

*Allusion: the case of Shakespeare**Hugh Haughton*

Walton Litz has spoken of T. S. Eliot's 'almost insatiable appetite for allusion', observing that 'one of the most striking aspects' of Eliot's poetic development between 1915 and 1920 was 'the thickening of conscious, orchestrated allusion'.¹ Litz draws attention to Eliot's 'A Note on Ezra Pound' published in 1918, which contrasts the 'deliberateness' and the 'positive coherence' of Pound's use of allusions to those of James Joyce, 'another very learned literary artist', who 'uses allusions suddenly and with great speed, part of the effect being the extent of the vista opened to the imagination by the very lightest touch'.² Desmond MacCarthy was one of the first reviewers to comment upon Eliot's allusiveness. In a 1921 notice of *Ara Vos Prec*, bracketing Eliot with Pound, MacCarthy observed that 'The allusions in their poems are learned, oblique, and obscure; the mottoes they choose for their poems are polyglot, the names that occur to them are symbolic . . . known only to book-minded people' (Brooker, 31). Noting that Eliot's 'phrases are frequently echoes', MacCarthy claimed Eliot was 'the reverse of an imitative poet', his echoes were 'tuned to a new context which changes their subtlety. He does not steal phrases; he borrows their aroma.' Quoting the stanzas beginning 'Defunctive music under sea / Passed seaward with the passing bell' (*CPP*, 40) from 'Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar', MacCarthy comments:

Just as 'weeping, weeping multitudes' . . . is an echo from Blake, so 'Defunctive music' comes from 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' and 'Her . . . barge / Burned on the water', of course, from *Antony and Cleopatra*. But the point is that the poet means to draw a subtle whiff of Cleopatra and poetic passion across our minds, in order that we may feel a peculiar emotion towards the sordid little siren in the poem itself, just as he also uses later a broken phrase or two from *The Merchant of Venice* for the sake of reminding us of Shakespeare's Jew, compared with the 'Bleistein' of the poem. (Brooker, 33-4)

It is an exaggeration to say these allusions are 'known only to book-minded people', since most of them are references to well-known passages in Shakespeare. They are typical of Eliot's tactics in handling 'broken' material from the literary past, and of the way quoted words can be reactivated in new lyric forms.

MacCarthy's remark that Eliot does not 'steal phrases' recalls Eliot's own remarks in his 1920 essay on Philip Massinger: 'Immature poets imitate, mature poets steal'. The context of Eliot's oft-quoted aphorism about quotation tends to be forgotten:

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. Chapman borrowed from Seneca; Shakespeare and Webster from Montaigne. (*SE*, 206)

Eliot goes on to discuss the way Massinger borrows from Shakespeare, and his remarks have a bearing on the poems in *Ara Vos Prec.* Eliot generally preferred to 'borrow from authors remote in time, or alien in language', but we should remember that the Massinger essay not only confirms the overlap of Eliot as essayist and poet, it highlights something he and Massinger have in common: borrowing from Shakespeare. Eliot's claim that 'the good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different from that from which it was torn', is revealing in the light of his own systematic Shakespearean thefts, with their blend of violation ('torn') and creative unity ('welded' into 'a whole').

In a discussion of literary sources in 'Kubla Khan', Eliot said that the poem's imagery 'whatever its origins in Coleridge's reading, sank to the depths of Coleridge's feeling, was saturated, transformed there – "those are pearls that were his eyes" – and brought up into daylight again' (*UPUC*, 146). Discussing the poetic transformation of a poet's reading, Eliot notes that 'the re-creation of word and image which happens fitfully in the poetry of such a poet as Coleridge happens almost incessantly with Shakespeare'. Shakespeare gives a 'new meaning' or extracts a 'latent one' from familiar words: 'the right imagery, saturated while it lay in the depths of Shakespeare's memory, will rise like Anadyomene from the sea' (*UPUC*, 146–7). Talking of such 'reborn' words and images, Eliot discusses his own appropriation of an image from George Chapman, who

borrowed it from Seneca, suggesting that 'what gives it such intensity as it has in each case is its saturation ... with feelings too obscure for the authors even to know quite what they were' (*UPUC*, 147–8). This suggests the study of allusion is not only about literary sources or influences, but about what Eliot called the 'auditory imagination': 'the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling ... sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back' (*UPUC*, 118–19). Literary borrowing, then, is not a display of conscious learning or cultural memory; it is more personal and opaque than that. In this discussion of the poet's transformation of literary sources, Eliot's quotation from Ariel's song in *The Tempest* – the same phrase he had used in *The Waste Land* – shows how crucial Shakespeare was to his own auditory imagination.

Although there have been many studies of Eliot and his sources, Eliot and quotation, his poetic borrowings from Shakespeare, although easily recognised, have not aroused sustained critical attention.³ Eliot tended to play down the presence of Shakespeare in his work. With the exception of the 1919 *Hamlet* article and the 1927 piece on 'Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca' – two revealing essays – Eliot published little exclusively on Shakespeare. In 1961 he observed that the critical essays of his own that he liked best were 'on the contemporaries of Shakespeare, not those on Shakespeare himself' (*TCC*, 18). Yet though Eliot generally steered clear of Shakespeare in published essays, it has been said that he 'virtually invented the twentieth-century Shakespeare in a collection of asides'.⁴ Taken together, his dispersed comments amount to a substantial body of work. In 'Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca', Eliot took sideswipes at the 'up-to-date Shakespeares' presented by Lytton Strachey, John Middleton Murry and Wyndham Lewis, offering instead a Senecan stoic writing in 'a period of dissolution and chaos' (*SE*, 132) and drawn to 'the attitude of self-dramatization' (*SE*, 129). Eliot's Shakespeare reminds us that his own early poetry, with its use of dramatic monologue and allusions to dramatic situations, displays comparable 'dissolution and chaos' as well as attitudes of 'self-dramatization'.

In essays and interviews, Eliot paid tribute to the influence of Dante and Laforgue, but Shakespearean allusion is also a crucial thread in his poetry from the outset. J. Alfred Prufrock appeals to Shakespeare's melancholy soliloquising prince – 'No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be' (*CPP*, 16). The negative allusion records Prufrock's refusal to cast himself as a contemporary counterpart to the famously indecisive Hamlet ('nor was meant to be' takes up *the* famous soliloquy 'To be or

not to be'), but it also intensifies our puzzlement about what Prufrock *is* meant to be. Despite the disavowed comparison with Hamlet, he presents himself in inherently theatrical terms as 'an attendant lord, one that will do / To swell a progress, start a scene or two, / Advise the prince' (*CPP*, 16). The lines, although not blank verse, recall Shakespeare's pentameters and occasional couplets, and the idiom is fully Shakespearean (he is 'Full of high sentence' like Polonius). 'Almost, at times, the Fool. / I grow old . . . I grow old' (*CPP*, 16) invokes both 'the Fool' and king in *King Lear*. Even the closing sea images recall the world of *Pericles* and *The Tempest*, revealing Eliot's peculiarly aqueous sense of Shakespeare. If Prufrock talks of composing a theatrical scene, then the speaker in 'Portrait of a Lady' says 'You have the scene arrange itself', conjuring 'An atmosphere of Juliet's tomb' (*CPP*, 18), thereby using the world of *Romeo and Juliet* as an analogy for the stifling, would-be romantic room where the cultured Bostonian lady serves him tea. Eliot is subtly recapitulating the mode of his early Laforguean pastiche 'Nocturne', with its 'Romeo, *grand sérieux*, to importune / Guitar and hat in hand, beside the gate / With Juliet' (*CPP*, 601).

Ara Vos Prec (1920), laced with epigraphs, embedded quotations, polyglot phrases and recondite references, turned up the volume of allusion, including Shakespearean allusion. 'Gerontion' takes its epigraph from *Measure for Measure* – Shakespeare's play offering a 'measure' of the protagonist stiffening in his rented house. The speaker's acrid psychic world is full of half-throttled echoes and smothered memories of the cadences and rhetoric of earlier drama.⁵ If the bulk of these poems move away from the dramatic monologue, they remain haunted by theatrical echoes. 'Ode' takes its epigraph from *Coriolanus*, quoting the disaffected hero's speech to Tullus Aufidius as he prepares to betray his country: 'To you particularly, and to all the Volscians / Great hurt and mischief' (iv.v). In the play Coriolanus speaks of the 'drops of blood' he has shed for his 'thankless country'; casting a strange light on the 'blood upon the bed' in Eliot's nuptial poem about a 'Tortured' bridegroom (*IMH*, 383). The same poem incorporates two other Shakespearean allusions relating to 'hurt and mischief': 'Indignant / At the cheap extinction of his taking-off' mangles Macbeth's famous soliloquy before the assassination of Duncan, while 'Now lies he there / Tip to tip washed beneath Charles' Wagon' (*IMH*, 383) recalls Antony's powerful oration over the body of Caesar. Such echoes give an eerie inflection to Eliot's bloody bridegroom, the dragon-slaying Perseus of the poem: 'The fooled resentment of the dragon' (*IMH*, 383) crosses back upon the hero of *Coriolanus* (who is

compared three times in the play to a dragon). Eliot's tortuously allusive poem, with its 'Subterrene laughter' and the Shakespearean equation between political murder and blood of the 'Succuba eviscerate' (*IMH*, 383), is disturbed and disturbing. It may turn upon Eliot's marriage to Vivien without his parents' approval (the allusion to Coriolanus suggesting a symbolic desertion of his family and his country). The bloody sheets of the marital bedchamber are stained with quotations from Shakespeare's violent dramatisations of civil strife, suggesting 'feelings too obscure for the author even to know quite what they were'.

According to Grover Smith, 'Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar' contains 'more quotations and functional allusions than any [Eliot poem] of comparable length'.⁶ Among the collage of quotations resonant of Venice – the most allusive of cities – Eliot draws on Shakespeare's two Venetian plays, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* (Othello's 'Goats and monkeys!' appears in the macaronic epigraph). 'Defunctive music under sea / Passed seaward with the passing bell' (*CPP*, 40) remembers 'That defunctive music can, / Be the death-divining swan, / Lest the requiem lack his right' from 'The Phoenix and the Turtle'. Eliot's poem is a mock-elegy, an excursion into venereal Venice, where love and constancy are dead. This theme coalesces with the comparable music 'under the earth' heard by soldiers in *Antony and Cleopatra*, which is interpreted in the play as 'the god Hercules, whom Antony lov'd, / Now leaves him' (iv.iv). Cleopatra is invoked in Eliot's poem by the reference to the barge that 'Burned on the water all the day' (*CPP*, 40), recalling Enobarbus' description of Cleopatra: 'The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne, / Burned on the water' (II.ii). The phrase 'On the Rialto once' (*CPP*, 41) recalls *The Merchant of Venice* where variants of 'on the Rialto' occur five times in the play, identifying 'Bleistein' – 'Chicago Semite Viennese' (*CPP*, 40) – as a modern Shylock. Opinions vary as to the degree of anti-Semitism in Eliot's poem, as in Shakespeare's play: the racist association of rats and Jews has a source in the metaphorical 'land-rats and water-rats' that Shylock has heard about 'on the Rialto' (I.iii). The 'Time's ruins' (*CPP*, 41) in the final line of Eliot's poem may allude to Antony's words in *Julius Caesar*: 'Thou art the ruins of the noblest man, / That ever lived in the tide of times' (III.i). The allusive web in these quatrains requires a literary Baedeker to make sense of them. In its mixture of virtuosity, pastiche and collage, 'Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar' resembles the contemporary paintings of Pablo Picasso, which raid past and present for their multi-plane compositions. They are responses to the post-war fracturing of communal certitudes. Allusion forges a

mirage of cultural continuity even as it registers contemporary chaos, dissolution and disorder. The grotesque Shakespearean montages presented in *Ara Vos Prec* offer a disturbing 'objective correlative' of the poet's attempt – as Eliot thought Shakespeare struggled to do in *Hamlet* – to 'express the inexpressibly horrible' (*SE*, 146).

The Waste Land is famously (or notoriously) marinated in allusion. Because of the paratextual references in Eliot's notes to *The Golden Bough* and *From Ritual to Romance*, and the textual allusions to among others Dante, Baudelaire and Wagner, the very familiarity of the Shakespearean allusions can prevent us from taking due notice of them. 'A Game of Chess' opens with another warped account of Cleopatra's barge from *Antony and Cleopatra* – 'The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne' (*CPP*, 64). Enorbarbus had reported 'pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids' (II.ii) standing on either side of her. Eliot's opening verse paragraphs draw upon this as well as Iachimo's description of Imogen's bedchamber in *Cymbeline* – 'The roof o'the chamber / With golden cherubins is fretted. Her andirons – / I had forgot them – were two winking Cupids' (II.iv). These two scenes are conflated in *The Waste Land*'s feminine bedchamber where 'a golden Cupidon peeped out' (*CPP*, 64). Iachimo also noted on a visit to Imogen's bedchamber that 'She hath been reading late / The tale of Tereus; here the leaf's turn'd down / Where Philomel gave up' (II.i). This 'sylvan scene / The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king / So rudely forced' (*CPP*, 64) is on display in *The Waste Land*.⁷ Here Eliot's elaborate pastiche of Elizabethan Ovidian verse mutates after the conventional nightingale's 'Jug Jug' from a nightmare vision of 'other withered stumps of time' which 'were told upon the walls' (*CPP*, 64) into a modern domestic dialogue, dramatising the contrast and the continuities between the representation of a mythological scenario and this marital *scene*.

The section title 'A Game of Chess' recalls Miranda and Ferdinand who are discovered playing chess in *The Tempest*, the only play by Shakespeare to be directly quoted in *The Waste Land*. The question 'Do you remember / Nothing?' prompts the reply 'I remember / Those are pearls that were his eyes' (*CPP*, 65), which in turn prompts us to remember Madame Sosotris's earlier parenthetical aside '(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)' (*CPP*, 62). The echo of Ariel's elegy for Prince Ferdinand's father, who is presumed drowned – 'Full fathom five thy father lies' (I.ii) – links it to Madame Sosotris's 'drowned Phoenician Sailor' and her warning about 'death by water' (*CPP*, 62), further anticipating section 4, entitled 'Death by Water', where Phlebas the Phoenician

drowns. The interjection of 'Those are pearls that were his eyes' from Ariel's song – perhaps suggesting Eliot's grief for his own dead father – into the desultory, neurotic conversation of the unnamed couple in 'A Game of Chess' is eerie and unnerving.

The quotation from *Hamlet* at the end of 'A Game of Chess' is transferred to a London pub at closing time: 'good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night' (CPP, 66). It connects the speaker suffering from 'bad' nerves to mad Ophelia, another drowned figure. Earlier the question 'Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?' is the cue for the poem to launch weirdly into an allusion to a popular American vaudeville song 'O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag' (CPP, 65). The jazzy ragtime rhythms of Gene Buck and Herman Ruby's popular lyric, 'That Shakespearian Rag', mock and appropriates the 'high browed rhymes' of Shakespeare's 'syncopated lines': 'That Shakespearian rag / Most intelligent, very elegant / That old classical drag'.⁸ Eliot's popular allusion is *about* allusion and plays upon the relationship between popular culture and the 'high-browed' culture of the past, which generates a new 'syncopated' music. The song's opening quotation from Mark Antony's funeral speech in *Julius Caesar* – 'Friends, Romans, Countrymen' – suggests that if you 'lend an ear' you can hear Shakespeare in ragtime. By tweaking the nominal form 'Shakespearean' to 'Shakespeherian', Eliot allows us, in Shakespeare's name, to lend an ear to the word 'hear' and to infer the rhythms of the American jazz song. *The Waste Land's* 'O O O O', which might appear to add nothing, in fact opens out the nothings, reminding us of Lear's near final words ('Pray you, undo / This button. Thank you, sir, O, O, O, O!' [v.iii]) paving the way for the Os which sound and resound in the poem: 'O the moon shone bright on Mrs Porter', 'O ces voix d'enfants', 'O City city', 'O you who turn the wheel', 'O swallow swallow' (CPP, 67, 69, 71, 75).

'The Fire Sermon' returns us to the world of *The Tempest*, as a voice speaks of 'fishing in the dull canal / On a winter evening round behind the gashouse / Musing upon the king my brother's wreck / And on the king my father's death before him' (CPP, 67). The effect of these transitions is neither mock-heroic nor satirical, but there is something uncanny, turning again upon the death of the father, in the transposition of Shakespeare's lines into Eliot's against the backdrop of the gasworks. In the next reference to *The Tempest* – 'This music crept by me upon the waters' (CPP, 69) – the words are in quotation marks, suggesting a different form of auditory allusion to Shakespeare's magical island. Later the Thames barges remind us of Cleopatra's barge, just as mention of Elizabeth and Leicester recalls Shakespeare's contemporaries, and the

fragment 'To Carthage then I came' (*CPP*, 70) remembers not only Augustine's *Confessions* but also the courtiers of *The Tempest* shipwrecked on their way back from North Africa, prompting Gonzalo's remark that 'This Tunis, sir, was Carthage' (II.i). After 'Death by Water', associated with the deathly sea-change of Ariel's song (a grotesque anti-Semitic travesty of Ariel's song entitled 'Dirge' was cut, on Pound's recommendation, from the published poem), Shakespearean allusion effectively disappears from *The Waste Land*, although thunder figures in both *The Tempest* and 'What the Thunder Said' and the inverted 'Tolling reminiscent bells' (*CPP*, 73) are reminiscent of the sea-nymphs in *The Tempest* who 'hourly toll his knell' as well as Prospero's 'cloud-capped towers' (IV.i).

At the close, however, Shakespeare sponsors one of the most arresting allusive moments of the entire sequence: 'Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours / Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus' (*CPP*, 74). Shakespeare's controversial Roman hero is one of only three literary figures (alongside Tiresias and Kyd's Hieronymo) named in the poem. Grover Smith sees Coriolanus, like Dante's Ugolino, as 'another traitor, who betrayed his country and those who loved him'.⁹ And yet 'a broken Coriolanus' suggests not only *the* broken Coriolanus of Shakespeare's play but also a role with which many other persons might associate themselves. Is this baffling and oracular image alluding to the 'broken' hero in the later stages of the tragedy, or a reference to a fragmented memory of the play? After all, 'aethereal rumours' sound more at home in the world of *The Tempest* or *Pericles* than in this abrasively secular Roman tragedy. What is the broken Roman general doing amid the final fragments 'shored against my ruins' (*CPP*, 75) as the poem dissolves into a welter of broken quotations? 'My ruins' is architectural, reminding us of Roman ruins and Roman ruin. Comminius talks of Rome laid flat in 'heaps and piles of ruin' (III.i) while Volumnia (who uses the word 'ruin' three times) implores her son not to 'triumphantly tread upon thy country's ruin' (v.iii). If brokenness is a condition of Eliot's poem, so is a country's and a city's ruin. The 'awful daring of a moment's surrender' (*CPP*, 74) recalls the moment when Coriolanus (named after a conquered city) surrenders to the force of his mother's pleading, and breaks down. We remember that Eliot wrote this poem about breakage, ruin and fragmentation during his own 'breakdown' after his mother's visit to London. The allusion to *Coriolanus* leads on to the 'controlling hands' (*CPP*, 74) that follow. In her final showdown with her son, Volumnia says that Coriolanus has torn 'with thunder the wide cheeks of the air' (v.iii), but what the thunderous 'aethereal rumours' say to Eliot's Coriolanus intimates regenerative

possibilities. These Shakespearean 'rumours' suggest the impact of sound (*Coriolanus* is a play full of noise, voices, clamour, trumpets, rumours), which, along with the 'music' of Ariel's song, confirm that allusion and the auditory imagination are scarcely distinguishable in the acoustic arena of *The Waste Land*.

Eliot's understanding of Shakespeare changed radically in the late 1920s when he wrote his two most overtly Shakespearean poems. Under the influence of G. Wilson Knight's interpretations of the patterns in Shakespearean drama, Eliot argued that 'The whole of Shakespeare's work is *one* poem . . . united by one significant, consistent, and, developing personality' (*SE*, 203). 'Marina' and 'Coriolan', with their titles pointing towards *Pericles* and *Coriolanus*, mark this stage of Eliot's Shakespearean investment. Here allusions to Shakespeare are less invasive than pervasive. 'Marina' crosses the recognition scene from *Pericles*, described by Eliot as 'the speech of creatures who are more than human, or rather, seen in a light more than that of day',¹⁰ with the New England coastline of his childhood; crossing them again with a Latin epigraph from Seneca's *Hercules Furens* with its tragic allusion to another coast where Hercules in his madness kills his wife and sons.¹¹ Through the epigraph, Eliot keeps Senecan paternal terror in play within the paternal awe of Shakespeare's triumphant reunion of Marina with her father Pericles. The poem offers a free-floating, fugal variation on Shakespeare's recognition scene. It opens:

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

(*CPP*, 109)

'Shore' is a rich Shakespearean term, especially in the late romances. It appears twenty-one times in the plural ('shores'), five times in *Pericles*, once associated with Marina's apparent death and three times in association with her recovery and meeting with her father. In the main, however, the Shakespearean music of 'Marina' resigns itself to this influence without quotation. 'What images return' the poem says, and the allusions draw on a bank of Shakespearean imagery (the word 'image' itself returns over eighty times in his oeuvre) explicated by Wilson Knight's criticism. Eliot dedicated 'Marina' to Knight, who called the poem 'a perfect poetical commentary on those Shakespearean meanings which I had unveiled'.¹² But it is both more and less than commentary. Eliot's speaker, who longs to resign 'speech for that unspoken' (*CPP*, 110),

may be recalling Pericles' grief-stricken silence before his reunion with his daughter, anticipating a mirage-like human meeting. The poem's hallucinatory participial present tells us that Pericles is still at sea, while the phrase 'the sty of contentment' (*CPP*, 109) calls up Marina in the brothel, who speaks of fortune having placed her 'in this sty' praying that the 'gods / Would set me free' (iv.iv). The speaker's question 'What is this face, less clear and clearer / The pulse in the arm, less strong and stronger – Given or lent?' (*CPP*, 109) has roots in Pericles' question to Marina: 'But are you flesh and blood? Have you a working pulse' (v.i), gratefully exhibiting the debt Eliot owes to Shakespeare within the 'working pulse' of his poetry.

Pericles allowed Eliot to tune into a father–daughter story. 'Coriolan' turns on the mother–son relationship dramatised in *Coriolanus*. Grover Smith has said that 'Triumphal March', the first part of 'Coriolan', 'competes with *The Waste Land*' in its allusiveness, such that its difficulty could have been 'moderated by the judicious insertion of quotation marks'.¹³ The poem draws on Eliot's memories of London parades at the end of the First World War; an account in the *Daily Mail* of Benito Mussolini's march on Rome; extracts from Charles Maurras's *L'Avenir de l'intelligence* and the philosopher Edmund Husserl's *Ideas*; while the allusion in the title to Beethoven's *Coriolan* overture suggests a musically mediated relationship to Shakespeare (the overture was to Heinrich von Collin's 1802 play). Although it does not quote directly from *Coriolanus*, Eliot's dramatic collage incorporates some of the imagery and brazen music of Shakespeare's play, opening with a triumphal march in the streets of Rome:

Stone, bronze, stone, steel, stone, oakleaves, horses' heels
Over the paving.
And the flags. And the trumpets. And so many eagles.
How many? Count them. And such a press of people.
We hardly knew ourselves that day, or knew the City. (*CPP*, 127)

The poem is aligned with Wilson Knight's account of the play (which he sent to Eliot), emphasising a 'world of hard weapons, battle's clanging contacts, civic brawls', full of 'metallic' imagery and 'numerous weapons', through which 'Coriolanus strides gigantic, thunderously reverberating his aristocracy above the multitude'. Knight insists on the play's sounds and Eliot's poem, too, is sound conscious: its steel and trumpet flourishes recall the 'steel pikes' (v.vi) and funeral music at the end of the play. Further, 'Coriolan' reinforces Knight's claim that *Coriolanus* is 'not alone a play of iron, but of irony'.¹⁴ Eliot's poem places a partly ironic, anachronistic world of martial public images in counterpoint with more

vulnerable ones associated with the hero's feelings for his mother. 'Difficulties of a Statesman', the second part of 'Coriolan', begins: 'CRY what shall I cry?' (CPP, 129), and the word 'cry' recurs eight times in this poem and fourteen times in *Coriolanus*. Again, the Shakespearean allusions channel material that Eliot struggled with: not only his difficult relationship with his demanding mother, but his dissatisfactions with the Versailles Treaty, Fascist ideals of authority and the psycho-pathology of the political hero.¹⁵ Like 'Marina', the unfinished 'Coriolan' involves familial virtuosic re-castings of the Shakespearean drama it grew out of.

Ronald Bush has argued that in the two lectures on Shakespeare that Eliot delivered in Edinburgh in 1937, he was feeling his way not only towards a more visionary reading of Shakespeare's 'hidden music' but that of *Four Quartets*.¹⁶ The 'broken king' (CPP, 191) of 'Little Gidding' recalls the 'broken Coriolanus' of *The Waste Land*, but also Willoughby's account of King Richard II as 'a broken man' (II.i). The phrase 'History is now and England' (CPP, 197) is permeated by the presence of Shakespeare's history plays – notably Henry VI's 'now in England' (3*Henry VI* I.i) and Henry V's 'gentlemen in England now a-bed' (IV.iii) from the field at Agincourt. There is also a haunting allusion to Shakespeare in what Grover Smith has called 'the astonishing phalanx of allusions and imitations' lurking in the second movement of 'Little Gidding'.¹⁷ The spectral meeting with the 'familiar compound ghost' (CPP, 193) is a literary haunting, acknowledging in 'compound' a Dantean debt to Ezra Pound – 'il miglior fabbro' (CPP, 59) from the dedication to *The Waste Land* and a key influence on Eliot's allusive method. Grover Smith recognises 'that affable familiar ghost' of Shakespeare's Sonnet 86, a poem that asks, 'Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write / Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?', reflecting on the interconnection between literary competition and inspiration. Eliot's allusion surely touches on his rivalry with and debt to Shakespeare. The dawn parting of the compound ghost of 'Little Gidding' – 'And faded on the blowing of the horn' (CPP, 195) – creates an inter-textual rhyme with Marcellus' description of the disappearance of the ghost in *Hamlet*: 'It faded on the crowing of the cock' (I.i). The metrical ghost of 'the crowing of the cock' reminds us that *Hamlet*, like this Dantean episode, is concerned with the purgatorial. The ghost of Hamlet's father says he is 'confined to fast in fires, / Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature / Are burnt and purged away' (I.v), whereas the ghost in 'Little Gidding' says: 'From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit / Proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire' (CPP, 195). The episode's final auditory allusion compounds war-torn London with a reflex of Shakespeare's

haunted Denmark. The familiar (indeed insistently familial) ghost of Shakespeare is never far away in Eliot's poetry, moving, if not always to ragtime, then to the distinctive poetic rhythms of his twentieth-century individual talent.

NOTES

1. A. Walton Litz, 'The Allusive Poet: Eliot and his Sources', *T. S. Eliot: The Modernist in History*, ed. Ronald Bush (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 138.
2. 'A Note on Ezra Pound', *Today* (September 1918), 6.
3. Charles Warren's valuable survey of Eliot's critical writings on Shakespeare documents numerous articles discussing Eliot's 'reworking of Shakespeare in this or that poem'. See *T. S. Eliot on Shakespeare* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987), p. 88.
4. G. K. Hunter, *Dramatic Identities and Cultural Tradition: Studies in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Liverpool University Press, 1978), p. 299.
5. For example, compare Gerontion's 'Virtues / Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes' (*CPP*, 38) with 'Our means secure us, and our defects / prove our commodities' from *King Lear* (iv:i).
6. Grover Smith, *T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays* (University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 51.
7. Shakespeare makes ten other references to the rape of Philomel in his oeuvre, notably in *Titus Andronicus*.
8. Quoted in Lawrence Rainey, *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot's Contemporary Prose* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 97.
9. Grover Smith, *Eliot's Poetry and Plays*, p. 96.
10. Cited in Elizabeth Drew, *T. S. Eliot: The Design of his Poetry* (New York: Scribner, 1949), p. 127.
11. The Latin lines are translated by Jasper Heywood as 'What place is this? What region? Or of the world, what coast? / Where am I?', *Seneca: His Tenne Tragedies*, ed. Thomas Newton, intro. T. S. Eliot (London: Constable, 1927), p. 46.
12. G. Wilson Knight, 'Some Literary Impressions', *T. S. Eliot: The Man and the Work* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), p. 247.
13. Grover Smith, *Eliot's Poetry and Plays*, p. 160.
14. See G. Wilson Knight, *The Imperial Theme* (Oxford University Press, 1931), pp. 154–98.
15. Ronald Bush suggests that the poem dramatises 'Eliot's horror of both conforming and rebelling from the self-contained in his mother's eyes'. *T. S. Eliot: A Study in Character and Style* (Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 155.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 168–9.
17. Grover Smith, *Eliot's Poetry and Plays*, p. 290.