's place at Milton, the 12,000-seat St. Louis Coliseum occupied the eastern quarter of the Eliots' block. A five-story mill and warehouse overshadowed the Eliot home from what had formerly been the Mary Institute schoolyard (figs. 18). A junkyard took up a quarter of the block that was just across Jefferson Street from the St. Louis Coliseum.

Despite the departure of most of their peers, Charlotte and Henry Ware Eliot were determined to stay in the neighborhood out of loyalty to Greenleaf Eliot and his widow, Abby Adams.[27] As a result, the Eliots were living far beneath their means. As early as 1888 (the year of T.S. Eliot's birth), a notice appeared in the weekly *Spectator* advertising, "Mrs. J.L.D. Morrison has her mansion [at Locust and Leffingwell/28th] for sale or exchange. It could no doubt be had for a bargain as Mrs. Morrison is anxious to remove westward whence most of her friends have preceded her. Locust is beginning to lose its prestige just as Lucas did, and everybody of wealth wants to get beyond Grand Avenue."[28] The loss of Greenleaf Eliot's neighborhood made a large enough impression on T.S. Eliot for him to reflect on the St. Louis he knew as a boy in remarks to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1960, just three years before his death. In his address, "The Influence of Landscape on the Poet," Eliot recalled, " . . . we lived on in a neighborhood which had become shabby to a degree approaching slumminess, after all our friends and acquaintances had moved farther west. And in my childhood, in the days

Figure 18 – 2635 Locust Street today. The garage that stands on the Eliot's lot was built circa 1920. Photo by author.

before motor cars, people who lived in town stayed in town. So it was that, for nine months of the year, my scenery was almost exclusively urban, and a good deal of it seedily, drably urban at that."[29]

Though the Eliots were not living in so grand a home as Mrs. Morrison's "mansion," by the early 1890s, they were becoming people "of wealth." By the turn of the century, Henry Ware Eliot had become an officer in the enormously profitable Hydraulic Press and Brick Company. His office on the twelfth floor of Adler and Sullivan's Union Trust Building was located just two blocks east of the site where his father's second Church of the Messiah once stood. By the early 1890s, when Ware Eliot would have undoubtedly passed the site of the church on his commute to work, the church's "greatly admired . . . slender spire, which was a landmark for some distance" had already been long diminished by the skyscrapers that rose around it. Moreover, Ware Eliot would have had a daily glimpse of the razing of the church where he was baptized as the site was prepared for Rader, Coffin and Crocker's magnificent Century Building (this building, too, has fallen to the wrecking ball – to make way for a parking garage). Though Ware Eliot confidently rejected a calling into the ministry with the excuse that "too much pudding choked the dog," it is not difficult to imagine Ware Eliot reflecting upon this decision and his father's legacy as he rolled past the bare site that the Church of the Messiah once occupied.

In 1903, Henry Ware Eliot purchased a lot for a new home in Fullerton's Westminster Place. Though this new location was less than three miles west of the "old Eliot place," in 1903, it was far from the soot, crime, and commotion of the city. The home that Henry Ware Eliot built at 4446 Westminster Place (fig. 19) is by far the most

Figure 19 – Henry Ware Eliot House at 4446 Westminster, St. Louis. Photo by author.

Figure 20 – William Greenleaf Eliot Home at 2660 Washington Avenue. Credit: Missouri Historical Society.

understated home on its street. At first glance, the home appears to be a typical colonial revival home of the type that was en vogue around the turn of the century (fig. 16). While the architect, Montrose P. McArdle, certainly had colonial precedents in mind, a comparison between 4446 Westminster and William Greenleaf Eliot's Washington Avenue home betrays a much more direct source of inspiration. Like Greenleaf Eliot's house (fig. 20), the façade of 4446 Westminster is distinguished by windows symmetrically arranged around the front door. The home's untreated concrete window sills, roof brackets, and twin chimneys are also all eerily similar to those in Greenleaf Eliot's home.

Despite all the clear similarities, Ware Eliot's home is obviously an attempt to surpass and perfect his father's house. Ware Eliot's third story not only bespeaks greater wealth, it also results in a more perfectly symmetrical elevation. Though Greenleaf Eliot's home was proportioned more or less as a cube, the two rows of three windows stretched the home out horizontally. 4446 Westminster's three rows of three windows emphasize the vertical, horizontal and radial symmetry of the façade. The only interruption to this symmetry is the concrete band that runs across the façade at the base of the top row of windows. This band echoes palimpsest-like the position of the roofline of his father's home: it is a high-water mark

Despite the home's decidedly un-Victorian façade, elements of a "quintessentially Victorian household" remained in the interior of 4446 Westminster – particularly in those portions of the home which, if not entirely controlled by Charlotte, were gendered feminine.[30] Charlotte's bedroom displayed much of the Victorian sense of interior design. Photographs, keepsakes, and knickknacks covered almost every vertical and horizontal

Figure 21 – Charlotte Eliot's Bedroom in 1916. Photograph by Henry Ware Eliot Jr. Credit: Missouri Historical Society.

Figure 22 – Library Fireplace. Photo by author.

Figure 23 – Parlor Fireplace. Photo by author.

surface (fig. 21). While this style of decoration is most intense in Charlotte's rooms, it is also apparent throughout the home. Perhaps most striking aspect the dialogue between Victorian style and the new trend towards simpler, less cluttered modern design takes place between the library and the parlor (figs. 22-23). Though the rooms mirror each other in perfect spatial symmetry, their fireplace details code the rooms differently. While the library's arts-and-crafts-inspired fireplace mantle is made of unpainted and un-milled oak, the parlor's colonial mantle is painted white and is milled to echo a Doric pilaster. Here, just across the threshold, the modern and the classical face off, yet one room or the other can be closed off with massive pocket doors.

It is important to remember that T.S. Eliot almost certainly never spent more than a few nights in this house. While he would presumably have spent some Christmas breaks from Milton and Harvard at 4446 Westminster, he spent his summers with his family at the vacation home his father built at Eastern Point, near Gloucester, Massachusetts. Eliot's lack of connection to 4446 Westminster is confirmed by his continued lobbying of his mother throughout the summer and fall of 1919 to sell the home and move to Boston.[31] Charlotte Eliot did sell the home at 4446 Westminster, and she did move to Boston. From this point forward, not even Eliot's letters went to St. Louis.

Eliot's School

Today St. Louis' Church of the Messiah and the old Eliot place on Locust Street exist only in photographs and drawings. Washington University, however, which was originally named Eliot Seminary after T.S. Eliot's grandfather, still stands as a powerful

symbol of Greenleaf Eliot's legacy. In fact, a prominent brass plaque at its ceremonial entrance honors Greenleaf Eliot as the University's original namesake, its first Chairman of the Board, and its third chancellor. However, the visibility of the memorial to Greenleaf Eliot and the ascendance of Washington University in St. Louis to the ranks of the nation's great universities both obscure the fact that at the turn of the twentieth century the university and its preparatory school, Smith Academy, were institutions under tremendous pressure and whose long-term success was by no means assured. Moreover, when T.S. Eliot reminded the students of Washington University in June 1953 that "[t]he early history of this University which my grandfather served with tireless devotion until his death is inextricably involved for me in family and personal history,"[32] his student auditors may or may not have known Greenleaf Eliot's role in founding their university. The brass plaque memorializing the grandfather would not be installed in the pavement beaneath the arch of the main entrance to campus for another four months, at the behest and bequest of the Church of the Messiah.

Because Smith Academy, which Eliot attended, and Washington University originally shared the same neighborhood as the Church of the Messiah and the Eliot home, the same pressures of industrialization and redevelopment threatened their viability at the end of the nineteenth century. Like the Church of the Messiah and the Eliot family, the schools attempted to overcome the geographical and societal challenges they faced by moving beyond what the young T.S. Eliot considered the western boundary of St. Louis.[33] The schools' removes proved to be even more temporary solutions than the church's and the Eliots' relocations. Like the diminishment of the Church of the

Messiah and the decay of the "old Eliot place," the school's transformation and ultimate failure had a lasting and negative effect on T.S. Eliot's view of his grandfather's faith.

Smith Academy and Washington University were founded in 1853 (three and a half decades before T.S. Eliot was born) when a group of St. Louis businessmen passed a bill in the Missouri legislature chartering a corporation named "Eliot Seminary" to provide for the education of St. Louis boys. Greenleaf Eliot, the school's namesake, was unaware of the honor and demanded that his name be removed from the school when he discovered that his name had been used. Greenleaf Eliot did not refuse the honor because he disapproved of the aims of the school; far from it. Rather, he took great interest in the schem but thought the use of his name would set the institution on a wrong course because it was "too personal" and "too sectarian." Though Greenleaf Eliot distanced himself from the name of the institution, he quickly assumed the leadership of it. He directed the fledgling school with the full support of its board of directors, all seventeen of whom were members of his church.

In his inaugural address to the board of directors at the passing of the charter and constitution of the Washington Institute in 1854, Greenleaf Eliot outlined his purposes for the school. The school was, according to him, "impelled by three different motives," and should be expected to "attain a three-fold result." First, the school would meet the founders' need to educate their own children "in our city . . . at a moderate rate of tuition . . . [for] the best advantages." Secondly, the school would fulfill the leaders' duty to aid others: "there is," Greenleaf Eliot said, "no method of aiding [the poorer classes] so effectually as to give a good practical education to their children." Finally, and in Greenleaf Eliot's view, most importantly, the institution would "benefit the public" by

transforming the city on a "large scale."[34] Greenleaf Eliot feared the cultural barbarism of a rapidly expanding St. Louis and, like the Puritan founders of Harvard, determined not to leave an illiterate mass to confront it.[35]

At Greenleaf Eliot's insistence, Washington University and its preparatory department were, from their inception, dedicated to non-sectarian and non-partisan instruction. The Charter and Constitution contained a provision which stated: "No instruction, either sectarian in religion or partisan in politics, shall be allowed in any department of the institution, and no sectarian or partisan test shall be used in the election of professors, teachers, or other officers of the Institute, nor shall any such test ever be used in said Institute for any purpose whatsoever."[36] In his inaugural address, Greenleaf Eliot warned, "Above all, it must be our constant endeavor to keep narrow and sectarian influences from every department of this Institute. The Constitution as now adopted, guards us against them, and by the Eighth Article we have placed it beyond our power to introduce any partisan or sectarian test, or to allow any partisan or sectarian instruction." Washington University historian Ralph Morrow argues that Eliot's suggestion of the name Washington Institute as a substitute for "Eliot Seminary" indicates his desire to provide the university to a broad constituency; Washington's name, of course, by the mid-nineteenth century had become ubiquitous to the point of being apolitical.

Smith Academy quickly proved successful at achieving Greenleaf Eliot's tripartite mission of providing a first-rate classical education for the children of the city's leading citizens, polytechnic training for the city's middle class, and transformative education for the urban poor. Smith Academy had achieved distinction at the front rank of midwestern

preparatory schools; ninety-two percent of its graduates went on to college, and forty-seven percent of its graduates matriculated at Washington University.[37]

At the time of its construction, the building at the corner of Washington and 19th Streets was state of the art. In promotional materials, the school's board of directors reported, without a hint of self-consciousness about hyperbole, "It is believed that no better building or more substantial edifice has ever been erected in St. Louis, nor can any bad work or material be found in it. The faithfulness of the architect and builder and of all the mechanics to which so excellent results are due ought to be known and recognized by all interested in the university."[38] In the late nineteenth century, the school seemed destined for the same fate as the most prestigious East Coast preparatory schools, but the year 1879 proved to be the crest of Greenleaf Eliot's chancellorship of the university and the Academy. It was during this period that the university expanded to include both a school of fine arts and a museum of fine arts. It also marked the founding of the Manual Training School, which became an international phenomenon under the direction of its headmaster C.M. Woodward. In addition to the completion of the new Academy building, the University opened a new facility for its girls' school, the Mary Institute.

Despite these successes in preparatory education, several problems plagued the University as a whole. Compared to the dramatic rises of Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Cornell, and Michigan during the same period, the Collegiate Department's stagnation was galling to Greenleaf Eliot. As early as 1872, he considered relocating the University to a more suburban location but realized that the chief barrier between the University and the success of its more ascendant contemporaries was its lack of capital for such a relocation.[39] In addition to being hemmed in on all sides - a restriction which made

expansion exceedingly difficult - the University was rapidly tiring of its inner-city location.

Greenleaf Eliot's death in 1887 understandably provoked a crisis for Smith Academy and Washington University. Morrow writes that "[Greenleaf] Eliot's death simply highlighted a state of affairs rather than precipitating it," and many of the problems that the University faced after Eliot's departure had festered for years during his chancellorship. In addition to the barriers that the University's aging and cramped physical plant posed to research and teaching, staggering deficits, a loss of community support for the University, low college enrollment and below-market faculty salaries also threatened the university's existence.[40] These problems were compounded by a lack of leadership; following Eliot's death, no permanent chancellor was appointed for four-and-a-half years.

By 1891, the Eliots began to have grave concerns about the continued existence of the University, the institution they considered Greenleaf Eliot's most important life work. In May of 1891, Greenleaf Eliot's widow (T.S. Eliot's grandmother), Abigail Eliot, announced anonymously through the University's directors that she would give the University a $100,000 gift after a permanent chancellor was appointed to replace her deceased husband. Over the previous two years, T.S. Eliot's father, Henry Ware Eliot, scoured the city of St. Louis in search of donations, collecting some as small as $500 so that Greenleaf Eliot's "greatest work might be perpetuated."[41] A new chancellor was hired but the problems presented by its location intensified.

In 1893, the University's dissatisfaction with its location on Washington Avenue came to a head. In his 1893 report to the University's board of directors, new Chancellor

W.S. Chaplin argued that "the encroachment of business and manufacturing establishments . . . [made] it necessary to move the University . . . The smoke, the dirt, and the noise" were becoming an insurmountable barrier to "the accomplishment of the best results in teaching," and "the jarring caused by heavy traffic over the paved streets around the University," interrupted research that was dependent upon precise scientific measurements. Moreover, the area around the university had fallen from its fashionable residential character into a "neighborhood of saloons, boarding houses and gambling dens," which were "the resort of thugs, thieves, and lewd women."[42] The following year the board conceded defeat to the forces of industrialization and urbanization and approved the University's move to the western limits of the city. They had in mind a "vision of a great university" that with "structures grand" and "surroundings beautiful."[43] Construction of the new campus on a hill at the edge of Forest Park began in earnest in 1900, but it was interrupted in 1902 when the University leased its partially completed Forest Park campus to a group of St. Louis businessmen who would use the grounds for the 1904 World's Fair.

The fair's use of the campus had a tremendously negative effect on the University and on T.S. Eliot's apprehension of his grandfather's legacy. Unfortunately for Washington University's students and faculty, the dates of the lease of the new campus and the sale of the old campus did not overlap. Therefore, because the old campus was vacated in June 1902, and the fair maintained possession of the new campus until December 1905, hasty arrangements were made for classes, offices, and labs to be moved to temporary locations. The old Mary Institute building at the corner of Locust and 27th Streets, immediately adjacent to the "old Eliot place" at 2635 Locust, received a large

portion of the displaced students and faculty.[44] As a result, the young T.S. Eliot had a perfect vantage point from which to observe the chaos of the makeshift University.[45] Even as the fair was continuing to displace the University, the school's old buildings were being industrialized. After Washington University and Smith Academy moved from their Washington Avenue and 17th Street buildings, a second-hand furniture store and warehouse and Brown's Shoe Manufacturing Company subsequently filled the classrooms.

The University took possession of its "hilltop campus" in January 1905, the winter of Eliot's final year at Smith Academy and of residence in St. Louis. The campus did not, however, testify to a proud or even a solid institution. An account of the beginning of classes on January 30, 1905 describes the first day as set amid "a scene of desolation and destruction;" the campus "appeared to have been visited by a catastrophe." Some of the pavilions that had been constructed to showcase the achievements of foreign nations still stood on the campus grounds. Others had been only partially demolished, and still others were left as piles of timber and rubbish. The commuter rail line that brought fairgoers to Forest Park still cut across the campus like a scar, and odd trestles, rails, and ties from the Fair's small-gauge interior railroad lay strewn about the grounds. Shuttered ticket booths, unfilled trenches, potholes, and piles of timber, metal, and stone complicated travel around campus and presented dangers to careless pedestrians. Fully six weeks after the University took possession of its campus, the chancellor required three pages to itemize the debris from the fair that still marred the campus. Despite eager cleanup efforts, Morrow observes that the campus grounds "did not completely lose their rough appearance until the chancellorship of George R. Throop in the 1930s."[46]

T.S. Eliot had few opportunities to witness the slow maturation of the campus landscaping. Certainly, he would have been impressed with the campus's development upon his return to Washington University in 1933 at the age of forty-five, but as a boy, his last view of the campus before he left for Milton and Harvard was one of rubbish, incompletion, and decay.[47] Far from witnessing the triumph of his grandfather's university moving to a grand new location, Eliot witnessed the dislocation and degradation of the institution.

Eliot left few contemporary records of his thoughts about Washington University's dislocation, and he did not reflect on the move from Washington Avenue to Forest Park in visits that he made to the campus as an adult. He was, however, very clear about what he thought about the relocation that Smith Academy undertook because of Washington University's move. In the spring of 1905, Smith Academy chose the sixteen-year-old Eliot to deliver a valedictory poem at his class's graduation. For the occasion, Eliot penned a sixteen stanza, ninety-six line poem of rhyming iambic pentameter that nods to all of the conventions of sentimental, hyperbolic graduation oratory.[48] In between all of the poem's graduation clichés, Eliot demonstrated that he was fully capable of versifying his grandfather's vision for the school. Most importantly, Eliot shows that he had internalized (or at least met his audience expectation for a statement of) the school's mission of world transformation. In the poem's second stanza Eliot compares himself and his fellow graduates to "colonists embarking from the strand / to seek their fortunes on some foreign shore." The Kipling-like verses of the fourth, fifth and sixth stanzas show that by "fortunes," Eliot means not material wealth but “fates,” and in these

lines Eliot exhorts his classmates to take up their burden of service. “Although the path be tortuous and slow,/ Although it bristle with a thousand fears,” Eliot tells his classmates:

> Great duties call - the twentieth century
> More grandly dowered than those which came before,
> Summons - who knows what time may hold in store,
> Or what great deeds the distant years may see,
> What conquest over pain and misery,
> What heroes greater than were e'er of yore!
>
> But if this century is to be more than great
> Than those before, her sons must make her so,
> And we are of her sons, and we must go
> With eager hearts to help mold well her fate,
> And see that she shall gain such proud estate
> As shall on future centuries bestow
>
> A legacy of benefits - may we
> In future years be found with those who try
> To labor for the good until they die,
> And ask no other guerdon than to know
> That they have helpt the cause to victory,
> That with their aid the flag is raised on high.

Later in the graduation poem, Eliot reflects on the school's coming relocation and confidently predicts that though the school's physical plant will been transformed, the school itself will last for a glorious eternity.

> Sometime in distant years when we are grown
> Gray-haired and old, whatever be our lot,
> We shall desire to see again the spot
> Which, whatsoever we have been or done
> Or to what distant lands we may have gone,
> Through all the years will ne'er have been forgot.
>
> For in the sanctuaries of the soul
> Incense of altar-smoke shall rise to thee
> From spotless fanes of lucid purity,
> O school of ours! The passing years that roll
> Between, as we press onward to the goal,
> Shall not have power to quench the memory.
>
> We shall return; and it will be to find
> A different school from that which now we know;
> But only in appearance 'twill be so.
> That which has made it great, not left behind,
> The same school in the future shall we find
> As this from which as pupils now we go.

. . .

Thou dost not die – for each succeeding year

Thy honor and thy fame shall but increase

Forever, and may stronger words than these

Proclaim thy glory so that all may hear;

May worthier sons be thine, from far and near

To spread thy name o'er distant lands and seas!

Eliot anticipates a physical scattering of the class of 1905 but expresses confidence in a spiritual stability that is founded upon the school as a sturdy repository of glory. The school becomes a glorious tie that binds all the boys. With this poem, Eliot spoke more to his own experience than to his classmates', the vast majority of whom simply crossed over Delmar Avenue and Forest Park Parkway in the fall of 1905 to matriculate into Washington University and later distinguished themselves in St. Louis professions. In departing from Smith Academy in 1905, Eliot was essentially leaving St. Louis forever.

As clairvoyant as Eliot's view of his own future may have been, he could not have been more wrong in his prediction of a glorious future for Smith Academy. Though the school moved into an impressive and expensive new building in the fall of 1905, within ten years it merged with the Manual Training School as an emergency measure. In 1917, two years after this unsuccessful merger, the school was entirely dissolved and its twelve year old buildings were sold to the St. Louis public school system.

In his 1953 comments to Washington University, Eliot waxed nostalgic about the school for his audience, saying,

> My memories of Smith Academy are on the whole happy ones; and when, many years ago, I learned that the school had come to an end, I felt that a link with the past had been painfully broken. It was a good school. There one was taught, as is now increasingly rare everywhere, what I consider the essentials: Latin and Greek, together with Greek and Roman history, English and American history, elementary mathematics, French and German. Also English! I am happy to remember that in those days English composition was still called *Rhetoric.* Lest you infer that the curriculum was incredibly primitive, I will add that there was a laboratory, in which physical and chemical experiments were performed successfully by the more adroit.[49]

The overall effect of this statement by the returned world-famous poet is affection for the school of his boyhood, but this reflection, like Eliot's earlier comment in the same essay about his Grandfather's role in establishing the family code, undercuts itself by revealing Eliot's reservations about the school. He hedges his "good memories" of the school with the qualifier "on the whole;" he notes that the closing of the school painfully broke a link to his past, and he suggests some tension about the curriculum. Some students pursued a classical program while others, students "more adroit" than he, studied physics and chemistry in labs.

Eliot’s subtle ambivalence is a polite treatment of his thorough rejection of his grandfather’s philosophy of education. In essays such as "The Aims of Education," "Modern Education and the Classics," and "The Christian Conception of Education," Eliot repeatedly attacks the foundations of Greenleaf Eliot's program: specifically, the

elective system, education for the modern, industrial world, and, most stridently of all, non-sectarian education. While the closure of the school was clearly not the cause of the poet's rejection of his grandfather's educational philosophy, the school's failure certainly exerted pressure on Eliot.

When Eliot was given another chance to give a graduation valediction four years later at Harvard's 1909 Commencement, Eliot was far more aware of the transience of American monuments and the heroes they memorialize.

> For the hour that is left us Fair Harvard, with thee,
>
> Ere we face the importunate years,
>
> In thy shadow we wait, while thy presence dispels
>
> Our vain hesitations and fears.
>
> And we turn as thy sons ever turn, in the strength
>
> Of the hopes that thy blessings bestow,
>
> From the hopes and ambitions that sprang at thy feet
>
> To the thoughts of the past as we go.
>
> Yet for all of these years that to-morrow has lost
>
> We are still the less able to grieve,
>
> With so much that of Harvard we carry away
>
> In the place of the life that we leave.
>
> And only the years that efface and destroy
>
> Give us also the vision to see
>
> What we owe for the future, the present, and past,
>
> Fair Harvard, to thine and to thee.[50]

By 1909, Eliot had seen enough failure to know that no American institution or its physical manifestation would endure solidly enough to provide a landmark for future direction. In this second valedictory, Eliot abandons the triumphant optimism of his previous poem for melancholy. By 1909, Eliot had already begun to sense that American landmarks – even ones so firmly planted as Harvard – were subject to effacement and destruction. Instead of ending with ever-present glory, this poem ends with a plea to remember after Eliot and his classmates are removed from the presence of Harvard and its campus.

Finding his St. Louis home ruined while he was away at Harvard and his Unitarian faith shattered, Eliot began a period of geographic and religious travel. Unlike Melville's epic months-long journey to the Mediterranean during the previous century, Eliot's pilgrimages were much more local, they affected a far less clear distinction between the sacred and the quotidian, and they were far more idiosyncratic. Like Melville, though, Eliot found traditional sites of pilgrimage deeply unsatisfying. Eliot's response to the inadequacy of these sites is the subject of the next chapter.

[1] T.S. Eliot, “American Literature and American Language” in *To Criticize the Critic and Other Writings* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 44.
[2] Foote, Henry W., “A Tribute by Rev. Henry W. Foote D.D.,” reprinted in *Our Best Words* 8, no. 8 (April 15, 1887): 6. Washington University Archives, William Greenleaf Eliot Papers.
[3] Eliot, “American Literature”, 44.
[4] See Russell Kirk *Eliot and His Age: T.S. Eliot’s Moral Imagination in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Random House, 1971); Lyndall Gordon, *Eliot’s Early Years* (New York: Noonday Press, 1977), 8; Peter Ackroyd, *T.S. Eliot* (London: Abacus, 1984), 16; Lee Oser, *T.S. Eliot and American Poetry* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 28 and Eric Sigg, *The American T.S. Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989), 3.
[5] Charlotte C. Eliot, *William Greenleaf Eliot: Minister, Educator, Philanthropist* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904). Charlotte’s biography was well received nationally and merited a positive review in the *New York Times (*March 26, 1904).
[6] Charlotte Eliot, *William Greenleaf Eliot*, 364.
[7] Between 1837 and 1852, Greenleaf Eliot’s Church of the Messiah occupied a small Doric temple that stood on the corner of Fourth and Pine Streets. In 1852, the congregation built a larger Gothic Revival church at the corner of Ninth and Olive Streets. United States Department of the Interior: National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places – Nomination Form: Unitarian Church of the Messiah Nomination Form*, 1980 (St. Louis, MO), 8:1-2.
[8] Wheaton Holden notes, “Until the death of H.H. Richardson, Peabody and Stearns, although widely patronized and admired, was clearly eclipsed by Richardson among Boston architects. But after 1886, in spite of the accelerated output of Richardson’s successors Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge, Peabody and Stearns rose to preeminence in Boston occupying for some years a position commensurate to that of McKim, Mead and White in New York City.” “The Peabody Touch: Peabody and Stearns of Boston, 1870-1917,” *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 32, no. 2 (May, 1973), 115-116.
[9] James S. Garland, “Historical Sketch,” in *Dedication Services of the Church of the Messiah*. December 16, 1881. Prefaced by a Brief Historical Sketch (Privately Printed, 1881), 15.
[10] James S. Garland, *Dedication Services*, 15-16.
[11] Garland, *Dedication Services*, 26
[12] Garland, *Dedication Services*, 26-27.
[13] Quoted in *National Register Nomination Form*, 8:5. The paper’s use of “achieved *distinction*” brings to mind the definition of the term Pierre Bourdieu posits in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2007).
[14] Peabody and Stearns’s Church of the Messiah was featured in *American Architect and Building News* and *Brickbuilder.*
[15] *L’Architecture Américaine* (Paris: André, Daly et fils, 1886) reprinted as *American Victorian Architecture : A Survey of the 70s and 90s in Contemporary Photographs* (New York: Dover, 1975), pl. 31-32.
[16] Garland, *Dedication Services,* 59-60. Greenleaf Eliot’s recognition of his Church’s success at transforming their city is a high compliment. Ten years earlier, in a sermon entitled “Christian Work in the City,” Greenleaf Eliot challenged his congregation, “Above all, perhaps if rightly considered, every Christian church and congregation should be made the centre of systematic charity and benevolence. This opens a wide field of inquiry and remark, for there is no church in the city which is doing its full duty in this respect. . . On our own part, too, compared with our opportunities and means, our attainments, nay our attempts, have been very small. . . I desire to bring before you the importance of greater concentration and effort in Christian philanthropy than we have ever yet shown.” The papers of William Greenleaf Eliot, Missouri Historical Society Library.
[17] Garland, “Historical Sketch,” 16.
[18] Charlotte Eliot, *William Greenleaf Eliot*, 365. This east wall would have been the chancel wall if the church had been built with a chancel. The chancel visible in later pictures of the church was added by the Episcopal congregation that bought and remodeled the church.
[19] This font is now in the sanctuary of the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis.

[20] The African American Episcopal Church that purchased the Locust Street building should not be confused with African Methodist Episcopal Churches (A.M.E.). The Episcopal Church that purchased the building was, as Ware Eliot's comments indicate, was decidedly High Church. Ware Eliot notes dismissively that the new owners spend a large sum to make the church plan more liturgically appropriate.
[21] Henry Ware Eliot, Jr., "A Short History of the Church of the Messiah," (29 March 1916) Washington University Archives – William Greenleaf Eliot Papers.
[22] Ware Eliot, "A Short History."
[23] William Greenleaf Eliot, "Christian Work in the City," Missouri Historical Association Library, William Greenleaf Eliot Papers. The manuscript of Greenleaf Eliot's sermon is unclear "labor" seems the likeliest word choice.
[24] "Dedication Services," 60.
[25] T.S. Eliot, "Catholicism and International Order," *Essays Ancient and Modern* (London: Harcourt, 1935), 126-127.
[26] T.S. Eliot, *Collected Letters*, ed. Valerie Eliot (New York: Harcourt, 1990), 6. T.S. Eliot was sixteen years old when his mother wrote this letter.
[27] Eliot, *Collected Letters*, 7.
[28] Charles C. Savage, *Architecture of the Private Streets of St. Louis: The Architects and the Houses They Designed* (Columbia, MO: University of Missour Press, 1987), 17.
[29] T.S. Eliot, "The Influence of Landscape upon the Poet" reprinted in *Daedalus* 126.1 (Winter 1997).
[30] Peter Ackroyd, *T.S. Eliot* (London: Abacus, 1985), 16.
[31] See, for example, Eliot, *Collected Letters* pp. 296, 316, 346, 348, 351, 360.
[32] T.S. Eliot, "American Literature," 43-44.
[33] Eliot, "American Literature," 44.
[34] Quoted in Donn Walter Hayes, "A History of Smith Academy of Washington University" (PhD diss., Washington University of St. Louis, 1950), 23.
[35] Ralph E. Morrow, *Washington University in St. Louis: A History* (St. Louis: Missouri University Press, 1996), 18.
[36] Quoted in Charlotte Eliot, *William Greenleaf Eliot*, 83.
[37] Hayes, "A History of Smith Academy," 119.
[38] Quoted in Hayes, 55.
[39] Morrow, *Washington University,* 126.
[40] Morrow, 128.
[41] Morrow, 140.
[42] Chancellor's Report 1893, qtd in Morrow, 152-153.
[43] Morrow, 145
[44] Morrow, 167.
[45] TSE would also have apprehended the dislocation through the experience of his older brother, Henry Ware Eliot, who unlike T.S. Eliot, attended Washington University.
[46] Morrow, 173-5
[47] Charlotte Eliot's Letters to Richard Cobb the headmaster of Milton Academy, place her and TSE at Eastern Point, Gloucester, MA from July 23 to September 17, 1905 (*Collected Letters*, 8-11). Eliot left for the east while the campus was a wreck and had few opportunities to see its refinement and maturation before his return in 1953.
[48] T.S. Eliot, "Ode," *Poems Written in Early Youth* (London: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1967).
[49] Eliot, "American Literature,"44-45.
[50] T.S. Eliot, *Poems Written in Early Youth* (London: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1967).

Chapter Four – T.S. Eliot's Idiosyncratic English Pilgrimages

"Here is no continuing city, here is no abiding stay."

- *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935)

After graduating from Harvard in the spring of 1910, T.S. Eliot spent the 1910-1911 academic year in Paris, studying at the Sorbonne and attending Henri Bergson's weekly lectures at the Collège de France. In April 1911, Eliot left Paris for a brief visit to London. It was his first visit to the city he would later adopt, and Eliot reported on the trip in a letter to his cousin Eleanor Hinckley. In this letter, Eliot claims to have made a pilgrimage, though he acknowledges that it is a pilgrimage of a very strange sort. "I made a pilgrimage to Cricklewood," Eliot writes,

> "Where *is* Cricklewood?" said an austere Englishman at the hotel. I produced a map and pointed to the silent evidence that Cricklewood exists. He pondered. "But why go to Cricklewood?" he flashed out at length. Here I was triumphant. "There is no reason!" I said. He had no more to say. But he *was* relieved (I am sure) when he found that I was an American. He felt no longer responsible. But Cricklewood is mine. I discovered it. No one will go there again. It is like the sunken town in the fairy story, that rose just every May-day eve, and lived for an hour, and only one man saw it.[1]

Eliot writes here with the voice of the self-conscious, over-clever young man abroad for the first time, but the description of his first European pilgrimage is, in many ways,

continuous with the place pilgrimages he would undertake throughout his life in England. Like this early description of the pilgrimage to Cricklewood, a pilgrimage that resulted in discovery and possession of what had been overlooked and abandoned, Eliot's later pilgrimages were idiosyncratic and private rather than traditional and communal.

This chapter begins by showing that the initial impressions Eliot formed of London as a more stable and permanent place than the St. Louis of his youth quickly dissipated. It engages the two City churches that Eliot references in *The Waste Land* – St. Mary Woolnoth and St. Magnus Martyr – to show that Eliot became well aware of the transitory nature of the material record of London's Christian tradition and that he drew upon the insubstantiality of these two particular landmarks to heighten the sense of rootlessness that characterizes *The Waste Land*. Though places of spiritual significance are tremendously important to Eliot's poetic and spiritual development, this chapter shows that Eliot rejected the two most important English pilgrimage sites – Canterbury and Walsingham– as personal and poetic resources because the English Reformation thoroughly dismantled the original pilgrimages. Because of this destruction, Eliot apprehended that he could approach the resumed pilgrimages and rebuilt shrines only as invented traditions. Finally, the chapter shows that though Eliot rejected these two most famous English shrines, he did not reject place pilgrimage altogether. Instead, in the *Four Quartets*, Eliot reckons with the potential of idiosyncratic pilgrimage, a journey to a spiritually significant place that has a less obvious but less contrived tradition of pilgrimage. Ultimately, Eliot's pilgrimage was a search for a satisfactory place "here and in England" (instead of in an ideal, heavenly "there") to replace the St. Louis home that disappeared in his young adulthood.

Much Eliot scholarship separates Eliot's early life and work from that which follows his conversion. This chapter resists this tendency to show that Eliot's experience of St. Louis decay cast a long shadow across his career. Both his early poetry and his later works reveal a search for a stable dwelling and a hedged, simultaneous search for material out of which he might construct such a sanctuary. Eliot discovered that a satisfactory English dwelling was nearly as elusive as an American one. Unlike Melville who abandoned hope in a permanent dwelling and unlike traditional American life pilgrims who rejected earthly abodes as distracting, Eliot accommodated himself to a series of satisfactory dwellings that he discovered while journeying on the idiosyncratic pilgrimages he describes in the *Quartets*.

Eliot and the City Churches

In Eliot's letter to his cousin, the idiosyncrasy and independence that characterize his pilgrimage to Cricklewood are not isolated. Eliot displays a similar novelty, adventurousness and quirkiness as he the details of the rest of his tour for his cousin. Later in the letter, Eliot tells her that he skipped the Tower, Madam Tussaud's, and Westminster Abbey while he had been in London and had instead visited the "St Helens, St. Stephens, St. Bartholomew the Great, St. Sepulchre, St. Ethelreda, Camberwell Work House" – four City churches, one very old Catholic church just outside the City boundary, and one obscure guildhall. Of all the churches that Eliot could have visited while he was in London, he selected these four churches because his 1909 Baedeker guide *London and its Environs* marked them for special attention and extended description because of their

exceptional historical or aesthetic character.[2] St Helen's Bishopsgate, St. Bartholomew the Great, and St. Sepulchre are all composed of portions of buildings that survived the Great Fire of 1666.[3] That significant portions of these churches survived is something of a rarity; eighty-five of 107 churches were gutted or destroyed entirely in the fire, and fifty-one were rebuilt entirely.

To Eliot's young touristic eye, the City and its ancient churches looked far more substantial and far more durable than did the places that formerly marked the St. Louis of his boyhood – landmarks that Eliot knew had already disappeared by the spring of 1911. Yet, the City, and especially its churches, were not so surely founded as Eliot may have apprehended during his 1911 visit to London. The only City churches that Baedeker treats to detailed description that Eliot does not mention visiting – St. Magnus Martyr and St Mary Woolnoth – had undergone and were yet undergoing tremendous transformations during the period of Eliot's encounters with them. St. Mary Woolnoth's foundation was undermined in the late nineteenth century by the London Underground, and the façade of St. Magnus Martyr was overwhelmed on the outside by urban redevelopment just as its interior was overlaid with baroque ornament. Of all the City churches that Eliot encountered as a young man in London, these are the two that show up in *The Waste Land* ten years later.

Eliot scans past Saint Mary Woolnoth in his survey of the London cityscape at the end of the first section of *The Waste Land*:

Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,

And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.

Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,

Where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours

With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.[4]

Two sections later, in "The Fire Sermon," Eliot describes St. Magnus the Martyr at the end of a similar amble through the city:

And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.
O City city, I can sometimes hear
Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,
The pleasant whining of a mandoline
And a clatter and a chatter from within
Where fishmen lounge at noon: where the walls
Of Magnus Martyr hold
Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold.

Both churches are destinations in the poem, not merely passing elements of the cityscape. Amid all of the fragments and phantasms of the poem, the churches stand as two whole, stable structures that seem solidly rooted in time and place. Yet neither church is a final destination. Just after passing St. Mary Woolnoth, the speaker continues up the street to encounter the shy, ashamed friend whom he knew from the war, who, like the rest of the crowd avoids him by fixing his eyes before his feet. Similarly, after poking into St. Magnus Martyr to observe its splendid interior, this speaker continues down to the River Thames which carries him downstream to the Isle of Dogs. Neither church provides a place of sustained rest for the speaker or the reader of the poem.

Previous critics have been attentive to the significance of St. Mary Woolnoth and St. Magnus Martyr in the cityscape of the poem, but few critics recognize how the churches figure into the movement of the poem's speaker. Robert Day argued that these two churches "stand out as dominant 'landmarks'" and as participants in the "horrifying daily pilgrimage of [the poem's] multiple protagonist."[5] To Day, these two churches are a "pair of opposed figures."[6] St. Mary Woolnoth, the bank clerk's church, is associated with bondage, loneliness, emptiness, and dryness. According to Day, "everything associated with St. Mary Woolnoth and its area is evil, commercial, sterile, unfruitful, and anti-religious . . . ." By contrast, St. Magnus the Martyr - the fishmen and sailor's church - is one of the very few symbols of "religion, freedom, joy, [and] water" to be found anywhere in the poem. Nancy Hargrove reproduces Day's dichotomy with an explicitly religious argument: she concludes that St. Magnus the Martyr is "a complex symbol of the significant, fulfilled life in Christ, in opposition to the commercial St. Mary Woolnoth."[7]

Characterizing St Mary Woolnoth as dry and dead fits well into Day's and Hargrove's larger arguments about the fundamental problem of life in "The Waste Land." Both critics point to the sterility, monotony, triviality and terrible boredom of modern life as the cause of the "withered soul of modern man" and the desperation of life in the "time kept city." To be sure, there is plenty of boredom, apathy, numbness, and sterility in the poem, but there is a tremendous energy and fullness as well. This energy is the frenetic, chaotic, restless energy of the crowd flowing over London Bridge and of the jarring cuts between quotations and speakers' voices. Far from providing relief from the boredom and apathy that undeniably exist in the poem, the motion of the poem and the movement

of its characters present extreme disorientation. Despite appearing to be stable landmarks of solid stone in the frenetic city, the poem's two City churches participate in the motion, continual revision, and unending transformation that so dislocated Eliot and the speaker of his most famous poem.

St. Mary Woolnoth: Undermining the Foundation

Eliot's note to the line that alludes to the crowd flowing up the hill from London Bridge to St. Mary Woolnoth (fig. 24) explains with ironic understatement that the scene is "A phenomenon which I have often noticed," and many editors have observed that Eliot passed the church daily on his commute to his office at Lloyd's Bank, just down Cornwall Street from the church.[8] Eliot's knowledge of the church, however, was more significant than either his terse note or his editors' glosses would indicate. Eliot describes his intimate connection with the church in his May 1921 "London Letter" to *The Dial* as he argues for its preservation in the face of a destruction order from the Bishop of London: "To one who, like the present writer, passes his days in this City of London," Eliot writes, "the loss of these towers, to meet the eye down a grimy lane, and of these empty naves, to receive the solitary visitor at noon from the dust and tumult of Lombard Street, will be irreparable and unforgotten."[9] In addition to occasionally using the church nave as a lunch-hour refuge, Eliot daily used what was formerly the church's crypt. Like thousands of other commuters, Eliot would ascend up from the Underground station that had been built into Saint Mary Woolnoth's crypt as he made his way from his train at Bank Station to street level in the City of London. Each evening he would then descend back into the crypt to catch his train home to Crawford Mansions near Hyde Park. Far

Figure 24: St. Mary Woolnoth as it appeared in Eliot's day, 1923. Credit: London Transport Museum.

more than a metaphor for Eliot's dreary urban existence or the sterility of the modern world, Saint Mary Woolnoth's emptied crypt and undermined nave shows that the rootlessness that characterizes "The Waste Land" is at least partially the result of the disregard of both death and the possibility of transformed life.

Like all of the cultural and literary fragments that Eliot folds into "The Waste Land," Saint Mary Woolnoth has a rich history, though by the time of Eliot's encounters with it, the church had become an anachronism in London's financial center. The church seems to have been named after a certain Wulfnoth, an eleventh-century benefactor, and its existence was first recorded in 1191. However, some medieval church structure likely predated even the Norman Conquest.[10] This medieval building, which stood on the present-day site of Saint Mary Woolnoth (a narrow wedge of land between King William and Lombard Streets in the City of London, just around the corner and less than one block from Eliot's office at Lloyds Bank), was not destroyed in the Great Fire, but it was heavily damaged. Christopher Wren is said to have conducted the repairs, but this renovation was evidently unsuccessful or unsatisfactory because the entire medieval structure was razed in 1716.[11] Nicholas Hawksmoor was then commissioned to build the new church that same year. His building, the present structure was completed in 1727.

Though Hawksmoor completely redesigned the church, architectural historians Vaughn Hart and Pierre de la Ruffinière duPrey both recognize Hawksmoor's attempts to engage the long history of the site. In the building itself and especially in many of Hawksmoor's early drawings and sketches, Hart sees evidence of distinctly Roman Catholic elements. Particularly, he notes a sketch of a statue of the Virgin Mary that was to fill the easternmost of the three niches of the church's north wall.[12] Also, Hart finds

Hawksmoor's unusual cherubim above the doors of the crypt reminiscent of sculpted cherubim from Italian churches (fig. 25). Clearly, by the 1720s, England was solidly Protestant; as was Hawksmoor. Hart concludes, therefore, that the church's "Jesuit inflections" were not attempts to subvert or resist the dominant Protestant faith; rather, these elements were Hawksmoor's attempt to accommodate the congregation's memories of their former, medieval, Catholic church.[13]

Du Prey also suggests that Hawksmoor's design takes into account the deep history of the site of the church – a history that predates even the founding of the medieval church. In his analysis, Du Prey cites George Godwin, who wrote in the early nineteenth century that while the foundation for Hawksmoor's new church was being dug on the site of the razed medieval church in 1720, "The discovery of many fragments of antiquity . . . led to the belief that a temple, probably that which was dedicated to Concord, at one time occupied the site."[14] Du Prey argues that the significance of this discovery could not have escaped Hawksmoor: "Historically minded as he was, it would have . . . intrigued him to learn that his new church's foundations stood where worship had gone on continuously since Roman times."[15] Du Prey posits that Hawksmoor sought to honor the long tradition of Christian worship on the site by "creating a twin-towered westwork, bespeaking a northern medieval character but enunciated through the classical language of architecture." Somewhat more tenuously but very cleverly, Du Prey also notes the "coincidental" resemblance between the church's heavy banded rustication (fig.) with the "stratified layers of earth in an archaeological excavation."[16] Though Hawksmoor's design for the church engaged the long history of its site and the memories of its parishioners, the design also engaged the church's new context with a new style of

Figure 25: Cherubim above the entrance to St. Mary Woolnoth's crypt. Photo by author.

architecture. Like all of the rebuilt City churches, the new St. Woolnoth was not merely a faithful reproduction of the previous building.[17]

Despite the historical and aesthetic significance of Hawksmoor's Saint Mary Woolnoth, the church had, by the time of Eliot's encounters with it in the early 1920s, survived at least two orders of destruction by the city of London and the Bishop of London.[18] The construction of the city's Underground in 1897 led to the first attempt to raze Saint Mary Woolnoth. Initially, the City and South London Railway planned to demolish the church to make way for a booking station and access point to what is now Bank Station. Because of public outcry however, the project's engineers spared the church and instead built the booking station on the wedge-shaped site between the church's south wall and King William Street.[19] In the updated plan, the City and South London Railway provided access to Bank Station from the street level via an elevator shaft that engineers dug through the church's crypt and foundation (fig. 26).

Because this shaft descended directly through the church's crypt, which had for centuries been used as a burial ground, all of the bodies that had been laid to rest in the crypt were exhumed and reburied outside of London.[20] When the project was completed, Underground patrons accessed the elevators from King William Street by passing under the cherubim-linteled doors that formerly led to Saint Mary Woolnoth's crypt. Simon Bradley notes that because of the construction of the passage to Bank Station under Saint Mary Woolnoth, steel girders had to be inserted beneath the floor and inside the walls of the church to shore up its suddenly shaky foundation.[21]

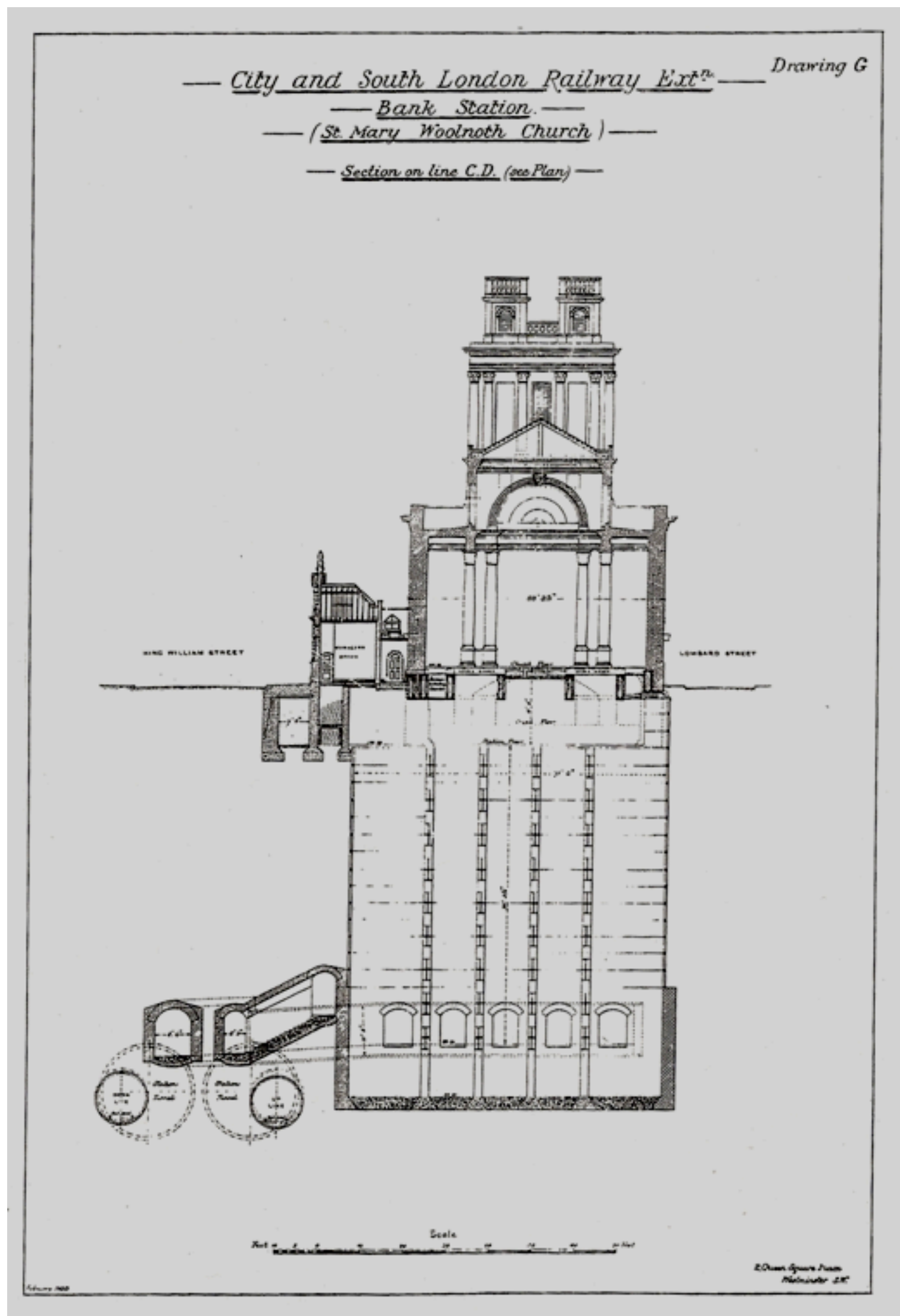


Figure 26: Architectural rendering for the design for the elevator shafts and waiting platform beneath St. Mary Woolnoth, 1892. Credit: London Transport Museum.

This project of exhumation and reburial must have come as a relief to many of Saint Mary Woolnoth's parishioners, despite the inconvenience and dislocation caused by the closing of the church during the months of construction. The railroad's removal of the bodies provided a permanent solution to what had been for many years a persistent, if intermittent, problem – the interruption of services by noises and stench wafting up into the sanctuary from the crypt. In an 1889 letter to the editor of the *Times*, the rector J.M.S Brooke noted that he had "often, while conducting service in the church above, heard the coffins tumbling about in the vaults below."[22] Two years later, Brooke again wrote to the editor of the *Times* about the condition of Saint Mary Woolnoth's crypt, this time to address the controversy over the reduction of scheduled services at his church; "Briefly," he writes, "the history is this. Some few years ago the smell from the vaults, which contain, as I compute, the remains of 7,000 or 8,000 bodies, became so foul and offensive that we were obliged to discontinue the services. It was then determined by the vestry to seal and concrete the superficial area contained within the walls." Brooke notes that the crypt was imperfectly sealed however, because "during the past summer, the church began to smell again, some of the congregation became ill, and I, after two and sometimes three services on Sunday, became affected with a sore throat. This smell at times was intolerable, coming up from below in whiffs and gusts; though at other times the church was comparatively free from it." Just before his final plea to preserve the church by "reverently" removing its vault's contents, Brooke notes again the terribly close proximity of the bodies:

> The mass of corrupted humanity contained within the four walls gives off an effluvium which must find a vent through the smallest of apertures,

> should such exist in the concrete. The fact that there are thousands of bodies within a foot or two of the floor of the church constitutes standing evidence of an insanitary condition. These bodies, from my own personal knowledge and sight, consist, roughly, of those which are dry and those which are wet. I should think that more than half are harmless, shrunken and withered, but the remainder are marvelously preserved flesh and bones, the stomachs nests of corruption, and here and there little pools of treacle reduced to such by catalytic process.

It goes without saying that Saint Mary Woolnoth's services began to suffer greatly from lack of attendance during this period.[23]

The plan to remove the bodies to make way for Bank Station was to the engineers a triumph; they were not only able to save a beautiful Baroque artifact from its own decay and the tyranny of progress, but they were also able to use its very features to beautify or civilize their feat of modern engineering. In this, they had redeemed the Church by reinterpreting it, making what was formerly useless, useful.[24]

The engineers' technical, and perhaps aesthetic, triumphs notwithstanding, the descent into Bank Station through Saint Mary Woolnoth's crypt was likely an uncomfortable experience to an Underground patron of Eliot's sensitivity. For at least two hundred years, but more likely more than nine hundred years, the act of passing under the cherubim and into Saint Mary Woolnoth's crypt was weighted with tremendous significance. Karsten Harries reminds us that,

> . . . We should not forget the . . . meaning of descent: going down into a cellar, into the underworld, descending into hell. In many medieval churches we often find beneath the light-filled choir a crypt: narrow steps wind down into its musty darkness. If the altar above is given to light and eternal life, beneath is the realm of darkness and death. The crypt is the cellar of the church. Here human pride is shattered.[25]

The engineers' design for the Tube stop demonstrates a rejection of the type of meaning that Harries finds in descent. The design of the station's interior space testifies to the engineers' attempts to overcome the former, deathly significance of the place. Like most underground stations, the design for Bank Station made liberal use of white ceramic tile. Nearly all surfaces were either coated with the tile or a white paint to sanitize the space by sealing out the contagion that formerly penetrated the walls, floor, and ceiling. Additionally, while the engineers used bright light and false windows to the outside streetscape to overcome the patron's sense of descent underground, they did not attempt to hide the fact that a tremendous mass of the church above pressed down on the station's ceiling. Instead, the engineers reveled in their ability to counteract this force. Far from hiding the structure that holds up the ceiling, the station's Corinthian capitals and energetic rivet work show off the structure and draw patrons' eyes upwards to contemplate the new foundation of the church.[26]

In *The Waste Land*, Eliot describes St. Mary's Woolnoth's bell ringing with "a dead sound on the final stroke of nine," yet given the lack of bodies in the crypt, the church was anything but a deathly place. Unlike Donne's tolling bell then, which told an earlier generation of Londoners that they will die, St. Mary Woolnoth's bell itself is dead,

that is, unable to proclaim anything to the crowd more significant that they are late for work.

Not long after the publication of *The Waste Land,* Walter Benjamin recognized the more general removal of death from public view. Benjamin observed,

> It has been observable for a number of centuries how in the general consciousness the thought of death has declined in omnipresence and vividness . . . . And in the course of the nineteenth-century bourgeois society has, by means of hygenic and social, private and public institutions, realized a secondary effect which may have been its subconscious main purpose: to make it possible for people to avoid the sight of the dying . . . In the course of modern times dying has been pushed further and further out of the perceptual world of the living. There used to be no house, hardly a room, in which someone had not once died . . . Today people live in rooms that have never been touched by death, dry dwellers of eternity, and when their end approaches they are stowed away in sanatoria or hospitals by their heirs.[27]

While perhaps Saint Mary Woolnoth's nineteenth-century parishioners could have, as Benjamin observed, already begun to "avoid the sight of the dying," the vivid sounds and smells of the dead from the crypt would have brought death directly into their "perceptual world." By the turn of the century, even this subterranean reminder had been removed, but not without consequence. Harries connects crypts and choirs in his church topology, and he recognizes that they are mutually supportive, even as they are antithetical. Harries

recognizes that the loss of one cannot but diminish the other. So too did Eliot recognize the problem of the disappearance of death. In *The Waste Land*, the absence of death makes impossible both meaningful life and resurrection. What is left is a Sybil-like ceaseless life, not new life each April.

A waste land is by definition a place where people cannot dwell. Waste, according to the *OED*, is "an uninhabited (or sparsely inhabited) and uncultivated country." "Oceans, land covered with snow, empty space, untenanted regions of the air" are considered uninhabited even though it is possible to travel across them or even to stay in these places for a time, because it is impossible to remain in a waste long enough to claim and mark it as one's own place. Wastes are fundamentally inhospitable and uninhabited places. As *The Waste Land* indicates, the City of London was indeed crowded – "the crowd flowed over London Bridge / Down King William Street . . . "- but no one of these people, and very few others actually live in the City. The Bishop's plan to raze seventeen City churches, a scheme that Eliot vehemently opposed, was directly related to the depopulation of the City.[28] The poem recognizes the inhospitality of the City by raising potential places of refuge, but by also then showing their fatal flaws. In the first section of the poem, "The Burial of the Dead," a speaker describes a world that offers neither satisfactory dwelling nor suitable refuge.

> What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
> Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
> You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
> A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,

> And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
>
> And the dry stone no sound of water.

A modest shelter does exist in this figurative desert place. Someone offers the speaker refuge "under the shadow of this red rock," yet instead of accepting this invitation, the speaker puts it out of his mind by shifting his thought to four lines of Wagner that begin, in translation, with "The wind blows fresh to the homeland." This mental escape from the hot, stagnant, noisy place to the fresh, wet, soft, Emerald Isle, is of course only a fantasy and only a temporary escape. The busy, noisy, chaotic material world intrudes once again on the speaker (and the reader) with the description of London twenty-five lines later:

> Unreal City,
>
> Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
>
> A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
>
> I had not thought death had undone so many.
>
> Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
>
> And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.

The problem with this world, the reason that it is wasted, even though it is so apparently productive, is indicated by the poem's epigraph. In this line from quoted from the *Satyricon,* the Sibyl, a being who was granted eternal life without eternal youth, exclaims, "I want to die." Death in this first part of the poem ("I. The Burial of the Dead") is the primary barrier to finding a place of refuge in the waste. It is not, however, the presence of death or even the threat of death that makes dwelling impossible; rather, the absence

or disregard of death makes remaining in a place impossible. The offer of shelter under the red rock is extended on the condition of facing death:

> (Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
> And I will show you something different from either
> Your shadow at morning striding behind you
> Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
> I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

The closing statement "I will show you fear in a handful of dust" of course echoes the phrasing of the rite of burial in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* (" . . . we therefore commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust").

Similarly, the moment of welcome that follows the description of the flowing Dantean crowd is undone by death. A speaker recognizes "one [he] knew" and cries out,

> "You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!
> "That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
> "Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
> "Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?

The man does not apparently respond; humiliated and terrified, he refixes his eyes before his feet, disregards the deathly question and passes by.

The Sibyl prefaces these refusals to engage death and Eliot's later poem "Journey of the Magi" weighs upon them from after the fact. In this later poem, the "dead tree [that gave] no shelter" in *The Waste Land* is refigured as one of three trees on a low sky. After wandering in winter through "cities hostile and towns unfriendly," lacking shelter all the way, the Magi come down to a "temperate valley and found "the place; it was (you

may say) satisfactory." Though this place is "satisfactory" refuge after weeks of shelterless travel, it is a place of birth and death. It is a place of death because there, the speaker's being is utterly overwhelmed and he is transformed by the encounter. The speaker does not remain inviolate and independent; rather, he and is so thoroughly changed that he no longer finds himself at ease in his previously ordinary life once he returns home. In *The Waste Land*, St. Mary Woolnoth stands in between the rejection of shelter under the red rock and the encounter with the friend who hides a corpse in his garden. The church itself testifies to the disregard of death and to the apparent impossibility of dwelling in the modern city.

St Magnus Martyr: Overwhelmed Inside and Out

Like St. Mary Woolnoth, Eliot's other ecclesiastical landmark in *The Waste Land* was a structure under tremendous pressure. While the foundation of St. Magnus the Martyr (fig. 27) is more secure than the span of empty space that undergirds St. Mary Woolnoth, its founding is somewhat less certain. Although Pevsner notes that the Westminster Charter ("a C12 document spuriously dated to 1067") locates a church adjacent to London Bridge on the site now occupied by St. Magnus Martyr, he concludes that a "C12 foundation is more likely." Whatever church occupied the site was completely destroyed by the Great Fire. Indeed, old St. Magnus Martyr would have been one of the first churches engulfed by the conflagration — that is, if the Monument (which is just two blocks up Fish Street Hill from the church) rightly marks the place where the fire broke out. After the fire, in 1668, the parish of St. Magnus Martyr began constructing a new church and succeeded in raising the north front. Christopher Wren

Figure 27: St. Magnus Martyr in context today. Photo by author.

took over the project in 1671 and completed the church in 1684. Wren's design incorporated the congregation's nine bay north front and embraced the church's prominent location at the head of London Bridge by raising a large, heavily ornamented tower that stood almost as a gatepost to the City for commuters crossing over London Bridge from Southwark. In 1709, the congregation extended a richly decorated clock over King William Street to announce the time to people entering the City. Beyond the tower, the vast majority of Wren's creative energy went into the design of the church's interior. Inside, the church's rectangular plan was broken into aisles and bays by the slender ionic columns which are featured in *The Waste Land* ("[T]he walls / Of St. Magnus Martyr hold / Inexplicable splendor of Ionian white and gold").

The church that Eliot encountered as a City banker in 1920 was not the church that Wren designed. A catastrophic fire consumed much of Wren's church in 1760, and the fire provided the City with an opportunity to realize its plan of widening the roadway to London Bridge. Because St. Magnus's westernmost bays and tower stood directly over a lane that the City wanted to add to the bridge approach, the church demolished the two bays, moved the west wall of the church, and built a tunnel through the tower to provide pedestrian access to the bridge. So significant was this transformation that Pevsner concludes that the design was far removed from anything Wren might have employed. On the exterior of the building, the richly sculpted tower stood until the mid-nineteenth century as the greatest evidence of Wren's involvement in the design, but much of the statuary was removed by Victorian reformers. The tower was greatly simplified, and the exterior of the building was left "dull and unspectacular."[29]

When Eliot described the walls of Magnus Maryr as "hold[ing] / inexplicable splendor of Ionian white and gold" in *The Waste Land,* and when he glossed these lines with the note, "The interior of St. Magnus Martyr is to my mind one of the finest among Wren's interiors," he knew much of the history of the church's eighteenth-century transformations. Eliot's note about the interior of St. Magnus the Martyr concludes with the citation, "See *The Proposed Demolition of Nineteen City Churches* (P. S. King & Son, Ltd.)." This brief pamphlet published the official report by the London County Council on the historic and aesthetic justification for preserving city churches in the face of a 1919 demolition order by the Bishop of London. Both here in his notes to "The Waste Land" and in the *Dial* "London Letter," he argues for the church's preservation. The pamphlet describes historically and architecturally each of the nineteen City churches slated for demolition; in its description of St. Magnus Martyr, the pamphlet provides a detailed history of its renovations from its pre-Conquest founding through the Wren design and the nineteenth-century remodeling.[30]

Just as the St. Magnus Martyr that Eliot encountered in 1921 was not the church designed by Wren, Eliot's church is not the church that stands today. Eliot was on hand, however, to witness St. Magnus Martyr's second wholesale remodeling in the early 1920s. St. Magnus's façade had remained relatively unaltered since the nineteenth-century exterior remodeling, but Eliot watched the church become completely overshadowed by its commercial neighbors. Since the eleventh century, St. Magnus Martyr welcomed pedestrians crossing over London Bridge to the City from Southwark (fig 28), and even after the construction of New London Bridge in 1831, the church stood prominently in the City skyline. In 1921, however, engineers began excavating the foundation for

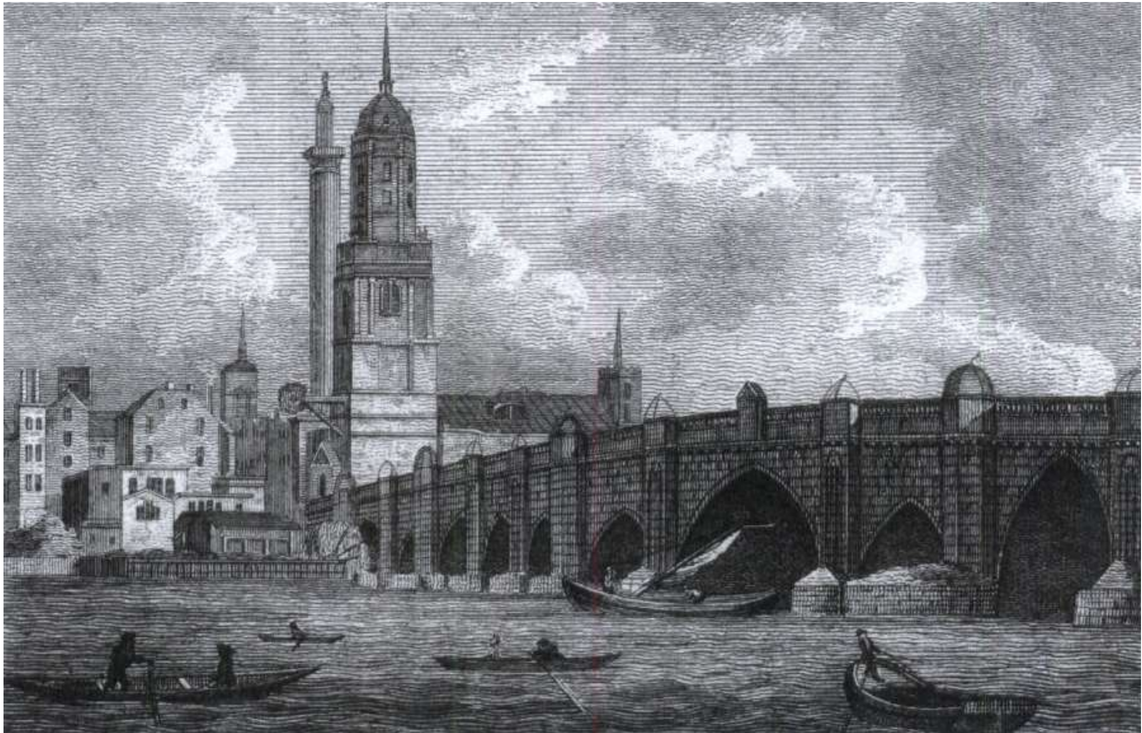


Figure 28: Engraving of London Bridge, St. Magnus Martyr, and the Monument byW.Wallis, drawn for Walks Through London (1817)

Figure 29: Similar view from slightly higher elevation after the completion of Adelaide House, 1924.

Adelaide House, an American-style warehouse and office skyscraper. This building, which was the tallest building in London at the time of its construction, encircled St. Magnus Martyr and cut it off from both London Bridge and the Thames (fig 29).[31] As Eliot was imagining the third section of *The Waste Land*, he could have peered into the L-shaped hole that had been dug around St. Magnus Martyr, and he certainly watched the walls of Adelaide house rising up around the church.

Just as the church's place in the city changed, the interior was being transformed, though this transformation proceeded in a direction directly opposite to the emptying of St. Mary Woolnoth. In 1921, the year that Eliot composed the bulk of the "The Waste Land," the Rev. Henry Joy Fynes-Clinton assumed the rectorship of St. Magnus Martyr and began an ambitious remodeling project for the church. Fynes-Clinton was a leader of interwar Anglo-Catholicism, the branch of the Church of England that sought to bridge the rupture with Roman Catholicism from the English Reformation without rejecting the Archbishop of Canterbury as head of the Catholic church of England. To varying degrees, Anglo-Catholics drew upon the rituals, theology, ecclesiology, and tastes of the Roman Catholic church. Of all Anglo-Catholics, Fynes-Clinton was of the wing closest to Rome in liturgical practice, ecclesiology, and taste. Michael Yelton characterizes him as "Anglo-Papalist," which means that he, unlike broad-church Anglicans and even many Anglo-Catholics, affirmed the authority of the Pope as head of the Church of England. Eliot, too, was Anglo-Catholic, though not of the Anglo-Papalist wing. Indeed, after his baptism into the Anglican Communion in 1927 and after his famous public announcement of religious belief ("my present position [is] . . . classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion") Eliot became the most famous Anglo-

Catholic of the interwar and post-war periods. [32] Eliot progressed towards the Church of England and Anglo-Catholicism through St. Magnus Martyr. It was the first Anglo-Catholic church that Eliot attended.[33]

Fynes-Clinton did not have historic restoration of the Wren church in mind for his remodeling project; instead, he devoted his significant personal wealth and his collection of liturgical furnishings to transform the interior of St. Magnus Martyr into a space where Anglo-Catholic liturgy could be practiced in its fullest expression (fig. 30). Under Fynes-Clinton's direction, the prominent Anglo-Catholic church designer Martin Travers transformed St. Magnus Martyr from a broad-church Anglican house of worship into a space that is modeled on baroque continental Roman Catholic churches. Most noticeably, Fynes-Clinton added a collection of shrines around the church. In the northeast corner of the church, Fynes-Clinton and Travers created an altar to the Virgin Mary that included a tabernacle for reserving the sacrament. The practice of reserving the sacrament — that is, keeping the Host or communion bread in a tabernacle after the mass so that parishioners may pray in its presence — was generally prohibited as idolatrous in the Church of England between the sixteenth century and the late nineteenth century. The practice was resumed, albeit rarely, during the nineteenth-century Oxford Movement. Fynes-Clinton brought the practice, as well as the even more controversial Benediction (a ceremony of adoration of the Host) to St. Magnus Martyr when he assumed the vicarage, much to the displeasure of the Bishop of London.[34] Travers also added an altar that celebrated Christ the King in the southwest corner of the church and a statue of St. Magnus the Martyr on the southern wall of the church. Both of the side reredoses were twentieth century creations, but they appear to be authentic baroque pieces because Travers used reclaimed

Figure 30: Interior of St. Magnus Martyr. (L to R) Tabernacle and altar, image of Our Lady of Walsingham, reredos, pulpit, altar of Christ the King

seventeenth-century woodwork to create them. The statue of St. Magnus the Martyr that Travers installed along the south wall was wholly new, though it too was made to look very old.

Much of the church's new interior design would have appealed to Eliot's tastes, even during the period of the composition of *The Waste Land* (fully six years before his Anglican baptism). Eliot wrote that as a young boy he had been fascinated by the sights and smells of the Catholic church that his Irish nurse, Anne Dunne, had taken him to in St. Louis.[35] Later in life, Eliot plainly stated his preference of baroque over gothic style, though he did not connect this preference to whatever early childhood associations may have remained from the contrast between his parents' sparely decorated gothic Unitarian church and his nurse's richly ornamented Catholic church. Despite Eliot's general interest in Baroque church architecture, there is much in Eliot's aesthetic and critical theory that would suggest that he disapproed of Fynes-Clinton's specific transformation of St. Magnus Martyr. Architectural style was almost certainly not the cause of Eliot's shift from St. Magnus Martyr to St. Stephen's Gloucester Road in 1933 – indeed, Eliot later said that he thought needing a particular style of furnishing to achieve a suitably reverent mood was problematic – but the architectural shift at St. Magnus may well have made unseen spiritual priorities manifest.[36]

Eliot's lecture to a gathering of the Friends of Chichester Cathedral on "The Uses of Cathedrals in England To-day" in 1951 indicates that he may have disapproved of the transformation of St. Magnus Martyr because of the new design's disregard for the long history of the church, even though the final result was, and remains today, very beautiful. Eliot's statement, "by far the greater work of our Cathedrals must be restoration."[37] fits

neatly into the view of Eliot as an arch-conservative. Such a tidy accordance is altogether too simplistic, however. Eliot was, like Fynes-Clinton, Anglo-Catholic, he did admire the city churches, and he admitted in the Chichester lecture to being "conservative in the matter of doing away with what is old." But Eliot's stated critical principles suggest that he did not support Fynes-Clinton's remodeling any more than he could approve of the City & South London Railway's transformation of St. Mary Woolnoth. Indeed, within Eliot's thought, the commercial transformation of St. Mary Woolnoth and liturgical transformation of St. Magnus Martyr are equal but opposite errors, and both transformations remove the churches as potentially satisfactory spiritual dwellings.

Eliot understood the complexity of "restoration," and he provided his Chichester audience with his own definition: "By restoration," Eliot said, "I mean the replacement of what was there before as exactly as possible."[38] At first glance, Eliot's clarification "what was there" appears sloppy because it disregards the question of time; his definition leaves the "when" off of the "what was there." As we have seen with St. Magnus Martyr, what was "there" architecturally changes far more than what is "there" in a fair copy text. Unlike the historical preservationist, Eliot makes no attempt to identify what particular time's "there" is most worth restoring, What was there is not a collection of discrete artifacts (an altar here, an image there, an organ, a clock), but an always evolving totality made up of elements that are related to each other both at a particular instant and across time. Restoration affirms continuity with the past instead of trumping or disregarding it. In the cases of the City churches, the restoration that Eliot describes would recognize that a crypt had continually been under the sanctuary of St. Mary Woolnoth from the eleventh

century through the nineteenth and that the design of St. Magnus Martyr had never been executed in continental baroque style.

Though Eliot was interested in the work of accurate restoration, he was not interested in preserving churches as aesthetic artifacts; instead, he wanted churches to be both used and useful. He explained to his Chichester audience that though he is "conservative in the matter of doing away with what is old," he "deplore[s] excessive conservatism where there is new work to be done." Eliot frames this "new work to be done" as the work of modern ecclesiastical art, and he says that he would "rather take a risk on a great modern artist . . . than employ a man who can be depended upon to produce a close imitation of the devotional art of an earlier age." He values what is old simply for its sake of being old, not for any inherent connection between beauty and truth of a previous period's art, but he is uncomfortable with historical reproduction, even of a very high quality and accuracy.

Two reasons account for Eliot's distaste for reproduction. First, Eliot had long found imitation artistically "immature." In his oft-(mis)paraphrased assessment of Philip Massinger, Eliot, as a much younger man, wrote

> One of the surest of tests is the way in which a poet borrows. 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. The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different from that from which it was torn; the bad poet throws it

> into something which has no cohesion. A good poet will usually borrow from authors remote in time, or alien in language, or diverse in interest.[39]

Eliot believed that imitation defaces the original model and that it tears the original out of its historical matrix without reorienting it into a new context. The quotation or the reproduction becomes a discrete and inert bit of ornament, with neither meaning nor power.

Michael Yelton describes St. Magnus Martyr as being remade into an “Austrian church which has been washed over by the Counter-Reformation.” Far from reinforcing St. Magnus Martyr’s tradition as a fisherman’s church in the City, Fynes-Clinton’s remodeling cut it off from English Christianity as it had been practiced in all of its remarkable diversity. Though the church remodeling was undeniably more beautifully executed than the faux-Egyptian, American-style skyscraper that rose around it, the isolation of St Magnus out of its historical context effected by the interior renovations was nearly as complete as the work done by Adelaide House.

Everybody’s at Walsingham, Where’s Tom?

Both St. Mary Woolnoth and St. Magnus Martyr failed to live up to their initial appearances as satisfactory refuges in the midst of the City. Eliot might have supplemented his minor quotidian pilgrimages to the City churches by participating in Britain’s national pilgrimage, the pilgrimage to Walsingham, as he settled into his new English home, but no reliable evidence connects him to this most significant contemporary English pilgrimage. That Eliot did not make a pilgrimage to Walsingham

– or that he did make a pilgrimage, but that it did not strike him as significant enough to engage it poetically, critically, or in his letters – is a problem that has not been solved in Eliot scholarship. Eliot's distance from St. Magnus Martyr after its transformation does not solve the riddle of his distance from Walsingham, but it does provide context. Just as St. Magnus Martyr was a poorly restored church, Walsingham pilgrimage was a poorly restored shrine.

Barry Spurr observes that pilgrimage was Eliot's favorite conceit, and that his later poetry is "concentrate[ed] in . . . particular times and places where spiritual experience has occurred." [40] However, Eliot's poetry, his prose writing, and his letters all but completely disregard the pilgrimage to Little Walsingham in eastern Norfolk. Eliot's distance from Walsingham is all the more perplexing given the direct contemporaneity of the modern resumption of the Walsingham pilgrimage and Eliot's conversion to Anglo-Catholicism.

From the eleventh century to its destruction by Henry VIII in 1539 during the dissolution of the monasteries, the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham was the richest and most important pilgrimage site in England; some have argued that it was the most important Marian shrine in all of medieval Europe.[41] The shrine commemorated a visitation of the Virgin Mary, who mystically led the Saxon noblewoman Richeldis de Faverches to Nazareth to show her the childhood house of Christ and commanded her to build a replica of the Holy House according to the exact dimensions of the house in Nazareth. Lady Richeldis began the work, but the Virgin herself was said to have intervened and miraculously built the house overnight. An abbey and shrine complex grew up around the Holy House and became the primary site of devotion for pilgrims

who walked the "Milky Way" or the "Walsingham Way" to the shrine. English kings from Henry III to Henry VIII made pilgrimage to the shrine and became patrons of it. Walsingham's wealth and popularity made it an obvious target for Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell during the Reformation. In 1538, the priory was torn down, the image[42] of Our Lady of Walsingham was taken to London and burned, pilgrimages were forbidden, and the abbey's lands were confiscated. Without a poem like *The Canterbury Tales,* and without pavers worn smooth by pilgrims like those at Canterbury Cathedral, Walsingham, its shrine, and its pilgrimage quickly fell from prominence into a geographic and cultural backwater. Between the seventeenth century and the late nineteenth century, the shrine and pilgrimage had ceased to exist as a site of devotion. Walsingham had all but completely passed from English cultural memory in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[43]

Though the pilgrimage had been suspended since 1539, a group of Anglo-Catholics led by Fr. Alfred Hope Paten, rector of the parish of Walsingham, determined to resume what had been England's national pilgrimage and made the first modern pilgrimage in October 1922. The following spring, a much larger group led by Paten and Fynes-Clinton began the pilgrimage at St. Magnus the Martyr in London and walked 115 miles northeast to Little Walsingham. Like most Anglo-Catholics, Eliot held the Virgin Mary in high esteem, prayed the rosary, and venerated images of her.[44] Both St. Magnus the Martyr and the parish Eliot served as churchwarden, St. Stephen's Gloucester Road, installed shrines of Our Lady of Walsingham in 1931, and both parishes organized pilgrimages to the main shrine in Norfolk for their parishioners. The first national pilgrimage to Walsingham began in the nave of St. Magnus Martyr in May 1922.

Eliot may have visited the shrine during the National Pilgrimage or at some other time of the year, but no record survives to provide detail. Barry Spurr's contribution to an anthology of writing about Walsingham from "Middle Ages to Modernity" begins with Eliot, but quickly pivots to the Walsingham section of Robert Lowell's poem *Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket*, presumably for lack of poetic or epistolary evidence linking Eliot to Walsingham.

The dearth of evidence linking Eliot to Walsingham is curious both because of his parish's connection to the pilgrimage and because some of the most important figures in his spiritual life were engaged in the maintenance of the shrine: Eliot's confessor, the Rev. Percy Maryon-Wilson, was a Guardian of the Shrine; Eliot's priest for twenty five years, Father Cheetham, installed the image of Our Lady of Walsingham at St. Stephen's; and Nashdom Abbey, the monastery where Eliot sought annual retreat, sent monks to live in residence at Walsingham for a time. Most obviously, Eliot's memorial at St. Stephens directly faces the church's image of Our Lady of Walsingham (fig. 31). The resumption of the Walsingham pilgrimage was among the most conspicuous – and contentious – developments in interwar Anglo-Catholicism, and Eliot was the most prominent Anglo-Catholic of his generation.[45] Eliot should have been directly engaged with Walsingham, but other than one brief mention of Eliot as a "supporter of the shrine" in a subscription notice raising funds for a new shrine church, nothing places Eliot anywhere near the shrine or the pilgrimage to it.[46]

Eliot may have participated quietly (all but silently to the historical record) in the Walsingham pilgrimage. This decision would not have been out of character for a poet who had his letters burned in the determination that "there would be no biography," but

Figure 31: (Foreground) Image of Our Lady of Walsingham at St. Stephen's Gloucester Road, London. (Background) Memorial to THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT, O.M. of St. Louis Missouri "a churchwarden of this parish for 25 years."

Eliot's detachment from the developments at Walsingham differs from his prominent support of other Anglo-Catholic movements from the 1930s through the 1950s. Eliot lent his artistic talents and his celebrity to a number of other ecclesiastical events in the period. Most notably, he wrote the liturgical dramas *The Rock* and *Murder in the Cathedral* at the requests of the Rev. R. Webb-Odell and Rt Rev. George Bell, the Bishop of Chichester. Eliot also supported the work of cathedrals with critical lectures to organizations such as the Friends of Salisbury Cathedral and the Friends of Chichester Cathedral.[47] If there is more to Eliot's detachment from Walsingham and the resumption of the pilgrimage than the simple privacy of the poet, indeed, if Eliot deliberately maintained distance from the shrine rather than simply remaining quiet about his interaction, this distance might stem from the same critical commitments which led him to distance himself from St. Magnus Martyr.

Like St. Magnus Martyr, the Walsingham pilgrimage and shrine imposed tradition on a landscape that had laid bare and ruined since the English Reformation. Hope Patten rebuilt the shrine the place where the original stood, and he made use of the paths that pilgrims formerly walked. He had the altar inside the Holy House built in 1931 out of stones from the old, ruined priory that stood adjacent to the new shrine, and the walls of the Holy House itself out of stones gathered from ruined monastic houses. On its surface, Hope Patten's attempt to reuse old stones to establish continuity with a ruined past sounds remarkably similar to Eliot's poetic attempt to "shore fragments against his ruin," but in addition to the old stones, the new shrine buildings were created out of new brick (fig. 32) according to a design that attempted to make the buildings look older and more authentic than the gothic revival buildings that had sprung up around England during the

Figure 32: Shrine church of Our Lady of Walsingham.

nineteenth century. John Twyning describes the new shrine, which was built in an accurate Norman Romanesque style, as "peculiarly anachronistic, incongruous, almost like an English Catholic missionary outpost." He adds that the overall effect of the shrine is ironic: "while it generates a certain timelessness, it is somewhat closed off or ideologically reserved."[48] Even a sympathetic historian of Patten and the shrine, Michael Yelton, agrees that the shrine was "ill-thought-out" and that "the effect of the building was completely alien to its surroundings." Like Twyning, Yelton observes that the shrine "looked as though a modern ecclesiastical building from Italy or Spain had been dropped in the very English surroundings of Walsingham."[49]

The complete dismantling of the shrine and its pilgrimage had significant implications for their revival in the 1920s and 1930s. Without cultural or practical continuity connecting the medieval pilgrimage to the modern one, the revival is an example of what Eric Hobsbawm describes as "invented tradition," that is an "[attempt] to establish continuity with a suitably historic past."[50] Hobsbawm recognizes that all traditions develop over time, but what separates invented traditions from "old" or "genuine" traditions is that genuine traditions bubble up from (in Marxian terms) the base over a long period of time, while invented traditions are imposed down from the superstructure, often at a discernible moment. Old traditions change, grow, and contract over time, but the whole point of invented traditions is that they are fixed and that they are meticulously observed to justify a particular social or political agenda.

Patten's Walsingham pilgrimage, like Fynes-Clinton's St. Magnus Martyr, sought to recreate an English Catholic past that had been thoroughly dismantled by nearly four centuries of (admittedly uneven) reformation. Just as Eliot's critical principals cannot be

easily squared with St. Magnus Martyr's redesign, they cannot be used to support the revival of the Walsingham pilgrimage. Seen through Eliots' critical eye, a twentieth-century Walsingham pilgrimage is simply obeisance to a dead past. If Hobsbawm is correct that invented traditions have a direct bearing on authority and power relations, St. Magnus Martyr, the Walsingham pilgrimage, and the St. Louis' Church of the Messiah are all attempts to resurrect by human will a long dead practice to lend legitimacy to a marginalized movement.

Murder in [Some, Any, Every, No] Cathedral: **Eliot's Rejection of Canterbury as a "Satisfactory Place"**

Unlike Walsingham, the Canterbury pilgrimage dominates English thought about pilgrimage from the Middle Ages to this day not because its shrine survived the Reformation, but because the *Canterbury Tales* did. Canterbury's link to past pilgrimage is unbroken and its traditional place in English culture is assured, but Eliot did not find Canterbury Cathedral any more satisfactory a place than Walsingham or the City churches. While Walsingham is absent in Eliot's poetry, Canterbury is prominent. *The Waste Land* famously begins with an echo of *The Canterbury Tales* and proceeds to a rival, modern poetic pilgrimage to waste, chaos, and isolation. Eliot's 1935 play *Murder in the Cathedral* directly engages Canterbury with its dramatization of the martyrdom of Thomas Becket, but the play rejects the Becket shrine and Canterbury Cathedral as satisfactory places of modern pilgrimage. Though *Murder in the Cathedral* performs events that gave rise to a pilgrimage, it is not a pilgrimage play because it does not dramatize progress towards a particular geographic place. Instead of a physical,

geographic Canterbury, the play proposes a mythic, ideal Canterbury that is at once an everyplace and a no place.

Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* performs the events immediately prior to and after the murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket. The First Part of the play shows the Archbishop's return from France and then his resistance to four tempters. After the conclusion of Part One, the Archbishop returns to the stage for an interlude and delivers a Christmas sermon as if the audience were sitting in the cathedral. Part Two represents the murder and then attempts by the three knights to justify their actions directly to the audience. Throughout the play, a Chorus of the Women of Canterbury serve as an intermediary between the audience and the epic events that are depicted on the stage.

The stage directions for *Murder in the Cathedral* establish the setting of the play with a great deal of specificity ("*Archbishop's Hall, December 2nd, 1170"*), but the first words spoken by the chorus (and the first words heard by the audience) undercut this particularity, thus opening the play with an indistinct geography and the rhythms of seasonal (not calendar-measured) time. Rather than orienting themselves to a political map or within the jurisdiction of the Archbishop's Hall, the Chorus of the Women of Canterbury announce that they have been set "here . . . close by the cathedral." Similarly they mark the passing of time with muddy boots, and winter, ruinous spring, disastrous summer, autumn fires, and winter fogs (176). They note that the Archbishop has been gone for seven years; this may be a careful reckoning of 2556 calendar days, but more likely they are drawing on the number seven as symbol of perfection and completion.

Like the space of the play, which does not ground the setting with any geographical or architectural cues, time in the play is non-linear and anachronistic. Palm

Sunday bleeds into the arrival of the Archbishop, and echoes of *Canterbury Tales* describe life in England during the Archbishop's seven-year exile. The anachronism is, of course, intentional; it heightens the immediacy of the events because it refuses to let the audience isolate them, inert, in a remote historical past.

The play's typological characters parallel the indistinct geographical and temporal setting. For the first part of the play, prior to the arrival of the first tempter, the "Archbishop Thomas Becket" on the CHARACTERS list is simply, "the Archbishop," an office and a type, not the man Thomas Becket. But the tempters of the play tempt the Archbishop, the Chorus, and the audience into bringing the Archbishop down to a particular Thomas of flesh and blood by situating him in earthbound time and space. The first tempter greets the Archbishop as "Old Tom, gray Tom, Becket of London" and reminds him, the chorus, and the audience of his particular, individual, humanity. The second tempter situates the Archbishop not by relating him to the city or to the cathedral but by placing him at Clarendon, Northampton, and Montmiral, in Marne, three important sites in the rupture between Becket and the King.[51] The final tempter tempts the Archbishop to look forward to "pilgrims standing in line / Before the glittering jeweled shrine . . . " This tempter also gives voice to the Archbishop's fear that he will, after the shrine is "pillaged . . . [after] the sanctuary broken," be reduced from sainted martyr to mere "historical fact" and that all mystery would be stripped from "this man who played a certain part in history."

The main tension of the first part of the play, then, is held by resisting descent from the spiritual and the ideal into the particular, the geographic, the material, and the individual. Of course, insisting on an unearthly, ideal geography is disorienting to those

like the Chorus who live amongst and within the stuff of quotidian life on earth, “in the mews in the barn, in the byre in the marketplace.” The Chorus knows that the Archbishop’s return and certain death will uproot them from the meager life that they have established in his absence; they beg him to preserve his own life and theirs by staying away from England.[52] The incarnation that comes before the Archbishop’s death and martyrdom upsets what semblance of home the women of the chorus had staked out. After the murder, the chorus wonders, “Where is England, Kent, Canterbury?” and wanders in a land of broken boughs and dry stones. The places to which they have grown accustomed have been transformed completely by event of an eternal scope. For the next 850 years, no Englishman or Englishwoman will wonder where Canterbury is; they will know it because of its association with the martyrdom of St. Thomas Becket.

Near the end of the play, a priest tells the audience: “Go lost erring souls, homeless in earth or heaven” as a part of a benediction. The death of the Archbishop does not bring a curse then, but a blessing. Counter-intuitively, the blessing is a disruption of home, a scattering. The same priest plainly says, “The Church is stronger for this action [the Archbishop’s martyrdom].” The uprooting, the wandering, the exile on earth of both individuals and the church can be regarded as a blessing only within the framework of pilgrimage as life pilgrimage. Unlike the April rains that pierce the hearts of Chaucer’s place pilgrims and direct them towards the paving stones of Canterbury Cathedral, the Archbishop’s blood covers the Chorus’s eyes and causes them to wander blindly without a particular earthly destination towards which they can make progress. This does not sound much like a blessing, but it may be preferable to the precarious “living without living” that the Chorus describes prior to the Archbishop’s return. The

Chorus reprises the primary pilgrimage of *The Waste Land* - albeit in an even more disorienting spiritual space that is unmoored from the ruins of buildings, fragments of literary texts, and historical scraps that provide the semblance of navigability in the poem.

Though the overall arc of the play points towards the undifferentiated, indistinct space of life pilgrimage, it ends oddly with the shrine of Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral. The shrine is not a place of refuge, though, because "armies and sightseers" with guidebooks prevent access to the sanctity of the place. Just as the uncareful application of gothic style as pure ornament in the nineteenth century made the unironic use of the style impossible in the twentieth century, the touristic regard of Canterbury as an aesthetic monument or a historical curiosity removes it from Eliot as a spiritual resource.

Despite the inhospitality of Canterbury, the play does not give up all hope for material and geographic sites of devotion. It hints that the forgotten places, that is, places remote, alien, and unrestored – modest, but with patina intact – can perhaps be satisfactory places. It is to four of these particular but unremarkable places that Eliot turns after *Murder in the Cathedral.* None of the locations of the *Four Quartets* was a fully developed and recovered national site of pilgrimage. Nevertheless, Eliot discovered a potent spiritual resource in these places.

Idiosyncratic Place Pilgrimage in the *Four Quartets*

Much of the scholarship on Eliot's *Four Quartets* rightly attends to Eliot's engagement with time. In 1959, W. J. Bate introduced Eliot to the American Academy of Arts and

Sciences and, in the poet's presence, noted that reading the *Quartets* always makes us conscious of the "tragic past" and the "modern sense of the irrevocability of past time." Bate also noted that "[a]t the same time that you have this vertical sweep through time, and the sense of all that life, there is also a horizontal sweep from 'the shores of Asia' to the Edgeware Road in London, from the Mississippi to the granite rocks off of Cape Ann." Far from refuting this assessment of the importance of place in the *Quartets*, Eliot followed Bate's remarks with a brief lecture on "The Influence of the Landscape on the Poet" as an introduction to his reading of the "Dry Salvages."[53] Following Eliot's lead and attending to place in the quartets shows that the series of poems dramatizes four exploratory spiritual journeys. The four geographic pilgrimages that Eliot describes in the poems are attempts to find material, earthly places of stillness like the ideal satisfactory places that Eliot imagined in "Journey of the Magi" and *Murder in the Cathedral.*

Again and again, the *Quartets* circle around a still point, which contrasts sharply with the chaos, rootlessness, and meaningless of *The Waste Land.* The second section of "Burnt Norton" describes the *Quartets'* first "still point":

> At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
> Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
> But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
> Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,
> Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
> There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.

I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say where.

And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time.

The stillness described in this section is a welcome relief from the ceaseless motion that is described in *The Waste Land*, but it does not apparently lead to the boredom and constriction that Melville feared would result from the still life that the abbot at St. Saba offered. Far from leading to boredom and the destruction of vitality in ascetic submission, Eliot's still point is neither fixity nor arrest; indeed it is, paradoxically, a place of movement. Unlike the aimless, swarming motion of the crowd in *The Waste Land*, movement at the still point is the movement of the dance - purposeful, beautiful, and joyful. The appeal of the dance at the still point, unlike the constriction that Melville feared, is reinforced in "East Coker's" description of the matrimonial dance:

In that open field

If you do not come too close, if you do not come too close,

On a summer midnight, you can hear the music

Of the weak pipe and the little drum

And see them dancing around the bonfire

the association of man and woman

In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie -

A dignified and commodious sacrament.

Two and two, necessarye coniunction,

Holding eche other by the hand or the arm

Whiche betokeneth concorde. Round and round the fire

Leaping through the flames, or joined in circles,

Rustically solemn or in rustic laughter

Lifting heavy feet in clumsy shoes,

Earth feet, loam feet, lifted in country mirth

Mirth of those long since under earth

Nourishing the corn. Keeping time,

Keeping the rhythm in their dancing

As in their living in the living seasons

The time of the seasons and the constellations

The time of milking and the time of harvest

The time of the coupling of man and woman

And that of beasts. Feet rising and falling.

Eating and drinking. Dung and death.

For all of the beauty of this stanza's description of purposeful, joyous existence in connection to other human beings and to the earth, this event takes place somewhere apart. Like the indefinite location of the still point in "Burnt Norton," ("I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say where"), the setting of "East Coker's" matrimonial dance is impossible to place and it transpires in some vague but obviously distant past. The archaic spellings in the description - "daunsinge . . . matrimonie . . . necessarye coniunction . . . Holding eche other . . . Whiche betokeneth concorde" - reinforce the sense that this celebration exists in a time and place apart. The still point is "there" not "here" and the dance takes place in "that open field [over there]" not "this one right here." As the reader approaches a field where the beautiful summer scene is playing out, the speaker warns that it is observable only at a distance - "If you do not come too close, if

you do not come too close." Whatever desire the speaker (or reader) may have to enter sites of stillness, purpose, and community is left unfulfilled as the point remains inaccessible.

Still points are inaccessible because they do not physically exist. It is significant that Eliot's "still point" is in fact a point and not a *place* of stillness. Edward Casey reminds us that a "point" is a purely theoretical concept; indeed, it is a double abstraction. "Position" is an abstract but meaningful coordination of relations, "point," Casey observes, "is the abstraction of position itself: its highly compressed minimal unit, that is, what is posited as 'simply there.' A position shorn of its actual relations with *other* positions . . . shrinks to a point or is at least punctiform."[54] Points exist only on Cartesian grids, on maps, and on GPS displays – all abstractions that are in no way physically accessible. Points are ideal and in a sense, perfect, but they cannot be apprehended because they have no material being to lay hands upon and offer no place to stand. Places, on the other hand are directly available: "To be at all – to exist in any way – is to be somewhere, and to be somewhere is to be in some kind of place," argues Casey: "Place is as requisite as the air we breathe, the ground on which we stand, the bodies we have. We are surrounded by places. We walk over and through them. We live in places, relate to others in them, die in them. Nothing we do is unplaced."[55] Unlike the *Murder in the Cathedral* and "Journey of the Magi," which are set in ideal nowheres, the Quartets represent real places, but these earthly places contrast directly with ideal points of community, joy, and meaning. Places in the *Quartets* are overwhelmingly "places of disaffection, like the London Underground that is described in the third section of "Burnt Norton":

Here is a place of disaffection

Time before and time after

In a dim light: neither daylight

Investing form with lucid stillness

Turning shadow into transient beauty

With slow rotation suggesting permanence

Nor darkness to purify the soul

Emptying the sensual with deprivation

Cleansing affection from the temporal.

Neither plentitude nor vacancy. Only a flicker

Over the strained time-ridden faces

Distracted from distraction by distraction

Filled with fancies and empty of meaning

Tumid apathy with no concentration

Men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind

That blows before and after time,

Wind in and out of unwholesome lungs

Time before and time after.

Eructation of unhealthy souls

Into the faded air, the torpid

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

Hampstead and Clerkenwell, Campden and Putney,

Highgate, Primrose and Ludgate. Not here

Not here the darkness, in this twittering world.

Unlike the distant "there" of the still point, the Underground scene is immediate, it is "here," but it is an unhealthy and uninhabitable place. It is a place of deprivation, distraction, and emptiness where men and scraps of rubbish are indistinguishable from each other.

As the main argument of this chapter has shown, Eliot had good reason for being suspicious of finding a satisfactorily still place "now and in England" or in long-abandoned American cities (139). Just as his previous poems and prose writings consider the transience of even apparently solid architectural landmarks, the *Four Quartets* explicitly reckon with the instability of constructed places. "East Coker" begins with a description of a house that could easily be taken for a description of the fate of Eliot's boyhood home, church, or school in St. Louis:

In succession

Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended,

Are removed, destroyed, restored, or in their place

Is an open field, or a factory, or a by-pass.

Old stone to new building, old timber to new fires,

Old fires to ashes, and ashes to the earth

Which is already flesh, fur and faeces,

Bone of man and beast, cornstalk and leaf.

Houses live and die: there is a time for building

And a time for living and for generation

And a time for the wind to break the loosened pane

And to shake the wainscot where the field-mouse trots

And to shake the tattered arras woven with a silent motto.

The characterization of the here and now of the immediate material world as a place of restless motion and meaninglessness is a direct restatement of *The Waste Land*'s main theme, though the perfect, ideal point that exists beyond this world is something new in the *Quartets*. The poems – especially "Burnt Norton" and "East Coker," the first two poems - set up a clear distinction between an abundantly lived "there" and a shriveled "here," and while they provide a reason for this distinction, they also suggest that a place of stillness may be found.

Eliot's invocations of St. Julian of Norwich throughout "Little Gidding" reinforce the distinction Eliot makes between a perfect "there" and a decaying "here" because Eliot recognized that Julian's visions of eternal peace endured in her text even as her shrine was destroyed. Yet, the separation between the vision of peace "there" and the shattered shrine "here, in England" is not absolute; as the poem recognizes, changes in the place exert pressure on the words that describe the vision. This connection provides an opening for a satisfactory place of stillness. The lines

The dove descending breaks the air

With flame of incandescent terror

Of which the tongues declare

The one dischage from sin and error.

The only hope, or else despair

Lies in the choice of pyre of pyre-

To be redeemed from fire by fire

appear in the typed draft of "Little Gidding" that Eliot sent to Hayward on July 7, 1941, but the famous lines from St. Julian "And all shall be well, all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well," are not in this draft. Nancy Hargrove is certainly correct to assert that Eliot initially sought to contrast the dove of these lines (a dove descending to bring "pentecostal fire") with the "dark dove with the flickering tongue" of section II, which Hargrove understands to be a German bomber. Eliot may well have had such a stark contrast in mind, but the destruction of the church of St. Julian of Norwich (fig. 32) on the night of June 27, 1942 by a German high explosive bomb altered these lines that Eliot had written the previous summer. Sometime after the bombing of the church, Eliot returned to "Little Gidding" and made significant revisions to the draft that he had sent Hayward the previous summer. The most significant of these revisions that he sent to Hayward on August 27, 1942 was the addition of St. Julian of Norwich's famous statement "all shall be well/ And all manner of things shall be well" to three separate sections of the poem, including once immediately before the lines "The dove descending breaks the air / With flame of incandescent terror."[56] Juxtaposing these lines from Julian which had remain unchanged for 500 years with the recently destroyed church heightens the sense of the difficulty of finding a permanent place of stillness "now and in England."

Though finding a particular place of stillness "now and in England" proved nearly as difficult for Eliot as finding a stable home in turn-of-the-century St. Louis, the *Quartets* do not completely abandon the possibility of finding such a satisfactory place among the specific places that provide the names of the four poems. Unlike the first two

Figure 32: Church of St. Julian in 1946, four years after it was destroyed by a German bomb.

poems of the sequence, “The Dry Salvages” does not perfectly separate an ideal there of spiritual stillness from an unstable material world of the here and now. “The Dry Salvages” returns to the recognition that a satisfactory place must be a place of death that Eliot explored in *The Waste Land* and “Journey of the Magi.” Like the offer in *The Waste Land* of shelter under the red rock on the condition of death, and like the Magi’s recognition that he had “come all this way for death,” the granite rocks of the Dry Salvages off the coast of Massachusetts are stable, but they are a place of death. Beyond being uninhabited and absent of visible vegetation, they are just low enough and just far enough from the coast to pose a mortal danger to ships. They were also the main landmark that guided Eliot home after sailing up the Maine coast as a young recreational sailor. Eliot observes that the rocks are “unchanging and erosionless” despite the continual breaking of waves on them.[57]

At the very end of the “Dry Salvages” Eliot sympathizes with men and women who attempt to bring certainty and stillness into their present lives by occult (“wrinkles of the palm. . tea leaves. . playing cards”) or illicit (“barbituric acids”) means, saying “Men’s curiosity searches past and future / and clings to that dimension.” Though Eliot sympathizes with others’ attempts to access points of stillness though material means, he offers a different approach to “the point of intersection of the timeless with time.” Apprehending a point is ordinarily impossible (points, by Casey’s definition resist apprehending), but Eliot suggests that laying hold of the still point is “an occupation for the saint . . . /something given/And taken in a lifetime’s death and love, /Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.”

"Little Gidding" picks up on the consideration in "Dry Salvages" of the power of the saint to apprehend a point of intersection and wonders how that power might be transferred from the saint, who is out of time and place, to him, a person living "now and in England." Eliot's Catholic understanding of sainthood allowed for direct conversation between saints (who were no longer on earth but nevertheless endure as the "church triumphant") and those yet living on earth and in time (what he considered the "church militant"). The beginning of Little Gidding shows that Eliot came to believe that pilgrimage was not a process, but an event, and that accessing a measure of stillness in a particular place is possible. Stillness is not possible, however, without a subjection of self that approaches what Melville saw as self-annihilation.

Eliot allows the possibility of coming to the satisfactory place by any route, but once within the boundaries of the place "where prayer has been valid" the pilgrim must accommodate himself or herself to the place both bodily and intellectually:

> . . . you would have to put off
> Sense and notion. You are not here to verify,
> Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity
> Or carry report. You are here to kneel
> Where prayer has been valid

If the experience of the Magi are indeed a true model of what happens when a satisfactory place is encountered, then after kneeling, after subjecting the self, after dying (if not being fully annihilated), we should expect this speaker to stand up and to return to the place from which he has come. "Little Gidding" does not dramatize this return, but it does propose that "the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And

know the place for the first time." In the *Quartets* the unease that the Magi felt upon returning to the kingdom which they once ruled and in which they once felt at home, is transformed into quiet peace. The old places of disaffection remain disaffected for some, but perhaps not for the speaker and certainly not for Eliot.

In "East Coker," as in "The Waste Land," the Underground is the primary place of disaffection that directly opposes the open field as the site of the wedding dance. The speaker of "East Coker" looks across his car of "an underground train, in the tube, stop[ing] too long between stations / And the conversation rises and slowly fades into silence /And you see behind every face the mental emptiness deepen /Leaving only the growing terror of nothing to think about . . . " Eliot escaped this "emptiness" and "terror" by praying on the train, once writing to his friend Mary Trevelyan in 1952 that he could make it through "a whole section of the Rosary in the Underground going home, especially if the train stops long at Leicester Square."[58] The terror of the delay is transformed into a gift of additional time. After his poetic and geographic pilgrimage, even the crowded, moving Underground train could be a place where "all will be well and all manner of things will be well."

[1] T.S. Eliot, *Letters of T.S. Eliot*, 17-20.
[2] Nancy Hargrove, *Eliot's Parisian Year* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2009), 9. Karl Baedeker, *Baedeker's London and Its Environs* (New York: Scribner, 1908). Eliot's inscribed copy of the guidebook is held in the T.S. Eliot Collection at King's College, Cambridge.
[3] Baedeker describes St. Bartholomew's as "the oldest church in the City of London," and contemporary architectural historians Simon Bradley and Nicholas Pevsner consider the church "the most important twelfth-century monument in London." The present church is a fragment – the choir, crossing, and a chapel – of what was a grand Norman priory, the greater part of which did not survive the dissolution of the monasteries and the subsequent encroachment of dense development. Baedeker inaccurately states that St. Bartholomew's is the oldest church in the City, "with the exception of the chapel in the Tower, which is twenty years earlier." While the Tower chapel is indeed twenty years earlier than the oldest portions of St. Bartholomew's the Tower is not, strictly, inside the boundaries of the City. *London and Its Environs*, 101. Simon Bradley and Nicholas Pevsner, *London: The City Churches* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1998), 62.
[4] T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land," in *The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950*. (New York: Harcourt, 1971), lines 64-68. Subsequent references will be in the text.
[5] Robert Day, "The 'City Man' in *The Waste Land*: The Geography of Reminiscence" *PMLA* 80.3 (June 1965), 291.
[6] Day, 289.
[7] Nancy Duvall Hargrove, *Landscape as Symbol in the Poetry of T.S. Eliot* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1978), 69. Barry Spurr challenges Day's and Hargrove's sharp contrast between St. Mary Woolnoth and St. Magnus the Martyr. Spurr argues that St. Mary Woolnoth's identification with the evil, commercial life of the City, cannot be sustained first because Eliot admired the City Churches "toutes ensemble." Moreover, Spurr contends that St. Mary's bell ringing "with a dead sound at the final stroke of nine" should not be read as complicity with the commercial life of the City, but instead as an attempt to remind passersby (bankers, clerks, and typists all) that the ninth hour is the traditional time for English executions, and ultimately of the archetypal execution - Christ's death at the ninth hour - a "dead sound indeed." That the Church's reminder falls on ears that cannot hear the message (both the passersby and contemporary critics' ears apparently) is not evidence of the deadness of the church's bells but of the spiritual deadness of its auditors. "If anything" Spurr concludes, "St. Mary Woolnoth is closer to the heart of [Eliot's] critique, geographically and spiritually, than St. Magnus, which is on the edge of the City and next to the river and the life of its fishermen, rather than in the midst of the City's bankers" '*Anglo-Catholic in Religion': T.S. Eliot and Christianity* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2010), 276n.
[8]Eliot's "London Letter" sheds light on the irony. Eliot, "The Waste Land," 51. See, for example, Lawrence Rainey's note in *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot's Contemporary Prose* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2005), 85, and Michael North's note on *The Waste Land: The Norton Critical Edition* (New York: Norton, 2001), 7.
[9] T.S. Eliot, "London Letter," *The Dial* 70, no. 6 (June, 1921): 691.
[10] Gerald Cobb, *London City Churches*. (London: B.T. Batsford, 1989), 164.
[11] There is some disagreement over whether Wren was responsible for the repairs. Cobb in *London City Churches*, 164, Christopher Herbert in *London's Churches*, (London: Queen Anne Press, 1988),43, and Pierre de la Ruffinière du Prey in *Hawksmoor's London Churches: Architecture and Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 106, attribute the repairs to Wren. Simon Bradley, however, briefly claims in his update of Nikolaus Pevsner's guide *London: The City Churches*, (New Haven: Yale UP, 2002), 113, that the "work was apparently directed by Sir Robert Vyner, not Wren. . ."
[12] Vaughn Hart, *Nicholas Hawksmoor: Rebuilding Ancient Wonders*, (New Haven: Yale UP, 2002), 176. Hawksmoor's original sketch for the western façade and its statue of the Virgin Mary is reproduced in DuPrey's *Hawksmoor's London Churches.* The statue was never built and the three niches remain empty.
[13] Hart, 176.
[14] George Godwin, quoted in du Prey's *Hawksmoor's London Churches*, 107.
[15] Du Prey, 107.
[16] Du Prey, 107.
[17] The history of Saint Mary Woolnoth continued after Hawksmoor as well of course. John Newton, the famed slave trader turned evangelist and author of "Amazing Grace," was rector of the church from 1779 to

1807. William Wilberforce was one of his parishioners. This image of Saint Mary Woolnoth as a dynamic center of English social activism and transformative power contrasts sharply with the role it plays in both *The Waste Land* and in the contemporary cityscape.
[18] H.S. Goodhart-Rendel, *Nicholas Hawksmoor*, (New York: Scribner's, 1924), 24. Eliot too was aware of the plans to demolish Saint Mary Woolnoth. His note to line 264 suggests, "See *The Proposed Demolition of Nineteen City Churches*: (P.S. King & Son, Ltd.).", "The Waste Land", 71.
[19] Bradley, *London: The City Churches*, 114.
[20] Gill Davies, *One Thousand Buildings of London*, (New York: Black Dog, 2006), 237.
[21] Davies, 237.
[22] J.M.S. Brooke, "Letter to the Editor: The Mummy at St. Mary Woolnoth's," *Times* (London), December 26, 1889.
[23] Brooke defends unconvincingly the attendance record of his church in a letter to the editor of the *Times* on June 2, 1896. Brooke's letter is a response to a House of Commons committee report that claimed that the church was of no use and "had no congregation."
[24] Nicholas Pevsner and Simon Bradley capture the spirit of the designers' triumph in their famous guides to London's City Churches: Pevsner explains that "the entrances to the underground are *skillfully tucked in*," and Bradley, in his 2002 revision to Pevsner, opines that "Crypt and plinth of the church were used *most ingeniously* in 1897-1900 as a booking hall for the Underground." Pevsner, *The Buildings of England*, 158*n* and Bradley, *London: The City Churches*, 114. See Goodhart-Rendel, *Hawksmoor*, 24 for a contrary view that was contemporary with Eliot.
[25] Karsten Harries, *The Ethical Function of Architecture* (Boston: MIT Press, 1998), 192.
[26] Here, I am invoking Cecilia Tichi's characterization of the engineer at the turn of the century in *Shifting Gears: Technology, Literature, Culture in Modernist America*, (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1987).
[27] Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 95-96.
[28] The construction of the Underground at the turn of the century made commuting to the City possible for thousands of clerks and bankers. Residential districts in the City were quickly gobbled up by businesses, and the City churches were left without parishioners except for lightly attended midday, midweek services. The great City churches increasingly began to look like squatters on increasingly valuable real estate.
[29] Hargrove, *Landscape as Symbol*, 76.
[30] The pamphlet's St. Magnus the Martyr section reads:

> The supposed charter of 1607 (see under St. Clement, East-cheap) confirms to Westminster Abbey "the half of the stone church of St. Magnus near the bridge." That this embodies a true tradition appears from the fact that the confirming charter of Henry I. (1108-16) refers to the church ("the half of the stone chapel of St. Magnus the Martyr") as having been granted to the Abbey by the Conqueror. The date of the foundation is, therefore, certainly pre-Conquest.
>
> The then existing church was destroyed in the early stages of the Great Fire. It was rebuilt by Wren in 1676, the steeple being added in 1705, and is one of the most beautiful of all of Wren's works. The church was much injured by a fire in 1760, when a great part of the roof was burnt, the organ damaged, and the vestry room entirely consumed.

[31] Pevsner concludes that the "conjunction of [St. Magnus Martyr's] vigorous and imaginatively detailed steeple with . . .the sheer wall of the C20 building is entirely successful." I am not so sure of the aesthetic achievement of Adelaide house in context.
[32] T.S. Eliot, "Preface" to *For Lancelot Andrewes* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), 11.
[33] Though St. Magnus Martyr was Eliot's first Anglo-Catholic church, it was not the place where he was baptized and it was not the parish where he settled. Instead of being baptized in the City, Eliot was baptized on Easter, 1927, in a small, unremarkable, and decidedly unhistoric Oxfordshire church. Holy Trinity Church, Finstock, was built in 1841, just three decades before Eliot's St. Louis Church of the Messiah. St. Stephen's Gloucester Road, the South Kensington church where Eliot was a parishioner for the last thirty two years of his life, was also a relatively new building. It was consecrated in 1867, fourteen years before Church of the Messiah was dedicated.

[34] The 1552 Prayerbook forbade reserving the Sacrament, and the Thirty-nine Articles condemn it. The 1662 prayerbook says to reverently consume any remaining bread. The presence of a tabernacle in an Anglican church and the performance of the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament by the parish priest, a rite which allows adoration of the host, are the two most reliable signs of an Anglo-Catholic parish. Cf . Spurr, *'Anglo-Catholic in Religion*, 276.
[35] T.S. Eliot, "A Review of *Why I Am Not a Christian,* by the Hon. Bertrand Russell" *Criterion* 6 (Aug. 1927), 177. Eliot does not name the church that Anne Dunne took him to as a boy. Lyndall Gordon speculates that it was the "little Catholic church at the corner of Locust Street and Jefferson Avenue" *Eliot's Early Years* (London: Noonday, 1990)*, 3.*
[36] T.S. Eliot, *The Value and Use of Cathedrals in England Today* (Chichester, UK: Moore & Tillyer, 1951), 9.
[37] Eliot, *The Value and Use of Cathedrals*, 7. St. Magnus Martyr is a parish church, not a cathedral, and Eliot is clear to distinguish the work of cathedrals from the work of parish churches in his lecture, but Eliot's plea for restoration – work he specifies as "the work and expense to maintain the cathedral and its identity" - could easily be extended to indicate approval for Fynes-Clinton's remodeling of the interior of St. Magnus Martyr.
[38] Eliot, *Value and Use of Cathedrals*, 7.
[39] T.S. Eliot, "Phillip Massinger" in *The Sacred Wood* (London: Methuen, 1920), 125.
[40] Barry Spurr, '*Anglo-Catholic in Religion'*, 36, 218.
[41] Dominic Janes and Gary Waller, "Introduction – Walsingham: Landscape, Sexuality, and Cultural Memory" in *Walsingham from the Late Middle Ages to Modernity* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 5.
[42] "Image" in this case refers not to a two-dimensional representation – an icon – but to a three dimensional statue, a representation that the Protestant reformers and many interwar Anglicans considered an idol.
[43] Janes and Waller that the reformers attempts to remove memories of Walsingham from the minds of English subjects were "far from successful" and that the shrine remained a powerful presence in post-Reformation England. Janes and Waller are certainly correct to assert that English subjects retained a strong sense of nostalgia for at least twenty years after the destruction of the shrine and the prohibition of the pilgrimage. Royal warnings against the pilgrimage, poems, and Shakespearean lament for the shrine reveal that the destruction of the physical shrine did not lead to an immediate purging of memory, but the memories of the shrine quickly faded after the Elizabethan period. Janes and Waller admit that Walsingham's prominent place in English culture sharply declined between the Reformation and the rise of Victorian interest in Catholicism and medievalism, to the point that even today Walsingham is rarely considered outside the "strictly religious world" (*Walsingham,* 3).
[44] Cf. Spurr, '*Anglo-Catholic in Religion,'* 150-161.
[45] The National Pilgrimage remains the most conspicuous ceremony of Anglo-Catholicism in England today, and, while it is far less controversial in the twenty-first century, placard-wielding activists still gather to protest its Catholic superstition and idolatry.
[46] Just one document links Eliot to Walsingham, and this connection is somewhat spurious. Eliot's name appears on a list of supporters of the Shrine of Walsingham in a subscription notice that advertised need for money for a new chapel, Michael Yelton, *Alfred Hope Patten: The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2006). Neither a cease-and-desist letter nor corroborating evidence is extant in the Walsingham Shrine Archives. The list of the original supporters of the shrine was sealed in the altar when the Holy House was completed in 1931.
[47] T.S. Eliot, *The Value and Use of Cathedrals in England Today* (Chichester, UK: Moore & Tillyer, 1951) and Ron Schuchard, *Eliot's Dark Angel: Intersections of Life and Art* (New York: Oxford UP, 2001), chapter 10.
[48] John Twyning, "Walsingham and the Architecture of English History" in *Walsingham from the Late Middle Ages to Modernity* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 182.
[49] Michael Yelton, *Anglican-Papalism: A History1900-1960* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2005), 138. Pevsner and Wilson are also not impressed: "It is a disappointing building of brick, partly whitewashed, and looking for all its ambitions like a minor suburban church." *The Buildings of England:* Norfolk 1: Norwich and North East (New Haven: Yale UP, 1997).
[50] Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions" in *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983), 1-14.

[51] Clarendon was the site of the Constitutions of Clarendon, where, in 1164, Henry II sought to bring the ecclesiastical courts under royal control. Becket's resistance to the provisions of the Constitutions led to his exile. Northampton was the site of Becket's trial for perjury and heresy and of his escape after his guilty verdict. Montmiral, was the site of failed negotiations between Becket and Henry.
[52] In begging the Archbishop to save his own life, the Chorus echoes Peter's defense of Christ, a defense that earned Peter the rebuke, "Get thee behind me Satan." cf. Matthew 16:21-23
[53] T.S. Eliot, "The Influence of Landscape upon the Poet" reprinted in *Daedalus* 126.1 (Winter 1997).
[54] Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 191.
[55] Casey, *The Fate of Place*, ix.
[56] Eliot's July 7 manuscript is reproduced in Helen Gardner's, *The Composition of* Four Quartets,(London: Oxford UP, 1978), 225-233. See Hargrove pp. 153-54 for the dates of Eliot's revisions to "Little Gidding."
[57] The yew-tree that ends the poem is also a symbol of both death and permanence. Ancient yew trees stand next to scores of English churchyards because they are poisonous to plants and humans, but also because they were the only evergreen tree in Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, Vaughn Cornish, *The Churchyard Yew and Immortality* (London: Muller, 1946).
[58] Quoted in Spurr, '*Anglo-Catholic in Religion,'* 150.

CONCLUSION: CREATING *LATE* MODERN AMERICAN PILGRIMAGE

" . . . to travel is worth any cost or sacrifice"

-Elizabeth Gilbert, *Eat, Pray, Love*

The loss of home that Melville and Eliot experienced is hardly unique in American literary history. For every well-preserved Emily Dickinson or Walt Whitman home, there is a vacant lot or a high rise apartment complex to mark the birthplace of Marianne Moore or Robert Frost. Today, a century and a quarter after Melville was placed in his unremarkable Bronx grave and a half century after Eliot was laid to rest in East Coker, American writers are still trying to make sense of the loss of home. If anything, the destruction of home and the concomitant personal crises that impelled Melville and Eliot's pilgrimages has intensified in the twenty-first century. Here in the conclusion, I consider a range of contemporary responses to the loss of home, and I propose that the pilgrimage Elizabeth Gilbert narrates in her 2003 blockbuster *Eat, Pray, Love* is an ethical response to a loss of home that runs parallel to Melville's and Eliot's pilgrimages.[1]

Melville, Eliot, and Gilbert weigh submission to concrete institutions and to what they consider a very real, external, spiritual force. As I have been arguing, not only their submission, but also their approach to submission – place pilgrimage – is strange in American literary history, even though the condition that caused their pilgrimage (the destruction of home) is relatively common. Because the loss of home is so common (indeed it may be a defining feature of modernity), I want to situate modern pilgrimage in a wider conversation about what constitutes a well lived search for a home in the

contemporary world before I turn to Gilbert as contemporary example of a modern American pilgrim.

At the end of the twentieth century, Scott Russell Sanders reflected on his own loss of home in the introduction to his collection of essays, *Staying Put.* His home's destruction was even more complete than Melville's and Eliot's:

> I cannot return to my native ground and take up residence there. The farm in Tennessee where I spent my earliest years is buried under asphalt; the military reservation where I lived next is locked away behind fences and soldiers; and the farm in Ohio where I spent the rest of my childhood has been erased entirely, the house and barn bulldozed by the army, the woods and fields flooded by a boondoggle dam.

The result of all this devastation is that Sanders has been "lost, in ways that no map could remedy."[2]

Unlike Melville and Eliot, whose loss of home sent them on pilgrimages beyond the United States, Sanders responded to the destruction of his childhood homes by settling into a house that he and his wife Ruth bought at 1113 E Wylie Street in Bloomington, Indiana. By the time he wrote *Staying Put* in the early 1990s, Sanders had already lived in this home for twenty years. Another two decades have passed since the book was published, and Sanders has still stayed put. Sanders' 40 years in this place is three decades longer than either Melville spent at Arrowhead or Eliot spent in any London flat.

Sanders recognizes that his project of staying put runs counter both to distinctly American and distinctly modern relations to home. He observes that displaced persons

are "abundant in our country" all the way back to the Plymouth Pilgrims and that the result of all this internal exile is that "[American] history does not encourage me, or anyone, to belong somewhere with a full heart" (xv). Instead, Americans consider their shifting ground as a great gift and hold up as heroes those adventurers who seek an American Promised Land "over the next ridge or at the end of the trail, never under our feet" (104). In recognizing that Americans are a people who are in constant, restless motion, Sanders admits that Salman Rushdie's concept of "migrant hybridity" is more emblematic of the American character than his own project of staying put, but it is precisely because shifting ground and movement are so familiar and seductive that he protests against Rushdie's statement of the inherent value of movement. "I quarrel with Rushdie," Sanders writes,

> because he articulates as eloquently as anyone the orthodoxy that I wish to counter: the belief that movement is inherently good, staying put is bad; that uprooting brings tolerance, while rootedness brings intolerance; that imaginary homelands are preferable to geographical ones; that to be modern, enlightened, fully in our time is to be displaced. Wholesale displacement may be inevitable; but we should not suppose that it occurs without disastrous consequences for the earth and for ourselves. (106)

Sanders resists the tide that Rushdie welcomes.

As modern American pilgrims, Melville and Eliot do not fit neatly into one or the other of the positions that Sanders stakes out for himself and Rushdie. Melville and Eliot hardly stay put in any place, yet neither are they at home anywhere and everywhere as is Rushdie. Introducing Wendell Berry as a third pole in Sanders' disagreement with

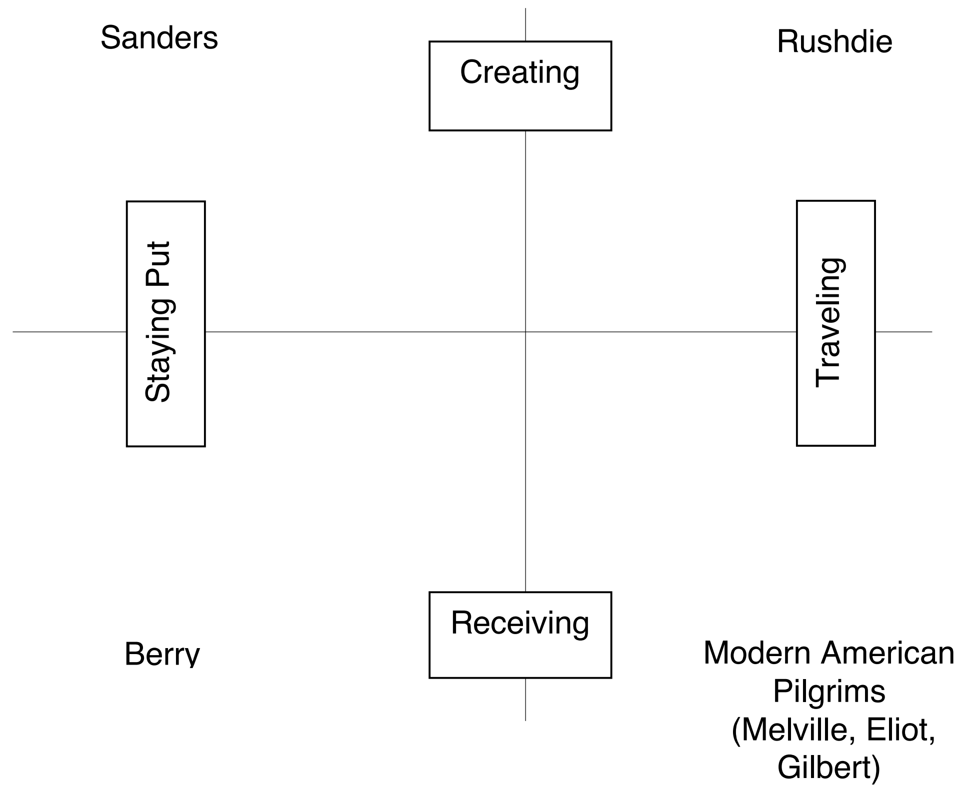
Rushdie helps to situate Modern American Pilgrims in this conversation and within larger contemporary discussions of identity and cosmopolitanism. Like Sanders, Berry has remained in a place – his farm, Lane's Landing, near Port Royal, Kentucky - for a very long time, but Berry differs from Sanders in that he acquiesced to this place where he was born and where his ancestors had farmed before him. Whereas Berry understands that he inherited Port Royal and that his task is to conform to the history and ecology of the farm, Sanders, by contrast, chose his place. Sanders did not choose his home at random, but neither does he settle on East Wylie Street because of some long family or personal connection to the place. He recognizes, "If I am to have a home, it can only be a place I have come to as an adult, a place I have chosen" (xiv).

Immediately upon taking possession of the house and then nearly every subsequent weekend for the next twenty years, he sets upon the house, transforming it into a more suitable dwelling for him and his family and forming it to his idea of the perfect place to stay put. He and his wife peel off the ivy that has overgrown the front of the house. He pulls down the lath and plaster in bedroom after bedroom and replaces it with insulation and sheetrock to make the rooms more snug nests for his children. Each weekend, Sanders sets upon the work of transforming the house, forming it to his idea of a perfect place to stay put. I am sympathetic to Sanders' fatherly desire to update dangerous wiring, to scrape lead paint off of double-hung windows, and to fill holes with insulation to create a safe, warm, and pleasant home for his family, but I also recognize that the emphasis in Sanders' chapter "House and Home" is on the work that he does to transform the place, not on the way that the place transforms him.

I make no moral distinction between Berry's and Sanders' approaches to staying put. Indeed, I recognize that these two writers come to very similar commitments about the environment that they love as extensions of their own particular places of residence. I also recognize that both writers' relationships to their childhood homes are extraordinary. Few Americans have a family farm waiting for them, but even fewer Americans are separated by their childhood home by fifteen fathoms of man-made lake. But a home is available to Berry and his decision to return to it and to submit to the demands it makes upon his life and his art does contrast with Sanders' and Rushdie's acts of creation and imagination.

Berry's remaining in Port Royal and his receptivity to the place as it has long been show that Sanders and Rushdie's disagreement reduces the available options for a modern home to a bifurcated choice: stay put and build a material home or travel and erect a home of pure imagination. In agreeing upon these options both Sanders and Rushdie abandon all hope in a found home: Sanders remakes his home with his hands and Rushdie makes one with his mind, but both create a dwelling outside of history and family tradition.

Sanders and Rushdie agree that solid homes cannot be found, but they disagree on how they might be made. Berry and Modern Pilgrims agree that solid places of refuge exist, but they disagree on how they might be discovered and embraced. The type of pilgrimage that I have tracked in Melville' and Eliot's lives and art is directly opposite to Berry's submission to a familiar (and familial) place. Instead of creating homes in a new place, these pilgrims moved to search for a material site that could ground their identity in a way that neither a well-built farmhouse nor a life lived as permanent exile could.



Modern American Pilgrimage as a Means of Fixing an Identity

In the introduction to this dissertation, I announced that I would be recuperating and revising the Turners' roundly criticized and seemingly dated definition of pilgrimage as a process of gathering individuals by orienting them towards a common object. I found that the Turners' definition still holds when it describes the experience of Modern Pilgrims who embrace religious travel to a particular place as a way to ground and construct an identity. However, in this final section, I want to test whether this practice

of pilgrimage might also hold together in our century. To do this, I turn to Elizabeth Gilbert and the pilgrimage that she narrates in *Eat, Pray, Love.*

Eat, Pray, Love has been a blockbuster by any measure. It sold more than seven million copies and spent three and a half years on the *New York Times* bestseller list. It spawned a (terrible) feature film starring Julia Roberts, led to over four hundred product tie-ins and has inspired scores of copycat pilgrimages.[3] Just as Melville and Eliot are unassailable as canonical writers, Gilbert's popularity and influence are not in question. Gilbert's informal, confessional "chick lit" style soft pedals intense engagement with serious religious and philosophical question. Just as Gilbert's popularity insulates her from dismissal as irrelevant, her savvy, highly conscious approach to her own experience in its cultural context protects her from being regarded as a mere product of ideology or as a passive cog in an oppressive social structure. She must be taken seriously as an authority on Modern American Pilgrimage; to this point she has not been.[4]

At first glance, Gilbert might seem a strange literary heir to Melville and Eliot. She does not walk directly in their theological or geographic footsteps, and her choice of genre and style is very different from Melville's and Eliot's. Though Christian tradition as subject and literary style distinguish Gilbert from Melville and Eliot, the way that she relates to places of spiritual significance and the demands that they make upon her life draw her very close to them. Like Melville and Eliot, Gilbert undertook a journey as a spiritual search after she witnessed the destruction of her home and experienced a "crisis of identity." What links Gilbert to Melville and Eliot is that her pilgrimage runs counter to the general American tendency towards independence. Like Melville, Gilbert contemplates an annihilation of self, and like Eliot, she submits to a spiritual force

outside her control through acts of religious devotion. In her successful act of submission and self-transformation, Gilbert - like Eliot – makes one more turn than Melville, who contemplates, but backs away from the annihilation of self that he understands as necessary to finally come to rest. By allowing her "Self" to be mastered, Gilbert makes a turn home.

In the opening chapters of *Eat, Pray, Love* Gilbert describes the destruction of home that started her on her pilgrimage. Like Melville and Eliot, Gilbert's spiritual struggle and loss of identity is directly related to the destruction of her home. In Gilbert's case, however, the causal arrow is reversed; her spiritual crisis led to and was then compounded by the devastation of her home. *Eat, Pray, Love* begins with Gilbert in tears on the bathroom floor of her well-appointed suburban New York home, realizing, "I don't want to be married anymore. I don't want to live in this big house. I don't want to have a baby."[5] This truth that "kept insisting itself" upon Gilbert led her and her husband into "a life lived in limbo" where "bills piled up, careers stalled, the house fell into ruin . . . ." The decay and devastation that Gilbert watched overcome her suburban home spread beyond an unmowed yard, a scummy bathroom, and a disheveled desk; she reflects that during this period she and her husband looked at each other with "the eyes of refugees." Both of them vacated their suddenly unhomely suburban house for Manhattan. He took over their pied-à-terre and she moved in with a new partner. Instead of offering a refreshing change of scenery, the city provided neither escape nor refuge. Gilbert recalls that she bottomed out in the early fall of 2001, reaching "the complete and merciless devaluation of self" just as she experienced, the "terrorizing of [her] city" (18, 21). For Gilbert, the attacks of 9/11 paralleled and compounded the devastation she experienced in

her personal life: "everything invincible that had once stood together now became a smoldering avalanche of ruin" like the pile of rubble at Ground Zero (19).

Gilbert might have responded to the literal and figurative ruin of her marriage, her home, and her city in the characteristic American fashion of lighting out for Big Sky country or by driving a convertible off the rim of the Grand Canyon. Indeed, Gilbert is well aware of the tradition of American pilgrimage as heroic nomadism; much earlier in her literary career she imagined the classic American pilgrimage to perfect freedom. The protagonist of Gilbert's 1992 short story "Pilgrims" is a young wrangler named Martha Knox who contemplates but ultimately backs away from a complete rejection of society for a life on the run.[6] Like her direct contemporaries Christopher McCandless and John Grady Cole, Knox weighs the prospect of crossing into a life of unfettered western peregrination.[7] In the story, Knox calls the bluff of her fellow guide - a boy, the ranch owner's son - who invites her to ride up to Washakee Pass from the hunting camp where they had led a group of city-slicker "pilgrims . . . guys that have never even been in a back yard." (11). After the clients go to sleep and while the two wranglers sit beside the fire, Jake proposes, "We take a horse each and whatever food and gear fits on them . . . and we don't come back . . . Then we head south . . . There's no reason in the world we shouldn't be in Mexico in a few months" (11-12). After each detail in the plan, Knox responds, "Okay, let's do this," but eventually the boy's plan spirals out of control into cattle rustling, bank-robbing and general western outlawry. Knox realizes that Jake has no intention of actually living out his fireside fantasy, but she remains fully committed to the idea of taking off, and she is frustrated by the boy's unwillingness to leave with her, telling him that he is "just limited. Limited." In the end, Knox settles for a wild tandem

night ride with Jake instead of crossing the Continental Divide and the Mexican Border, but it is only the boy's lack of commitment and seriousness that keep her from going. Martha Knox fits well into the tradition of *Huckleberry Finn*, *On the Road*, and *The Border Trilogy*; all that separates her from this American boys' club is the lack of a buddy like Jim, Dean, or Rawlins.

Instead of going west like her fictional protagonist, Gilbert responded to the ruin that surrounded her by heading east. Gilbert's real journey does not start with Knox's "let's do this"; rather it begins with her simple prayer: as she sits on her bathroom floor she tearfully asks and unknown god, "*Please tell me what to do*" (15). This act of supplication puts Gilbert very close to the Melville who determined to give himself up to Jerusalem's strange impressions and to Eliot who decided to put off "sense and notion" to "kneel / where prayer has been valid." Gilbert describes her prayers in much greater detail than both do Melville and Eliot. Her description of the voice that responds to her prayer sets up the major tension of the book, the question of exactly who is in control of her life. The voice that responds, "Go back to bed, Liz," is not "an Old Testament Hollywood Charlton Heston voice . . . " Gilbert recalls,

> It was merely my own voice, speaking from within my own self. But it was my voice as I had never heard it before. This was my voice but perfectly wise, calm, and compassionate . . . How can I describe the warmth of affection in that voice, as it gave me the answer that would forever seal my faith in the divine?"

Here, early in the narrative, Gilbert plainly states that the voice is "merely her own voice," but her assurance that the "omniscient interior voice" is in fact her own voice diminishes

as the memoir unfolds and as she continues to converse with it in the pages of a notebook. Gilbert initially describes this “strangest and most secret conversation” as a conversation with herself: “Here, in this most private notebook, is where I talk to myself,” she writes. Yet the very next sentence undercuts the assurance of the previous statement; she explains more ambiguously “ . . . something (or somebody) had said, ‘Go back to bed, Liz.’” Just a bit later, she writes that the infinitely wise voice “ . . . is maybe me, or maybe not exactly me.” Finally, she questions, “Maybe the voice I am reaching for is God, or maybe it’s my Guru speaking through me, or maybe it’s the angel assigned to my case, or maybe it’s my Highest Self, or maybe it is indeed just a construct of my subconscious, invented in order to protect me from my own torment.” Gilbert is not certain whether the voice is inside her or not, but she is sure that it is not of this world. She acknowledges, but rejects, Freud’s characterization of God as a mere coping mechanism that helps people get by in a cruel and nonsensical world. Instead, she argues “the very fact that this world is so challenging is exactly why you sometimes must reach out of its jurisdiction for help, appealing to a higher authority in order to find your comfort” (53).

In *Eat, Pray, Love,* when Gilbert realizes the need to escape the confines of her marriage, her home, and her city, she responds to this "crisis of identity" and to her loss of home not through an act of independent will that either puts down new roots wherever she may now find herself and not by embracing exile, and not in an act of resignation – returning to her parents’ New Hampshire Christmas tree farm. Instead, she purposefully seeks out three significant sites of transformation. In embarking on this pilgrimage instead of finding open space to start life anew, Gilbert rejects not only an American

tradition of lighting out for the territories, but also a key tenet of late modern pilgrimage. Eade and Coleman write that individuals seeking identity or enlightenment in the twenty first-century are determined to keep their options open. In praying, "Tell me what to do," Gilbert seeks authority to resolve her crisis. Gilbert's supplication surely grates on contemporary ears, and she acknowledges the troubling aspect of a woman fresh out of an unhappy marriage looking for a new source of authority outside of herself. She preempts charges of anti-feminism by claiming, "I have no nostalgia for the patriarchy, please believe me," but she follows this statement with a critique of the modern society that allowed her to marry too young and too foolishly: " . . . what I have come to realize is that, when the patriarchic system was (rightfully) dismantled, it was not necessarily replaced by another form of protection. . .If I am truly to become an autonomous woman, then I must take over that role of being my own guardian. . .What I've only recently realized is that I not only have to become my own husband, but I need to be my own father, too." (285-286)

Gilbert's recognition that she must become an autonomous woman seems contradictory to her prior statement that she sometimes needs to reach for an authority outside of this world. She escapes this contradiction, however, with the language that she uses to describe this outside authority. Gilbert's phrasing of a higher authority outside of this world grants an authority greater than human will, but it leaves open the possibility that this authority could reside within the divided consciousness of a person. Gilbert is quite certain that divinity resides within her, but she is not exactly sure where inside of her God is. When Gilbert prays through her private notebook, responses come from God in her own handwriting and she reflects, "Even during the worst of suffering,

that calm compassionate, affectionate and infinitely wise voice (who is maybe me, or maybe not exactly me) is always available for a conversation on paper at any time of day or night" (53). Gilbert's journey is not from autonomy to bondage or from inward authority to authority outside the self; rather the places that she encounters on her pilgrimage help her to see that discipline and autonomy and inward and outward authority are mutually caught up with each other. Gilbert apprehends that to be an autonomous and whole individual, she must both inhabit the world and have a point of reference outside of it. This tension is evident in Gilbert's description of the primary desire that sent her on her way to Italy, India, and Indonesia: "I want to have a lasting experience of God . . . I want to be with God all the time. But I don't want to be a monk, or totally give up worldly pleasure. I guess what I want to learn is how to live in this world and enjoy its delights, but also devote myself to God."

Rome: The Way Out

Gilbert begins her pilgrimage by traveling to Rome. Although Rome is the stop on her itinerary that has the longest history of western pilgrimage and the most defined pilgrim paths, Gilbert does not engage the Eternal City as a place pilgrim. She does not mention visiting any of Rome's important pilgrimage sites other than a brief stop into the church of Santa Maria del Popolo to see its famous Caravaggios. Not only does she bypass important but out-of-the way pilgrim churches like San Giovanni in Laterano and Santa Maria Maggiore, she also apparently skips St. Peter's entirely.[8] Despite her admiration for St. Teresa of Avila, whose mystical writings and biographical details bubble up throughout *Eat, Pray, Love,* Gilbert makes no mention of visiting Santa Maria Della

Vittoria to see Bernini's famous *St. Teresa in Ecstasy.* Gilbert is not a conventional pilgrim in Rome, but neither is she a conventional tourist. At the end of the narrative of her time in Rome, she sheepishly confesses that the National Museum of Pasta was the only museum she visited the entire time that she was in the city.

Rome then is not the destination of Gilbert's pilgrimage; instead, it is an extended stop on her journey out to the destination, an Ashram in India. Gilbert seeks no shrine in Rome, but her time there is not without devotion. She writes that all she wanted to do in Italy was "to eat beautiful food and to speak as much beautiful Italian as possible," but she approaches this goal not with wanton abandon, but with discipline and devotion. Likewise, Gilbert's decision to travel to Italy grew out of her New York night school study of Italian, and once she arrives in Rome, she enrolls in a Italian language course and determines to "read through one newspaper article every day, no matter how long it takes." Because she looks up "approximately every third word in [her] dictionary" reading the article takes quite a long time (37).

Though the discipline of language study is tedious at times, it opens up avenues to both pleasure and relief for Gilbert. Instead of the discipline of prayer leading to a moment of clarity in a pilgrim church, Gilbert's language study opens a Roman library to her as a site of ecstasy. Gilbert recollects that she settled into a seat under an orange tree next to a fountain in the courtyard of a beautiful old library with her recently purchased Italian translation of Louise Gluck poems and opened the collection to a page that read "*Dal centro della mia vita venne una grande Fontana* . . . 'From the center of my life, there came a great fountain . . . .'" The language in this setting overwhelms her, and she writes that she "sat the book down in [her] lap, shaking with relief" (39). This fleeting

experience of linguistic ecstasy is hardly the endpoint of Gilbert's pilgrimage, but it is a significant waypoint for her. Although it is rendered relatively minor by the book's later descriptions of much more powerful spiritual ecstasies, the overwhelming emotion in the place prepares her for the experiences that are to come.

Though Gilbert is responsive to the endless waves of transformation that swirl about her, she remains her own guide throughout her time in Italy. She is transformed by her disciplined, directed study of the Italian language, but midway through her time in Rome, she walks out of the structure of the classroom to simply learn Italian on the street with friends and acquaintances (96). Gilbert does not regard the decision either as a failure of persistence or as a rejection of authority. Her assessment is much more practical; she was learning more real Italian on the streets of Rome with her friends than she was by doing worksheets in a stuffy classroom. In Rome, the tension Gilbert feels between her desire to become a "self-governing individual" after years of submission in marriage and her recognition of her need for an outside authority to help her is generally resolved in favor of independence (23, 53). In her final analysis, Gilbert looks back on the time in Italy after she dropped out of her language school as "some of the loosest days of [her] life" a time when she was "finally beginning to flex [her] freedom for real because it has finally sunk in that [she] *can go wherever [she] want[s]"* (97). Gilbert's disciplined language study and the moment of ecstasy it opened up in the library courtyard prefigure and foreshadow the more traditional religious discipline and its religious ecstasy that she experiences while on her Indian pilgrimage. In Rome, Gilbert resolves the tension between devoting herself to God all the time and enjoying this

world's delights in favor of the world's pleasures, but at the Indian Ashram, she resolves the tension in the exact opposite way.

A Satisfactory Indian Place

In India, Gilbert resolves her crisis of identity and unifies her divided self first by embracing a power that is not only outside this world and then later, also outside of herself. The appeal of authority outside of the self is quickly apparent to Gilbert, but she also apprehends that embracing this external power presents the same peril of annihilation of self that Melville contemplated a century and a half before. While Melville began his pilgrimage determined to be annihilated, but could not follow through on his determination, Gilbert began with an assumption that she could find the source of her identity within herself, but ended up defeating that self through religious discipline. Gilbert's success where Melville failed must be owing in part to their different conceptions of the self. Melville was concerned with a single, unified self, but Gilbert, writing after Freud, conceives of the self as just one part of who she is. Gilbert communicates her understanding of her segmented identity most clearly when she describes her struggle to gain control over her thoughts while she is meditating. She writes the struggle as a disagreement between "Me" and "Mind." Me tries to meditate, but Mind continually interrupts the mantra that Me tries to pray (134-136). Mind wins the struggle, and Gilbert runs out of the temple in tears after only fourteen minutes. Full of "a hot powerful sadness" at her failure to meditate, she "wonder[s] who is the 'me' when I am conversing with my mind, and who is the 'mind'" (137). Gilbert's friend and fellow pilgrim, "Richard from Texas," provides one answer to her confusion: when she

explains that all she seems to do is argue with herself when she tries to meditate, Richard responds, "That's just your ego, trying to make sure it stays in charge. This is what your ego does. It keeps you feeling separate, keeps you with a sense of duality, tries to convince you that you're flawed and broken and alone instead of whole." Gilbert wonders how this work of the ego serves her, and Richard tells her,

> It *doesn't* serve you. Your ego's job isn't to serve you. Its only job is to keep itself in power. And right now, your ego's scared to death cuz it's about to get downsized. You keep up this spiritual path, baby, and that bad boy's days are numbered. Pretty soon your ego will be out of work, and your heart'll be making all the decisions. So your ego's fighting for its life, playing with your mind, trying to assert its authority . . . Don't listen to it . . . Divert his attention. Instead of trying to forcefully take thoughts out of your mind, give your mind something better to play with. Something healthier.

The next morning, Gilbert descends into the Ashram's meditation cave and tries to do exactly what Richard recommended: "Listen," she tells her mind just before meditating, "I'm not trying to annihilate you. I'm just trying to give you a place to rest. I love you." The new approach works. Gilbert falls into a sleep and then into what she describes as a "transcendent experience with God" that she compares to mystical experiences of divine energy in various religious traditions. At this point, Gilbert attributes her successful mastery of her mind - if not the mystical result - to her own will. It is Richard's technique, not an outside force, that opens her up to the mystical experience that she describes.

Gilbert's success at meditation emboldens her to take what she describes as the biggest obstacle in her Ashram experience, a chant called the Gurugita. Gilbert describes the Gurugita as a "long, tedious, sonorous, and insufferable hymn" composed of 182 paragraph-length verses of archaic and abstruse Sanskrit. It takes an hour and a half to complete, and Gilbert does not like either the tune of the chant or its words. When her feelings for the hymn shift from "simple dislike to solid dread," she starts skipping it to do other things that she thinks are better for her spiritual growth. When she does occasionally return to the chant, it agitates her physically: "I don't feel like I am singing it so much as being dragged behind it," she writes, "[i]t makes me sweat . . . And I can't even sing it. I can only croak it. Resentfully." It becomes to her, the "murderous thing."

Gilbert's initial decision to skip the hymn in favor of more productive spiritual practices around the Ashram – like meditating individually in the meditation cave instead of chanting the Gurugita in the Temple with the other pilgrims – parallels her decision to forsake Italian classes in Rome in favor of enjoying the beauty of the language as it is spoken on the street and amongst her friends. At the Ashram, as in Rome, when the excitement went out of an experience and when she found the work unpleasant, Gilbert just redirected her interests and energy to an activity of her choosing.

Unlike her experience with the classroom in Rome, Gilbert returns to the Ashram temple after her favorite teacher in the Ashram - a former NYU classical theater professor-turned-monk – explains to her, "Look, the Gurugita isn't supposed to be a fun song to sing. It has a different function. It's a text of unimaginable power. It's a mighty purifying practice. It burns away all your junk, all your negative emotions. And I think it's probably having a positive effect on you if you're experiencing such strong emotions

and physical reactions while you're chanting it." Gilbert asks the monk what she should do, and he tells her - since she asked - that she should continue chanting the Gurugita, "*especially* because [she is] having such an extreme reaction to it." The monk tells her that her reaction assures her that the chant is having the right effect on her. The Gurugita, he explains, "burns away the ego, turns you into pure ash. It's supposed to be arduous, Liz. It has power beyond what can be rationally understood" (164).

In her previous struggle Gilbert successfully employed the strategy that Richard provided her to quiet her mind enough to meditate. In contrast to Richard's suggestion, the monk's advice is not technical; rather, he simply suggests that she allow herself to be overwhelmed and transformed by the chant. Earlier, she began meditating by telling her mind, "Listen, I'm not trying to annihilate you," but she begins the Gurugita, having already acquiesced to the possibility that she will be "turned into pure ash."

Gilbert intends to follow the monk's advice, but the very next morning she oversleeps and finds that her roommate has locked her into her room from the outside. She responds by climbing out of her second story window to arrive at the temple just as the chant was starting. That morning , during the chant she "briefly understood on a molecular level (not an intellectual level) that there was no difference whatsoever between any of [the words of the chant] or any of these ideas or any of these people." Gilbert's sense of the annihilation of the entirety of herself (not merely her Mind) as a distinct, discrete entity is confirmed in her mind later the same day when she bumps into the embarrassed roommate who locked her in their room. The roommate was oblivious to the fact that she locked Gilbert in the room and shocked that it happened because she had been thinking of her all morning since she woke up in the midst of a vivid dream of

Gilbert and her bed on fire. In the dream, when the roommate leapt out of her own bed to help her friend, she arrived to find her "nothing but white ash."

Following this first experience of submitting to the Gurugita's purgational power, Gilbert reports that she never missed the chant again and that it became the most holy of her practices at the Ashram. The transformation that Gilbert realized as a part of her submission to the chant led her to adjust the itinerary that she had planned for her Indian stay. Instead of staying at the Ashram for six weeks and then spending the following three months traveling all over "India . . . looking for God," she decided to stay put at the Ashram for the duration of time in India.

Gilbert's decision to forgo "a bunch of trains . . . intestinal parasites . . . hang[ing] around backpackers to immobilize herself, to pursue self-exploration and devotional practice in the small, cloistered Ashram in the middle of nowhere" directly reverses the decision she made in Italy to abandon her classroom study of Italian in favor of experiencing the language on the streets and in everyday life. It also tips the balance of her desires from living in this world and enjoying its delights to devoting herself fully to God (26-27).

The result is not a reduction of herself but an expansion. Late in her stay in India, Gilbert went outside the Ashram's walls one night to run amongst trees in the moonlight, in the valley outside the Ashram feeling pure, godly love. Looking around the moonlight valley, she writes "I could see nothing that was not God," and she felt "so deeply, terribly happy" and thought "Whatever this feeling is - this is what I have been praying for. And this is who I have been praying to" (203). Obviously, such a moment of ecstasy is unsustainable, and Gilbert bridges the gap between the transcendence she glimpses in India and the ordinariness of her quotidian New York writing life by returning home

through Bali. In Bali, she seeks to perfectly synthesize the approaches to life that she resolves in favor of the delights of this world in Italy and in favor of being with God all the time in India. In her final analysis of her entire pilgrimage Gilbert does not reflect on her success or failure at sublating this tension, but she does conclude that she is "happy and healthy and balanced." Like the speaker of "Little Gidding" who observes, "the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time," Gilbert ends her pilgrimage by returning to the Indonesian island of Gili Meno but finds it very different from the place she encountered prior to her pilgrimage. Unlike the Magi, however, Gilbert does not feel ill at ease when she returns to this tropical paradise; indeed, quite the opposite is true. Gilbert recognizes that she now exists in "wholeness and maturity" in the place where she once found herself wandering beaches "confused and struggling."

Gilbert recognizes that her conclusion – lying happy and balanced on a tropical beach next to her perfect Brazilian lover – is altogether too neat; she acknowledges that it is "an almost ludicrously fairy-tale ending . . . like the page out of some housewife's dream." She defends her conclusion from charges of mere fantasy, however, by reminding her readers that she "was not rescued by a prince. [She] was the administrator of [her] own rescue" (329). Gilbert's choice of the word "administrator" is unusual but very significant. She might easily have concluded that she was the author of her salvation; she did, after all, carry out both halves of her conversation with God in writing in the pages of her notebook, and she wrote the story of her salvation in *Eat, Pray, Love*. But "I was the author of my own rescue" – with its echo of " . . . Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith . . ." – would perhaps usurp too much authority.[9] Among other

definitions, an administrator is "A person charged with directing or managing the affairs of a region, institution, etc., esp. on behalf of or as nominated by another" and "A person authorized to manage an estate for the legal owner during his or her minority, absence, incapacity, etc.; a person empowered to act for another, *spec.* for a child" (OED). Just as Gilbert claims control over her own transformation one last time, she subtly reminds her readers that there is someone or something beneath or above her whose will she manages.

The question for a study of *pilgrimage*, as opposed to a study of spiritual development, is whether Gilbert needed to go to a particular Ashram, half a world away, to discover this administrative capability. Is the place essential or is the more important point that she submitted to ritual? Like her shifting description of God (who is maybe me, or who is not maybe me . . .") Gilbert's assessment of the importance of place is ambivalent and conflicted. She uses "place" both metaphorically and literally. She has a moment of transformation on top of a tower in the "tallest *place* in the Ashram [that] had a view overlooking the entirety of th[e] river valley." In this beautiful high place she prays through a ritual of "Instructions for Freedom" that was given to her by a "plumber/poet" friend and she finally sheds the grief and guilt of her terminated relationships (184-86, emphasis mine). This place, like the meditation cave and the Ashram's temple, seems essential to her spiritual development, yet just a page later she reflects, "this ritual on the rooftop had finally given me a *place* where I could house those [bleak, unfinished, sad] thoughts and feelings whenever they would arise in the future . . . This is what rituals are for . . . to create a safe resting *place* for our most complicated feelings . . . " (187). Here place is the ritual not the tower where she partook of the ritual. Places do matter to Gilbert – she notes that some rituals are dangerous to perform outside

of an Ashram – but she does recognize that her experiences of places are transportable. This is not that different from Melville's working over the barren expanse of the Judean wilderness from a dark New York townhome or Eliot's arriving where he started after a journey and knowing the place for the first time. Perhaps Gilbert might have found herself in Sedona, at Burning Man, on her parents' New Hampshire tree farm, or in any other place in the world, but her book tells her story of travel to a particular holy site where she was positively transformed by a force outside of this world. This makes her a modern pilgrim, and a very compelling one at that.

Transcendence as an Ethical Aim

Martha Nussbaum writes against exactly the kind of rejection of ordinary life in the search for transcendence that Gilbert embraces at the Ashram, that Melville sought in the Holy Land, and that Eliot looked for in forgotten English landmarks. According to Nussbaum, the reach for transcendence deprives individual human beings of their humanity by introducing dissatisfaction with ordinary life as it is.[10] Nussbaum points to Augustine, Dante, and Bronte as examples of the troubles that are brought on by attempting to ascend out of the everyday, but she might just as well have used Eliot's "Journey of the Magi." In the poem, after the Magi encounter the Christ child in Bethlehem and return home, they find themselves, "no longer at ease in the old dispensation" and "glad for another death." To Eliot, this unease and willingness to continue to put to death his self is a good. Like the melting of forgetful snow or like the initial turning of "Ash Wednesday," the sense of unease marks the beginning of a transformation that proceeds from living death to miraculous new life. To Nussbaum,

even if such a resplendent new life were possible, it would represent a tragic repudiation of the very ordinariness that is essentially human - just as there is no drama to an athletic contest run by gods who are not bound by time and space, she argues, there is no love apart from petty human jealousies and infidelities. Nussbaum's models of love are Joyce's Leopold and Molly Bloom, who do not attempt to ascend out of their everyday life, but instead "transfigure" their ordinariness by displaying a touching lovliness of mutual vulnerability.

Gilbert's (and perhaps her former husband's) failings are not so troubling as are the Blooms', but she understandably had no desire to remain as she was or to become as they are. Her experiences of transcendence in the Ashram's meditation cave and temple do not deprive her of her basic humanity or turn her from a life of satisfied ordinariness to a life of desperate longing and anxious struggle. Quite the opposite is true. Gilbert describes her old, ordinary self as a puppet to millions of other small and large signals of pain and pleasure. Her experience of real, palpable (if not graspable) mystical ecstasy in the Ashram's cave and temple provides her with a solid foundation upon which she can build a new self. Gilbert tells us that her pilgrimage worked; it helped her become whole, happy, and balanced for the first time in her life. To reject her own assessment of her own life, we either have to regard her as dishonest or as naively subject to decidedly this-worldly social, economic, and cultural forces. Regarding her this way does not remove authority from Gilbert's life, however; instead it simply shifts the authority from her and God (who is perhaps her or perhaps not her) to the critic. This would be an interesting project, but it is not my task. I seek to approach Gilbert and Melville and Eliot charitably and as earnestly as they sought truth on their respective pilgrimages.

I do not propose Gilbert's pilgrimage, or Eliot's, or Melville's as a model for resolving personal crises that stem at least in part from the destruction of home, but all three of these writers' reckonings with their experiences show that seeking a solid foundation in a place or a discipline outside of the self does not lead to any certain end. While we might find examples of Modern Pilgrims whose earnestness and desire for certainty through authority led them to a form of enslavement or to a constriction of their humanity, this was certainly not Melville's, Eliot's, and Gilbert's fate. Melville didn't seem to find anything worth settling for; Eliot records welcome discovery of definite unease and singularity of purpose; Gilbert finds liberation, happiness, and balance. Certainly many more responses are possible.

[1] In arguing that Melville's, Eliot's, and Gilbert's pilgrimages are an "ethical" response to the loss of home, I draw on Ronald Dworkin's handy definition of ethics as including "convictions about what kinds of lives are good or bad for a person to lead." In Dworkin's view, ethics are contrasted with morality, which includes "principles about how a person should treat other people" *Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practice of Equality* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1985), 485, n.1. Kwame Anthony Appiah follows Dworkin and considers ethics a set of "questions about what lives we should lead" and how we should define the well-lived life *The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 2005), xiv. Appiah concurs with John Stuart Mill that the best, and most ethical, life that a person can live is the one that he or she has chosen for himself or herself. Appiah extends Mill's argument in favor of individuals' absolute freedom of self-creation even to kinds of life choices that some (perhaps many) citizens in democracy would find poor choices (5-6). The butler Mr. Stevens from Ishiguro's novel *The Remains of the Day* is Appiah's primary example. Stevens chooses to live an excellent and exemplary life within a condition that some would regard as a system of servility where he has surrendered his own moral rights to his employer, yet Appiah concludes that Stevens' life is dignified because he has chosen it (12-13). Appiah's conclusions about Stevens bump up against the one major limit that Mill places on the authority of the individual. In *On Liberty* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978),101, Mill argues that a person can choose any life he or she wants, except the life of slavery: "In this and most other civilized countries," Mill writes,

> an engagement by which a person should sell himself, or allow himself to be sold, as a slave would be null and void. . .His voluntary choice is evidence that what he so chooses is desirable, or at least endurable, to him, and his good is on the whole best provided for by allowing him to take his own means of pursuing it. But by selling himself for a slave, he abdicates liberty; he foregoes any future use of it beyond that single act. . .The principle of freedom cannot require that he should be free not to be free. It is not freedom to be allowed to alienate his freedom.

Stevens has not finally and completely sold himself into the type of slavery that Mill considers the limit of liberty, but as Ishiguro so devastatingly shows at the end of the novel, the commitment Stevens made as a young man to subordinate his personal wishes to his duty to his employer forecloses opportunities and limits his choices late in his life. The annihilation of self that Melville, Eliot, and (I will show) Gilbert contemplate goes beyond Stevens' decision to bind himself to an abstract and self-regulated sense of "duty."

[2] Scott Russell Sanders, *Staying Put: Making a Home in a Restless World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), xiv.

[3] Sara Stewart, "Eat, Pray, Zilch" *New York Post,* August 1, 2010. STA's officially sanctioned *Eat, Pray, Love* travel packages start at $777 for five days in Rome, $1099 for eight days in India and $310 for five days in Bali. http://eatpraylove.statravelpackages.com/

[4] Gilbert did make an appearance alongside of David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* and *The Pale King* in Sean Kelly and Hubert Dreyfus' *All Things Shining: Reading the Western Classics to Find Meaning in a Secular Age* (New York: Free Press, 2011), 26-28, 52-54. Kelly and Dreyfus admit that the justaposition of Wallace and "chick-lit" is unusual, but they argue that Gilbert works her way out of the same pressure of literary genius that undid Wallace, by considering herself a vessel through which muses poured their truth. In short, Gilbert eschews the notion of Renaissance and Romantic genius for a classical, polytheistic view of literary creation. This observation is not incompatible with the argument that I pursue in this chapter, that Gilbert submits to an authority that extends beyond her own individual will.

[5] Elizabeth Gilbert, *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India, and Indonesia* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 10. Subsequent references will be in the text.

[6] Elizabeth Gilbert, "Pilgrims," *Pilgrims* (New York: Penguin 2004). The story, Gilbert's first published work, first appeared in *Esquire* in 1993.

[7] Christopher McCandless famously donated his entire $24,000 trust fund to charity after his graduation from Emory University to wander the American West. He died trying to live off the land in a remote part of Alaska in August 1992, Cf. John Krakauer, *Into the Wild* (New York: Anchor, 1997). John Grady Cole is the protagonist of Cormac McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* (New York: Knopf, 1992) .

[8] Rick Steves lists St. Peter's, St. Paul's Outside the Walls, San Giovanni in Laterano, and Santa Maria Maggiore as the four great basilicas that pilgrims to Rome try to visit, *Rome 2011*.

[9] Cf. Hebrews 12:2: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (KJV).

[10] Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Though: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge UP, 2001).

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