

T. S. Eliot's Chapman: "Metaphysical" Poetry and Beyond

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The significance of the Renaissance poet, dramatist, and translator George Chapman (?1559–1634) for T.S. Eliot has largely been overlooked.¹ Yet Chapman was a pivotal presence in Eliot's prose, and a continuing presence in his poetry, from the late 1910s until at least the early 1940s. When he was preparing a whittled-down version of section 3 of his *Selected Essays*, which was to be published in the U.S. as *Elizabethan Essays* in 1956, Eliot acknowledged that there were "two conspicuous omissions" from the volume. About the lack of an essay on John Webster he retained equanimity, but said:

I very much regret the fact that I did not, during that period of my life in which these essays were written, have occasion to write about the work of that very great poet and dramatist, George Chapman.²

It is the roots of this regret, the resonance and implication of Chapman's presence in Eliot's writing, which this article is concerned to articulate. In order to do so, I will focus particularly on the years 1919 to 1927. These are defining years which see the production of major essays on "metaphysical" poetry, reassessment of earlier critical ideas in the light of his move towards Christianity, and the relinquishment, at the end of this period, of his American citizenship. These are also the years in which Eliot's criticism is most intensively in dialogue with his poetry and in which his interest in the creation of a modern ritualistic drama emerges with the experiment of *Sweeney Agonistes* (1927).

In many of the collected essays in which Eliot seeks to establish his critical perspective across this intensive period, the name of Chapman recurs as a stimulus for debate. From "Imperfect Critics" (1919) through "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921), down to the Clark Lectures (1926), "Shakespeare and

the Stoicism of Seneca," and "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation" (both 1927), Chapman figures crucially in Eliot's thinking, as he seeks both to define the core of his own poetic, and also his fundamental ideas and beliefs. But Chapman figures crucially in several significant uncollected pieces by Eliot of this time, including review articles.

Review of this broad evidence suggests that Eliot responded to Chapman, and to the critical background surrounding that poet in the early years of the twentieth century, in several fundamental ways. Established in various texts as the major promoter of Senecan stoicism in English literature (Eliot only wrote at length on the other contender for this position, John Marston, in 1934), Chapman enables Eliot to consider his own worldview in these years as he moves towards adherence to Christian belief.³ Yet review of this evidence also suggests that Eliot was more ambivalent about the possibility of incorporating a temperamental stoicism within Christianity than critics of his work have hitherto contended. Through his engagement with Chapman, we find Eliot discovering a method in which a Senecan strain of figuration can be deployed alongside a recognizably Christian one, a strain of figuration that plays a key part in his work down to *Four Quartets* (1935–42). We also find Eliot establishing stoical characters as protagonists of his own early dramas, from *Sweeney* to at least *The Family Reunion* (1939), something derived from his own consideration, via Chapman, of the position of Senecan heroes in relation to tragic action.

Second, Chapman's work enabled Eliot to consider crucial issues relating to allusion in poetry, to allusion through translation from one language to another, and the relation of both to poetic "difficulty." It enabled him to consider the origins of his own allusiveness. More particularly, this engagement enabled him to propose how thought and ideas might be engaged with in lyric and dramatic verse, how poetry might be made to "refer outside" itself to more abstract intellectual issues. Chapman's reputation, from the editions in which Eliot read him, was that of the most difficult and obscure writer in the language, one whose ideas struggled to articulate themselves in poetic form. To this degree, Eliot's reading of Chapman allowed him to reflect upon his own practice and also to develop his own distinctive imagery and conceits relating to this specific poetic difficulty. In the final pages of this article, my contention will be that Chapman's own preoccupation with "obscuritie" and "vision" offers a unique range of figuration and perspective to Eliot, who in turn deploys similar insights when revising his poetic after *The Waste Land* (1922).

In each case Chapman's importance exceeds Eliot's own formulation of the "metaphysical." In "The Metaphysical Poets" review essay of 1921, of course, the "feeling" of Donne's poetry is perceived by Eliot as consonant with Chapman's:

In Chapman especially there is a direct sensuous application of thought, or recreation of thought into feeling, which is exactly what we find in Donne:

In this one thing, all the discipline
Of manners and of manhood is contained;
A man to join himself with th'Universe
In his main sway, and make all things fit
One with that All, and go on, round as it; [. . .] (*SE* 286)⁴

Eliot's choice of Clermont's speech on "the great Necessity," from Chapman's 1613 tragedy *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* (Act IV Sc. I), to illustrate "direct sensuous application of thought," is both surprising and telling. It reveals in his own mind at this time (as illustrated here and elsewhere, as we shall see) an interesting concatenation of "thought" with a stoical worldview. But crucially also, it involves "thought" in the realm of translation and allusion. Clermont's stoicism, which lends him a Hamlet-like hesitation over enacting revenge for his brother's death, is given voice through Chapman's familiar method of directly translating classical (here Epictetus), or earlier Renaissance sources, as part of his own poetry.

This method, advertised most transparently by Chapman through such mechanisms as the inclusion of Notes to his 1594 poems *The Shadow of Night*, is something I will reflect upon in the second half of this article.⁵ Initially, however, I wish to dwell upon the implications of "great Necessity," as figured by Chapman, in Eliot's critical thought and poetry after *The Waste Land*. Chapman's work has a multifaceted role in Eliot's discovery of a new lyric distillation after 1922 and in the movement of Eliot's poetic interest eventually towards drama.⁶ The two sides of his creative output are reviewed within the orbit of Chapman, Dostoevsky (with whom, as we shall see, Chapman was several times linked by Eliot), and Dante, in a letter of 30 November 1924 to Ottoline Morrell. This letter was written in response to Morrell's approbation of some drafts of *The Hollow Men* (1925) which Eliot had included in earlier correspondence (he had sent "We are the hollow men" and "Eyes that last I saw in tears"):

They are part of a larger sequence which I am doing—I laid down the principles of it in a paper I read at Cambridge, on Chapman, Dostoevski & Dante—and which is a sort of *avocation* to a much more revolutionary thing I am working on. (qtd. in *Varieties* 151–52, n. 40)

At this stage, the distilled lyrics of this period seemed to Eliot a comparatively minor project compared with *Sweeney Agonistes*. The lyrics themselves, some of which were incorporated into the final version of *The Hollow Men* in 1925, had appeared in print as "Doris's Dream Songs" in *Chapbook* (November 1924) and as "Three Poems" in the January 1925 *Criterion*.⁷

A succession of critics, since at least Helen Gardner's 1950 *The Art of T.S. Eliot*, have seen the emergence of these lyrics in the years following the publication of *The Waste Land* as co-terminus with Eliot's acknowledgment of his Christian faith. Ronald Bush's impressive chapter on these lyrics, which centers itself, as Gardner does, on the Dante references, goes so far as to adopt as its title "New Life" (*Study* 81–101).⁸ From this perspective, Bush is confident about our knowledge of the significance of Chapman (and Dostoevsky) for Eliot across these transitional years. Pointing not only to the November 1924 letter to Morrell but also to the descriptions of Chapman in the 1926 Clark Lectures *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry* and the 1934 essay on John Marston, Bush diagnoses Chapman's presence as contributing to a notion of what Eliot calls "doubleness" in drama. To quote from the Marston essay:

What distinguishes poetic drama from prosaic drama is a kind of doubleness in the action, as if it took place on two planes at once [. . .] We sometimes feel, in following the words and behaviour of some of the characters of Dostoevsky, that they are living at once on the plane that we know and on some other plane of reality from which we are shut out. [. . .] More fitfully, and with less power, this doubleness appears in the work of Chapman. (*Study* 94, *SE* 229)⁹

Within this critical perspective, through Chapman (and alongside him Dostoevsky and Dante) Eliot was already discovering across these crucial years that quality which was to determine the centrality of Shakespeare in his thought from the 1930s onward. In the first of the unpublished lectures on "The Development of Shakespeare's Verse," given at the University of Edinburgh in 1937, for instance, we find him describing the "great speeches" in Shakespeare (compared here with one from *The Revenger's Tragedy* [1607] and some "in the great tragedies of Chapman") as "those in which a person is speaking, not out of character, but beyond character [. . .] it has the impersonality of something which simply utters itself." In the second lecture, he asserts that "brooding over" *King Lear*, *Measure for Measure*, *Timon*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and "the group of late plays" has brought him to believe that from *Hamlet* onward Shakespeare was perceiving "dimly" "another plane of emotion, apprehensible through the music of the play" (Lecture 1, 9; lecture 2, 10).¹⁰ This is a music towards which his own dramatic protagonists at least aspire: Harry, in *The Family Reunion* (1939), is notably set apart by his pathological need to "be awake, / To be living on several planes at once" (82).

This is a quality, "plane," or "pattern," of course, which critics like Gardner and Bush, and Lyndall Gordon's biography, have been anxious to harness, when perceiving Eliot's "new life" as one which emanated in a poetic of Christian reconciliation. For readers of Eliot in this vein, the key passage is that in the essay published in 1927, the year of his acceptance into the Christian communion, "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca":

Stoicism is the refuge for the individual in an indifferent or hostile world too big for him; it is the permanent substratum of a number of versions of cheering oneself up. Nietzsche is the most conspicuous modern instance of cheering oneself up. The stoical attitude is the opposite of Christian humility. (*SE* 131–32)¹¹

The distinction is seemingly clear for the new convert. And yet, in this same year, 1927, we find Eliot re-weighing the key question of the relation of poetry, philosophy, and belief in his review of Frank L. Schoell's *Études sur l'Humanisme Continental en Angleterre à la fin de la Renaissance*, a work that exposes Chapman's allusive method when promulgating his Senecan philosophy. To an extent, Eliot's reflections, via Schoell, on this method deepen that fraught disenchantment with "the metaphysicals" Donne and Chapman, and the seemingly concerted shift of interest towards Dante, which had surfaced at points in the Clark Lectures of the year before.¹² Eliot's review of Schoell's book attempts a similar displacement of, and distancing from, this key early influence for himself. Chapman's practice of "lifting bodily" passages from Italian scholars and translators of classical texts confirms, we are told, the belief to which, Eliot claims, "some of us were inclined before," that Chapman was "emotional" rather than "intellectual." He took little "trouble to do much thinking for himself":

Chapman was, in fact, an illustrious example of that numerous tribe—very numerous in the Renaissance—for whom the value of a philosophy resides in the subjective emotion which they can relevantly or irrelevantly impose upon it. ("Sources" 88)

Eliot at this time is debating within himself, in other words, not just the relation between "subjective emotion" and "philosophy" or "pattern." In "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca" in the same year he could insouciantly declare the opposite view to that propelling his criticism here of Chapman: "In truth neither Shakespeare nor Dante did any real thinking—that was not their job" (*SE* 136). At this point, therefore, the relation among terms like "stoicism," "pattern," and "Christian humility" might be more fluid, as Eliot seems to speculate whether his own writing is that of a "psychologist," like Donne (or Proust), or a philosophical or religious poet. The clear assertion in the essay of a distinction between Shakespeare and Seneca (and Eliot's implied favoring of "humility" over "cheering oneself up") might not be so clear-cut as it seems.

Indeed, however much it carefully locates and annotates Chapman's sources, Schoell's book does not encourage any such sanguine sense of choice in these matters. Commenting on the "veine de stoicisme intermittent" which he, along with others, perceives as key to Chapman and other English Renaissance figures, Schoell concludes that

Ce stoïcisme, à vrai dire, est parfois si fort teinté de christianisme qu'on ne sait trop si c'est une voix chrétienne ou une voix franchement stoïcienne qui se fait entendre. (99)¹³

In Chapman, identified by Eliot in "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca" as being (along with Marston) "peculiarly Senecan," the issue of the relation between stoicism and Christianity is particularly stark. His inveterate and extensive allusiveness often makes it unclear (as it is often unclear in Eliot) what the origin and nature of the poetic voice we are hearing through the poetry might be (*SE* 129).¹⁴

While Eliot's review was silent on this intermingling of Christian and classical sensibilities as perceived in Schoell's argument, there is broad evidence from his own secondary reading on Chapman, and precise evidence from the conceits deployed in his own poetry, that he was at ease with a Chapman-like cross-fertilization of the two sensibilities. As Frederick S. Boas noted in 1905, most particularly in the death speeches of Chapman's tragic protagonists, there is a crossing of the "modern" plot of the drama, and its Christian world-view, with classical mythological echoes (often "lifted bodily" from their sources) to create energies "born anew" (xxx). To take Boas's specific example: at the end of *Bussy d'Ambois* (1607), a play which dramatizes political infighting among the French nobility, Bussy as he lies dying speaks in conceits which elaborately interweave "ancient" and "modern." He does this in a passage which Eliot picks up in "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca" (as many times elsewhere, as will become clear), and which he presents as emblematic of all stoicism in the English Renaissance. Bussy displays an "attitude of self-dramatisation" in which he at the last projects his place within a wider order of things:

Flee, where the evening from th'Iborean vales,
Takes on her swarthy shoulders *Heccate*
Croud with a grove of oakes; flye where men feele
The burning axletree: and those that suffer
Beneath the chariot of the Snowy Beare:
And tell them all that *d'Ambois* now is hasting
To the eternall dwellers [...]. (V. 3. 145–51)¹⁵

As Boas was the first to note, in this edition of the play cited by Eliot in the Conclusion to *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933), the lines given here to Bussy are closely adapted by Chapman from the Chorus's commentary upon Hercules's agony in Seneca's tragedy *Hercules Oetaeus* (iii; *UPUC* 147).

Raymond B. Waddington has demonstrated that in these lines Chapman is drawing upon an association familiar to Renaissance mythographers, including Francis Bacon, whereby Hercules, on account of his voyage to free Prometheus, was associated with the Christian Word's quest to free the flesh

into spirit (*Mind's Empire* 33–34). This consonance between Hercules and Christianity is precisely the mythography that Eliot was himself to draw upon in the Pentecostal section IV of *Little Gidding* (1942):

Love is the unfamiliar Name
Behind the hands that wove
The intolerable shirt of flame
Which human power cannot remove. (*CP* 207–08)

Hercules's donning of the shirt of flame sent to him by his wife in revenge for his infidelities, as reported in Act 3 of *Hercules Oetaeus*, is re-rendered by Eliot as an extraordinary predicate of all suffering for the Word. Eliot's "human power" is a nice distinction, reflecting upon the fact that Hercules alive is not to achieve that deification promised him on completion of his labors, while also prioritizing the Christian over pagan mythological spiritualities.

This Chapman-like interweaving of the Senecan/Herculean with Christian reconciliation is, of course, something that Eliot had explored earlier in *Marina* (1930). There, he placed a version of Hercules's lines from Seneca's other play about this hero, *Hercules Furens*, lines upon waking from the reverie in which he had been forced, whilst maddened by Juno, to kill his own children, at the start ("What seas what shores what grey rocks and what islands"). Eliot added Seneca's original line as the poem's epigraph when he typed up his first draft ("Quis hic locus, quae region, quae mundi plaga?").¹⁶

In a note written to accompany the manuscript of *Marina* upon its submission to a library in Oxford in 1930, Eliot explained the "crisscross" he intended between the poem's title and its epigraph—the Shakespearian motifs suggesting humility before the recognition and redemption of the living child, the Senecan a murderous denial of such possibility.¹⁷ What this explanation implies is that the poem's journey towards the scarce-conceived hope of yielding the self to something beyond (the "new world"—in every sense—mentioned in the poem's first draft) is crossed by its immediate thwarting, at least in Eliot's own mind. The possibility that *Marina's* rhetoric thinly veils a vaingloriousness on the part of its speaker, a ridiculous and hollow form of "self-dramatization," is confirmed by the presence of a further intertext for these lines in Eliot.

In the version of Seneca's lines rendered in Chapman's 1608 *The Conspiracy of Charles, Duke of Byron* (I.i), the protagonist (whose Herculean credentials are in the process of being established by analogy) has brokered a peace between French King Henri IV and the Archduke of Austria. As he enters, triumphant at his feat, Byron is accompanied by a procession and "loud music," and says:

What place is this? what air? what region?
In which a man may hear the harmony
Of all things moving? Hymen marries here

The inversion of Herculean bewilderment, as rendered by Seneca, here registers the emptiness of the proclaimed unity and “harmony”; Byron blindly ignores the fate to which Hercules is brought, in order to vaunt the success of his own labors. What the Chapman echo of Seneca might urge us towards is further understanding of the ways in which Eliot was aware that the “hope” proclaimed at the end of *Marina* might become corrupted into sham rhetoric.

The issue that the re-echoing “crisscross” note resonating behind Eliot’s own reworking of Seneca in his poem seems most to raise is whether recourse to allusion displays (as it seems to in Chapman’s sarcastic gifting of Hercules’s words to Byron), however obscurely, a facet of the psychology of the belated writer. Why and when is a writer open to a particular source, original or intermediate? Does the allusion to one specific source, as in the *Marina* example, create reverberations between intermediate versions of that source of which we know the later writer was aware?¹⁸ The burden of Chapman’s “thought,” principally his stoicism, is carried via his allusion and seamless translations into his own work. How far is this true for Eliot as he moves beyond *The Waste Land*? More broadly, how does Chapman’s allusiveness impact upon Eliot’s thinking in this area?

Aside from his presence in "The Metaphysical Poets" essay, with its formal injunction that, given the pressure of particular contemporary event, poets in the early twentieth century must become "more allusive," Chapman consistently forms a point of departure across the period from the late 1910s to early 1930s when Eliot thinks about the issue of allusion. Chapman is consistently mentioned when Eliot considers the bases of allusion in a poet's sensibility, specifically when Eliot speculates about the ways in which allusion might emerge from the unconscious. Interestingly, Eliot deploys in each of these speculations outside "The Metaphysical Poets" not the word "allusion" to describe the process, but "saturation"—a word carrying at this time resonances from chemistry and physics. Such resonances suggest a technical intention in Eliot's use of the word correlative to his use of "catalyst" to describe the poet's function in the contemporaneous "Tradition and the Individual Talent."¹⁹

So, lamenting in a Summer 1919 article in *The Egoist* the lack of visible recourse to tradition in contemporary writing (“No dead voices speak through the living voice, no reincarnation, no re-creation”), Eliot’s own mind turns to Bussy’s dying speech:

Not even the *saturation* which sometimes combusts spontaneously into originality.
 fly where men feel
 The cunning axletree: and those that suffer
 Beneath the chariot of the snowy Bear

is beautiful, and the beauty only appears more substantial if we conjecture that Chapman may have absorbed the recurring phrase of Seneca in

signum celsi glaciale poli
septem stellis Arcados ursae
lucem vero termone vocat . . .

sub cardine

glacialis ursae [. . .]

a union, at a point at least, of the Tudor and the Greek through the Senecan phrase. ("Reflections" 39)²⁰

Eliot's point here is presumably that by establishing, during their dying moments, their place in the world, which seems one of stoical endurance towards the condition of things, such heroes across "Tradition" provide us with a series of mediatory points which can lead us back to some original (Greek) understanding of the human situation. It is a point, of course, familiar from the third of Pound's "Three Cantos" (published in 1917 and later reworked as Canto I), and from the same writer's 1918 series of articles on "Early Translators of Homer" (*P* 242–45; *LE* 249–75).

But the continuing and recurring significance of Chapman's "fly where men feel [. . .]" as exemplum of this for Eliot is confirmed when, in his 1927 Preface to *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies*, he quotes both Seneca and Chapman's lines to confirm that some "phrases haunt us more than we expect" (*SE* 74). Then, in the Conclusion to *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, when pondering how in Shakespeare "the right imagery, saturated while it lay in the depths of Shakespeare's memory, will rise like Anadyomene from the sea," he surprisingly switches course to quote again the Bussy speech and its Senecan origins, before continuing that

There is the first probability that this imagery had some personal saturation value, so to speak, for Seneca; another for Chapman, and another for myself, who have borrowed it twice from Chapman. I suggest that what gives it such intensity as it has in each case is its saturation—I will not say with 'associations', for I do not want to revert to Hartley—but with feelings too obscure for the authors even to know quite what they are. And of course only a part of an author's imagery comes from his reading. It comes from the whole of his sensitive life since early childhood. (149)

"Saturation" (or saturation within saturation here) therefore would seem to open the process of allusion to both unconscious propensity (the surface/depth model) and to a lifetime of experience. The choice of a certain allusion over others depends upon inclination or formation within the writer her or himself.

Such repeated instances of this single example from Chapman in Eliot's discussion of this issue lead us to revisit his seeming dismissal of such as Donne

and Chapman in the Clark lectures. Reading back through Eliot's reflection, via Chapman, on a broader interpretation of allusion as "saturation," we might perceive some of his statements in the Clark lectures in a more positive (or at least equivocal) light:

[Donne's] fraction of thought into thoughts means that the only thing that holds his poems, or any one poem, together, is what we call unsatisfactorily the personality of Donne. In this, he is a modern poet. (*Varieties* 155)

Eliot's "personality," as evidenced by his recurrent allusion to Chapman's allusion to Seneca, and his temperamental interest in its stoical emotional situation had, after all, already been revealed in several ways through Eliot's reading by this point, and in his early direct poetic allusions to the Chapman passage.

"Gerontion" has "De Bailhache, Fresca, Mrs. Cammel, whirled / Beyond the current of the shuddering Bear / In fractured atoms / [. . .] White feathers in the snow." "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar" has the narrator reflecting on the former after his liaison with Princess Volupine that "the God Hercules / Had left him, that had loved him well. / / The horses, under the axletree / Beat up the dawn" (*CP* 31, 32). In both instances, Eliot seems fascinated by the dramatic gap between his persona's actual situation and the rhetorical extravagance with which it might be captured in poetry. In the "Burbank" instance, of course, as in Chapman's use of allusion in Byron's speech, this results in huge comedic irony. What seems to draw Eliot throughout is that mixture of moment-of-death desperate self-projection and concomitant bewildered acceptance of that which derives from Chapman's Senecan saturation.²¹

Such mixing as a particular facet of Eliot's own allusiveness seems present in the ways in which Eliot first encountered Chapman's poetry and drama, in the editions from the turn of the century which we know he had on his bookshelves, and to which he referred in his articles of this time. The Conclusion to *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* notably takes its citation of Bussy's speech from Boas's 1905 edition; in citing the passage in his previous work, Eliot notes, "I had an inaccurate text."²² That text is identifiable as the Mermaid edition of *The Plays of George Chapman*, edited by William Lyon Phelps, first published in 1895, which contains the adjective "cunning" rather than "burning" regarding the world's axletree (the Mermaid volume is listed as being on Eliot's shelves in the Bodleian's partial inventory). Both these words have a significant place in Eliot's mature poetry. "Cunning," of course, is key to the world-wide view of "history" established by Gerontion ("History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors"); across his career, "burning" resonated for Eliot with the passionate sufferings of the saintly, as most famously mediated via St. Augustine at the end of section III of *The Waste Land* ("To Carthage then I came / / Burning burning burning burning") (*CP* 30, 64).

Phelps's introduction to his selection is notably negative about the dramatic qualities of Chapman's writing, finding that the poet's learning blights too many speeches with obscurity. Unsurprisingly for us, though, he draws attention to the protagonists' dying speeches in the tragedies as those places in which Chapman's poetry is at its strongest. Discussing Byron's death, Phelps concludes:

The Duke, finally confronted with the actual presence of death, feels his wonted bravado forsaking him; he alternates between piteous supplication and reckless defiance, his soul torn with conflicting passions. (22)²³

That piteousness mixed with supplication might be read into Gerontion, "an old man in a dry month"; it looks forward tonally across Eliot's poetry as far as the hopeful assertion of pattern against chaos ("All shall be well") in the final movement of *Four Quartets*. The sources of such inclinations within a poet's "personality," her or his temperament and experience, are, as *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* acknowledges, perhaps "too obscure" to articulate. Phelps was not alone, though, in perceiving a conflict between Chapman the playwright's philosophical "subtlety," his "inner life," and the need to achieve poetic coherence and expressiveness.²⁴ His learning, Phelps claims, often leaves him "tongue-tied."

These issues would seem if anything exacerbated in Chapman's poetry. This is something foregrounded in the introduction to Chapman's poems, the so-called "Minor Poems & Translations" volume of the collected edition which began publication in 1875, which Eliot possessed. This long introduction, which takes in both the plays and the poems, was by the poet A.C. Swinburne. When the introduction was reprinted as part of a posthumous selection of Swinburne's works called *Contemporaries of Shakespeare* in 1919, Eliot acclaimed it as "the best we have on that great poet." But Swinburne's argument displays also, Eliot claims, Swinburne's "infirmities" as a critic, his inability either to "penetrate the heart and marrow" of his subject or to find adequate comparisons for his qualities in other writers: "Chapman is a difficult author, as Swinburne says; he is far more difficult than Jonson [. . .] He is difficult beyond his obscurity" (*SW* 18–19). Such difficulty, Eliot argues, comes from what Chapman shares with Donne (and Webster, Tourneur, Marlowe, and Shakespeare), something that Swinburne's Pre-Raphaelite soft-centeredness fails to notice, his "quality of sensuous thought, or of thinking through the senses" (*SW* 18–19).²⁵ However, in his eagerness to offer his first formulation of that "unity" which he was famously to conceive as definitive to metaphysical poetry generally, Eliot somewhat overrides the distinctions Swinburne draws between poetic difficulty and poetry as a medium of thought. These are distinctions which, in fact, resonate with Eliot's own later thoughts on the matter.

Swinburne perceives Chapman as displaying the kinds of "metaphysical" unity which have become familiar to us through Eliot. He characterizes the poems as "full of earnest thought, of passionate energy," written by "a man of genius." But he also sees Chapman as having an "encrusted mind." Chapman's "vigorous but unfixed and chaotic intellect," his being "overcharged with overflowing thoughts" lead him to work the "most gloriously obscure in style" that Swinburne says he has ever read and written about. Chapman is "not sufficiently possessed by any one leading idea, or attracted towards any one central point." Swinburne, like Phelps, finds comparison between Chapman and Browning. But he sees Browning in comparison as having falsely been accused of obscurity by the critics, since his work—unlike Chapman's—displays a "decisive and incisive faculty for thought" (*Contemporaries* 25).²⁶

Swinburne's essay looks forward in precise terms to the skepticism expressed by Eliot about Donne and Chapman in the Clark lectures of 1926 and to the reflections on Chapman's thought and its mediated origins in Continental humanism in Eliot's reviews of 1925–27. Most tellingly, perhaps, it diagnoses Chapman's "difficulty" as deriving from the impact of his "philosophy" or "ideas" upon his poetic style. Swinburne's discussion of obscurity spans the twin poles of Eliot's poetic between "The Metaphysical Poets" in 1921 and 1923's "*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth." In the former, while Eliot grants that "it is not a permanent necessity that poets should be interested in philosophy," he goes on in his next sentence to argue that, in current conditions, they "must be *difficult*" (*SE* 289). In the essay on Joyce, myth seems to stand in for that "leading idea" which Swinburne sees Chapman as lacking²⁷ and which it would seem that Eliot in these years around the publication of *The Waste Land*, was clearly anxious that he lacked also. What we find in Eliot's early engagement with Chapman via Swinburne, therefore, is an immediate dramatization of the complexities and dangers involved in translating an established and elaborately responsive worldview into poetic form.

For Chapman himself, of course, "obscuritie" was the essence of what he was fascinated by. As the dedicatory epistle to the long poem "Ovid's Banquet of Sense" has it,

Obscuritie in affection of words, & indigested concets, is pedanticall and childish; but where it shroudeth it selfe in the hart of his subject, uttered with fitness of figure, and expressive Epethites; with that darknes wil I still labour to be shadowed: rich Minerals are digd out of the bowels of the earth, not in the superficies and dust of it [. . .]. (239–40)

This association of obscurity with "concets [. . .] fitness of figure [. . .] expressive Epethites" is not dissimilar from Eliot's sense of the prescription upon "poets in our civilization" in "The Metaphysical Poets":

The poet must be more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning . . . Hence we get something which looks very much like the conceit—we get, in fact, a method curiously similar to that of the “metaphysical poets”, similar also in the use of obscure words and of simple phrasing. (*SE* 289)

In Chapman, of course, who was at least associated with the hermetic circle around Walter Raleigh and Thomas Harriot, with its fascination for arcane learning and possibly alchemy, such obscurity went along with a dismissal of the *profanum vulgus* and the belief that poetry is addressed solely to a narrow coterie. “You have actually meanes to sound the philosophical conceites,” Chapman wrote to Matthew Royden, another member of this circle, in the dedicatory epistle to his “Ovid,” because Royden is “acquainted long since with the true habit of Poesie.” While it would be possible to project such frequent Renaissance celebrations of obscurity into the much-debated elitist intention of the twentieth-century modernist avant-garde,²⁸ it is more pertinent here to dwell upon the distinctive epithets and figures Chapman’s passion for “obscuritie” presents to the reader, and to consider their possible relevance for Eliot’s own particular “conceits” in the early-mid- 1920s and beyond. I want to suggest that, however much Chapman and the contemporary editions of his work uniquely taught Eliot that allusion always operates in the orbit of “obscurity” and “difficulty,” there is a vein in Chapman’s own conceits that is taken up into Eliot’s imagery, crucially in *The Waste Land* and the revised poetic thereafter.

The play upon “darknes” in Chapman’s epistle, in connection with “obscuritie,” is typical: unlike Shakespeare, Donne, and other Renaissance writers, for whom night is a place of chaos, error, and uncertainty, for Chapman night is the time in which enlightenment is to be found.²⁹ In the “Hymnus in Noctem,” part of Chapman’s first verse volume *The Shadow of Night* (1594) (the volume, along with the Ovid poem, called by Eliot in a 1925 review, “obscure and most beautiful” [“Wanley” 907]³⁰), we find many injunctions towards reversing the expected order of things:

Kneele then with me, fall worme-like on the ground,
 And from th’infectious dunghill of this Round,
 From men’s brasse wits, and golden foolerie,
 Weepe, weepe your soules, into felicitie:
 Come to this house of mourning, serve the night,
 To whom pale day (with whoredome soked quite)
 Is but a drudge, selling her beauties use
 To rapes, adultries, and all abuse. (ln. 324–30)

Daylight consciousness is painful; fertility leads to abuse and corruption, as in the injunction to night to prevent the sun and “suffer no more his lustfull rayes

to get / The Earth with issue" (ln. 264–66). Chapman's conceit here is a reversal as marvellous as that effected at the start of *The Waste Land*, where "breeding" of any kind is similarly traumatic. Earth's day in the "Hymnus" is figured as maimed, emasculated, and incoherent like that in Eliot's sequence: "what makes men without the parts of men, / Or in their manhoods, lesse then children, / But manlesse natures?" (ln. 91–92). From this perspective, the "darknes," that *via negativa* derived from St. John of the Cross, which Eliot later explores in *East Coker* ("I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you / Which shall be the darkness of God" [CP 188]) is freighted by something of the resonance in its reversal ("so the darkness shall be the light") particular to Chapman's *The Shadow of Night* and other works.

The challenge of the "obscuritie" rejoiced in by Chapman is paradoxically, then, that of attaining a true perspective or knowledge of "sound" poetic conceits amid such existential difficulty. He opens a way to a primarily allegorical poetry which is partly the shift that Eliot's own work makes after *The Waste Land*, through *The Hollow Men* and *Ash Wednesday* (1930), an allegorical poetry in which the worlds of dream and artifice stand in for, and refer back to, the more realistic early twentieth-century world of the earlier work. Yet at the same time Chapman foregrounds the whole issue of perspective and understanding as the ethical testing places for both poet and reader. Like other Renaissance playwrights and poets, including Webster and Jonson, Chapman was drawn to what he called in "Ovid's Banquet" "opticke reason." The scene of this poem is set around "Corynnas bathing place," as Ovid (in a drama that we would describe as Keatsian) gazes upon, then seeks to woo, the naked Corynna. The poem, taken by many as a rebuke to the Ovidian sensuality prevalent in others' poetry of the period, and perhaps as a direct criticism of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, is a detailed exposition of the dangers of desire as sparked through the five senses. However, Chapman educates his reader into understanding the potentially misleading, or ambivalent, nature of what is perceived as early as the poem's third stanza, in the description of the bathing pool itself:

Stone *Niobe*, whose statue to this Fountaine,
 In great *Augustus Caesars* grace was brought
 From *Sypilus*, the steepe *Mygdonian* Mountaine:
 That statue tis still weepes for former thought,
 Into thys spring *Corynnas* bathing place;
 So cunningly to opticke reason wrought,
 That a farre of, it shewd a womans face,
 Heavie, and weeping; but more nearly viewed,
 Nor weeping, heavy, nor a woman shewed.

From a distant perspective, the pool reflects the reality informing the statue's weeping into it: Niobe's grief at the death of her children, brought upon them

by her foolish pride. “*Corynnas* bathing place” itself, when seen from this perspective, seems a warning to her, Ovid, and the reader of the sadness foreshadowed in any trusting to the senses alone, or to a correlative human vanity. “Opticke reason” reveals the truth behind an appearance, however beautiful.

While this kind of allegorical figuration, dependent upon perspective, in Chapman as elsewhere in Renaissance writing and iconography, might be expected to engage the Eliot focused by Bradleyan philosophy, it is important to note the potential for revelation which this particular conceit of the weeping face (often a woman’s), rightly seen, holds for Chapman. As earlier cited, “Hymnus in Noctem” contains in its final movements the injunction to “Weepe, weepe your soules, into felicitie” (ln. 327). In *Euthymae Raptus; Or the Teares of Peace* (1609), Peace herself weeps throughout at the death of “human love,” whose coffin she carries under her arm, and whose funeral oration the poet declares himself unable to deliver, “Since Teares want words, & words want teares to weepe” (ln. 1206). In Act V Scene 1 of the tragedy *The Revenge of Bussy d’Ambois*, the mistress of the protagonist literally weeps herself into blindness upon hearing of his false arrest:

[. . .] those loveliest eyes
 (Through which a soul looked so divinely loving,
 Tears nothing uttering her distress enough)
 She wept quite out, and like two falling stars
 Their dearest sights quite vanished with her tears. (ln. 144–48; Phelps 301)³¹

While the indebtedness of Eliot’s lean poems from 1921–25, including “Doris’s Dream Songs,” to Dante’s grief at the death of Beatrice in the *Vita Nuova* and to his encounter with her in the *Paradiso* have been well attested, it is perhaps important to note the recurrence of the image of the woman’s face in tears, and of the transformative power of tears, in Chapman, another of Eliot’s proclaimed sources for his work in this period. The speaker in Eliot’s “Eyes that last I saw in tears” suffers his own perspectival “affliction,” as when “The golden vision reappears / I see the eyes but not the tears.” Like Ovid in Chapman’s poem, he is beguiled by the allurements of “vision” into not seeing the grief truly belonging to beauty. When “The eyes outlast a little while” the tears, impending blindness waits upon that grief, a sense that here in hell vision itself is momentary. In section I of “The Hollow Men,” it is “Those who have crossed / With direct eyes” to paradise who are those alone to rightly perceive “the hollow men.” “The eyes are not here,” hope is empty; unlike Clermont’s mistress’s “falling stars,” the only “hope” is that the eyes appear as “the perpetual star” (CP 137, 39).

What is not granted by Eliot here is that snatched-at potential (“reality” via “opticke reason,” as revealed at “*Corynnas* bathing place”) envisioned ten years later in the drained pool in part I of *Burnt Norton*, where echoes in the

memory are suddenly seen reflected: "Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged, / And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight" (178). Even here, though, vision is not ensured, since, in a crossing of Mallarmé with that keyword from the "saturating" passage of *Bussy*, "Garlic and sapphires in the mud / Clod the bedded axletree."

What the *Quartets* read as a whole, with their Chapman-like swift interchange of mood and mode, are striving towards is that sustaining, authorizing, informing presence that arrives only seven years later in the Pentecostal encounter with the Brunetto Latini figure in the blitzed streets of London at war in section II of *Little Gidding*. Whilst Dante's "familiar" spirit from *Inferno* XV (when crossed with sentiments from Yeats) informs the content of the encounter, Eliot's concern to establish the precise location of it, "Between three districts whence smoke arose," perhaps contains a residual reminiscence of Chapman. Chapman narrates an encounter with his informing spirit, Homer, when he celebrates a similar lull in fighting (the 1609 truce between Spain and the Netherlands) in *The Teares of Peace*:

I am (sayd hee) that spirit *Elysian*,
That (in thy native ayre; and on the hill
Nexte *Hitchins* left hand) did thy bosome fill,
With such a flood of soule [. . .]. (ln. 75–78)³²

The year 1609 saw also the end of Chapman's prolonged translation of Homer's *Iliades*. Chapman's suggestion in *The Teares* that Homer himself had a "worthy hand" in inspiring the English version (ln. 1208) contains a similar sense to that of Eliot's "compound ghost"; here, that translation (especially after many centuries) leads to the original figure finding words "I never thought to speak / In streets I never thought I should revisit" (204, 205).³³ As in Eliot's encounter, Chapman's visitation from Homer is enabling in that it allows him to recognize and express realities that would otherwise range beyond his poetic scope:

Where I am just, and knowe I honour Truth,
Ile speake my thoughts, in scorne of what ensu'th.
Yet (not resolv'd in th'other) there did shine
A beame of *Homers* fre'er soule, in mine,
That made me see, I might propose my doubt;
Which was; if this were true Peace I found out [. . .]. (ln. 172–77)

This sense that the dramatic embodiment of an informed and thence informing poetic spirit might bring access to a fuller understanding and knowledge is, of course, proximate to the role played by the Senecan voices (and Clermont in *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* is the most determined presentation of Senecan man) in Chapman's tragedies. Chapman's plays, like Eliot's, concertedly reveal through their principle characters the truths that lie beyond the ordinariness

of the everyday. In terms of Eliot's own impulsion from 1923 onwards towards the invention of a viable modern ritualistic drama, therefore, Chapman might be seen to have had a "worthy hand" in allowing him initially to consider the development of a protagonist—which he does from *Sweeney Agonistes* through *Murder in the Cathedral* and *The Family Reunion*—whose eye is consistently on the "pattern," the larger reality.

Eliot's "new life" after *The Waste Land*, his concern to engage "several planes," which is central to his development towards the drama, is everywhere "crisscrossed" by this sense that understanding is dependent upon perspective ("opticke reason"). But it also includes a Senecan sense, derived in him initially from Chapman in the English tradition,³⁴ that reality is to be perceived from outside the everyday. It may seem absurd to write so singularly of the impact of one Renaissance poet and dramatist upon Eliot, whose poetry and criticism displays throughout his career that broad knowledge of the period which he admired in one of his earliest influences in this regard, A.C. Swinburne (*SW* 20). But the overlooked importance of Chapman offers scope for further reflection. Especially at the moment in which Eliot was both reflecting upon his own method in *The Waste Land* and seeking to move his poetic forward across the 20s, Chapman's impact extends beyond the various kinds of "doubleness" Eliot himself perceived when seeking to define the "metaphysical" in poetry and the poetic aspects of drama. It involves those key issues of stoicism's relation to Christianity, of allusion and comprehension, which are central to his reflections upon his earlier output and to the emergence of his later poetic, across these years.

Notes

1. When discussing Eliot's complex relationship with the English Renaissance, it is the significance of Chapman's junior, John Donne, both within Eliot's own poetry and in his key critical formulations, which was acknowledged from very early on. Brooker cites only two references to Chapman (and even manages to confuse George with the later critic John Chapman); there are twenty-four references to Donne.
2. The phrase also appears in the Preface to the U.K. version of Eliot's essays on this subject, *Elizabethan Dramatists* (7).
3. Eliot would seem to have been contemplating writing an essay on Seneca—or his influence—since at least 1922, as he mentions in a letter of 12 May to Richard Aldington that Bruce Richmond (editor of the *TLS*) has been "angelic" "about my repeated delays in producing an article on Seneca" (*Letters* 525).
4. Eliot described a similar consonance between thought and feeling in Chapman several times, including "John Donne" (332) and "Thinking in Verse" (441).
5. Raymond B. Waddington has argued that Eliot might have been influenced, when he thought of adding notes to *The Waste Land* in order to expand the text for the Liveright book publication, by Chapman's practice in *The Shadow of Night* ("T.S. Eliot's Reading of George Chapman" 26–28).

Waddington surmises that Eliot became familiar with Chapman's work while he prepared his Extension Lectures on "Elizabethan Literature" in 1918. Ronald Schuchard has established, however, that Eliot's copy of Chapman's poems, including *The Shadow of Night*, was *The Works of George Chapman: Poems and Minor Translations* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1904), suggesting, perhaps, an earlier familiarity (*Varieties* 226 n. 49). This edition is listed as being in Eliot's dining room in the partial inventory of his library prepared by Vivien Eliot, in the Bodleian Library. The listing of it there as "Chapman's Minor Poems" reflects the title given on the spine of this edition.

6. *Sweeney Agonistes* was begun in September 1923, but not published until October 1926/January 1927, according to Gordon (57–59).

7. "Eyes that last I saw in tears," poem I of "Doris's Dream Songs" and poem II of "Three Poems," eventually appeared outside *The Hollow Men*, as the first of the "Minor Poems" in *Collected Poems*. "The wind sprang up at four o'clock," originally II of "Doris," appeared as the second "Minor Poem." Some of its lines derived from "Song to the Ophorian," included in *The Waste Land* manuscript and published by Eliot under the pseudonym "Gus Krutzsch" in *The Tyro* no. 1, Spring 1921.

8. The "vita nuova" theme is, of course, captured in the title of the second volume of Lyndall Gordon's biography from the same year as Bush's study.

9. Referring in the Clark Lectures to Chapman's tragedy *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*, Eliot claims that "there runs the curious theme of reconciliation, quite inconsistent with the motives and intentions of the personages, but never ludicrous, because it seems to belong to another plane of reality from which these persons are exiles" (*Varieties* 152). Eliot here is picking up on his own perception of a year earlier in his review "Wanley and Chapman," in which he had claimed that Chapman was "a dramatist by accident," a "poet and scholar" who displayed "sensibility" of thought" and, in his tragedies, a "double significance" through his crossing of "classical stoicism" with "otherworldliness" (907). An early version of this view, as regards its application to Dostoevsky, can be found in "Beyle and Balzac" (392).

10. These thoughts, and some of the material from these lectures, were taken up in the 1951 published lecture on "Poetry and Drama."

11. See Gordon (3, 8); Bush (109–12) on Eliot's "change of heart" about Donne.

12. On these issues, Moody's is probably still the most illuminating criticism (95). Rather than displaying the "order and congruity" that Eliot had perceived in Donne's thinking and feeling only three years before ("John Donne" 332), in *Varieties* Eliot perceives Donne's frequent allusion to science and philosophy as evidence of the "chaotic intellectual background" in which he operates. Donne is not a thinker nor, the implication runs, a true Christian (80, 126, 154).

13. "This stoicism, to tell the truth, is sometimes so touched by Christianity that we cannot tell whether it is a Christian or an overtly stoical voice that is being heard." Soldo has claimed that the "genuineness" of Eliot's stoicism continued beyond 1927 and that it is evident in *Ash Wednesday* and *Four Quartets* (84–86).

14. Two books that, from the Bodleian partial inventory of Eliot's library, we know he owned (and both of which he refers to in "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca") similarly isolate Chapman along with Marston as the major debtors to the classical playwright in their age. See Lucas (128); Cunliffe (96–98).

15. Hudston (141). My subsequent citations from Chapman come, unless otherwise indicated, from this edition. See Eliot *SE* (130).

16. Eliot ponders this scene from *Hercules Furens* in "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation" (1927) as proof that, because of its improbability when staged, "Seneca's plays might [...] be practical models for modern 'broadcast drama'" (*SE* 69–70). Eliot's thinking about the "Senecal" from 1924–27 to a certain extent culminated in this introduction to an edition of Seneca's tragedies in their original, Elizabethan, translation into English (*Seneca His Tenne Tragedies*). It is an introduction that features Chapman frequently. It is also work of which Eliot was clearly proud, and which he saw as key to his

thinking about the Elizabethan period. It appears as “Seneca in Elizabethan Translation,” the longest essay in *SE*, and as first essay in *Elizabethan Essays*. Jasper Heywood translated these lines from *Furens* as “What place is this? what region? or of the world what coast? / Where am I? under ryse of sun or bond els uttermost / Of th’icy beare” (note the variant on the *Oetaeus* image here) (*Seneca His Tenne Tragedies* 46).

17. Bodleian Library, Oxford. MS Don C 23/1–3 (x.ii.100).

18. Edmund Wilson, in a 1925 review of *Homage to John Dryden*, “T.S. Eliot and the Seventeenth Century,” was certain about how such allusion functioned. Noting Eliot’s citation from Bishop King, and the analogy Eliot finds for him with Poe in “The Metaphysical Poets,” Wilson claims that it is “the poet Eliot and not the poet King [. . .] who expressed his temperament in these selected passages—the poet who has already given a new color and meaning to lines taken out of their context from his predecessors by embodying them in his own poems” (Brooker 124).

19. “Saturation”: “To cause (a substance) to combine with or dissolve the utmost possible quantity of another substance” (*OED*).

20. In citing Chapman’s version of the chorus’s commentary on Hercules’s agony in *Hercules Oetaeus* (ln. 1519–24 in the Seneca), Eliot here actually gives as the source lines from Seneca’s other Hercules play, *Hercules Furens*: “signum celsi [. . .] vocat” (“the icy constellation at the high pole, / Arcas’ bear with its seven stars, / turns its wain and calls down the light”). These lines come from the choral ode, ln. 129–31; “sub cardine” (“under the turning-point of the icy bear”) comes from the line, following that in Hercules’s speech beginning “Quis hic locus?” which provides *Marina* with its epigraph (ln. 1138–40). Although slightly mis-transcribed, at the very least Eliot’s concern to give these Latin examples reveals the thoroughness of his interest in the detail of Seneca’s language and conceits.

21. Moody has discussed *Gerontion*’s connections with “Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca” (68).

22. Eliot had cited this “inaccurate” version of the Bussy passage every time from the 1919 “Reflections” through *Varieties* (152), the 1927 essays, and “Thinking in Verse” (442). He had corrected it for the citation in “John Dryden II” (681).

23. Phelps’s selection of plays contained the comedy *All Fools*, the two Bussy plays, and the two plays on Charles, Duke of Byron.

24. Boas makes a similar point about Chapman’s obscuring “plethora” of imagery, when seeking to articulate an emotion or idea, in his edition of the Bussy plays (xxvi).

25. Thais E. Morgan has noted the broader significance of Swinburne’s thinking, especially on Eliot’s theories of influence (Rooksby and Shrimpton 138).

26. This discussion of obscurity appears on p. xiv of the Chatto & Windus edition of Chapman’s *Minor Poems & Translations*, which Eliot owned.

27. Waddington sees a correlative mythic structure in Chapman’s formal procedures to that discovered by Eliot in Joyce (*Mind’s Empire* 4).

28. Depeveen has discussed these charges (9–10 ff., 101–02).

29. Bottrall, in an article that appeared in Eliot’s *Criterion*, makes a similar equation between these strands in Chapman’s poetic. After citing various of Chapman’s statements as proof that “trance [. . .] night [. . .] pain” are the sources of his inspiration, Bottrall argues that “If we accept his self-revelations as substantially true, we are enabled to understand more clearly his position as a champion of difficulty in poetry, for they show how strong an emotional basis underlies his intellectual acceptance of certain literary theories already current” (644).

30. Eliot’s particular praise for one essay, Janet Spens’s “Chapman’s Ethical Thought,” from the volume of *Essays and Studies* that he was reviewing here, gives a further sense that Chapman served to confirm Eliot’s instinctive practice when dealing with “various and complex” materials in poetry. Spens describes Chapman’s practice in his poetry as involving “association,” which “takes the place of design” or “logical

argument." She calls his work "a sort of musical composition" and a "dream-fugue"—encouraging terms to read for Eliot, who was later in the year of this review to publish his own gathering of "dream songs" as *The Hollow Men* (161–62).

31. In the 1919 essay on *Hamlet*, Eliot cites this scene by Chapman as evidence of Shakespeare's comparative failure in rendition: "if you examine [Hamlet's] two most famous soliloquies you see the versification of Shakespeare, but a content which might be claimed by another, perhaps by the author of the *Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* Act V Sc. 1" (SE 145).

32. Unsurprisingly, Bottrall isolates the encounter with Homer as evidence of the "trance" aspect of Chapman's creative process. Such encounters are, of course, an obvious impact of the "saturation" of one poet by another.

33. Waddington suggests that the tradition of an earlier poet "appearing" in the work of a later is everywhere imbued with questions of translation, from that of Hermes Trismegistus in *The Pimander*, to Ennius' *Annales* (where Homer also "speaks"), to (in an instance close to Eliot's own declared interests), Jasper Hayward's claim that Seneca aided him in his version of *Thyestes* (*Mind's Empire* 18 ff.).

34. The edition cited by Eliot throughout the 1934 essay on John Marston is the first volume of the three volume edition by H. Harvey Wood of the same year. Marston did not appear in the popular "best plays" Mermaid editions which, from the Bodleian inventory, formed the basis for his initial reading in Renaissance drama.

Abbreviations

SE	<i>Selected Essays</i>
UPUC	<i>Uses of Poetry and the Use of Criticism</i>
CP	<i>Collected Poems</i>
SW	<i>The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism</i>
Varieties	<i>The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry</i>

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Little critical attention has hitherto been paid to the fact that, when seeking to define the "metaphysical" in poetry, T.S. Eliot repeatedly named as an example the Renaissance poet and dramatist George Chapman, alongside the more familiar influence of Donne. And yet Chapman's writing had, as this article argues, a demonstrable influence upon the development of Eliot's poetic in the years following The Waste Land, and especially upon his move towards the poetic drama. This influence is evident in the kinds of poetic conceits which Eliot was drawn to, both in the period 1919–27 and through to Four Quartets, and also in the debate about poetic obscurity which Eliot conducted at this time. It is further evident in the attempts, conducted through essays and reviews of this period, to reconcile a temperamental Stoicism (Chapman was perhaps the prime mediator of a Stoic vision in the English Renaissance) with Eliot's developing Christianity. Drawing upon a range of archival materials, and upon the introductions and commentaries of editions of Renaissance texts which we know that Eliot referred to when preparing his own writings on the earlier period, the article seeks to open up again a clearly vibrant and complex engagement for Eliot with Chapman's writing, one which then re-echoes across what we know as modernist poetics.

Keywords: T.S. Eliot / Chapman / Renaissance / Literary influence