

## “Heart of Light”: Emily Hale and *The Birth of Tragedy* in *The Waste Land*

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Eliot’s phrase “the heart of light,” appearing in the hyacinth garden scene of *The Waste Land* and the rose garden of *Burnt Norton*, have long suggested a tie between these two emotional, lyrical passages written fourteen years apart. Eliot’s letters to Emily Hale, finally opened in 2020, now reveal the autobiographical basis for this echo linking the two works. Writing to Hale in a burst of ardor in fall 1930, Eliot asked Hale to re-read the hyacinth lines as the testament of his love; he reminded her of their shared experience at a performance of *Tristan und Isolde* in 1913, when he fell in love with her; and he recounted the terrifying moment in spring 1914 when he almost declared himself to her, but could not.<sup>1</sup> He described the dizziness that still overtakes him when he thinks how his life might have turned out differently if he had spoken. The frame of quotations from *Tristan und Isolde* around the hyacinth garden passage recalls his transfixing experience of Wagner’s opera in Hale’s company, even as the work and its web of associations gathered significance in his mind over the years. As well as Eliot’s model for the Hyacinth girl, Hale inspired the composition of *Burnt Norton*, having accompanied him to the historic manor near Chipping Campden in August or September 1935, where he was a frequent guest of Hale’s family during the summers of 1934 to 1939. The meaning of the garden in *Burnt Norton*, then, extends backwards in time all the way to 1913, while the garden in *The Waste Land* also extends forwards in time to 1936, when Eliot drew these threads together into what he called “a new kind of love poem” for Hale—a poem that, he told her, was also about time.

Desire and longing in *The Waste Land* (1922) are intimately connected to those emotions in *Burnt Norton* (1936). The rose garden of the latter poem is an enigmatic space – inhabited by birds, roses, rustling leaves and a pool that is both dry and filled with “water out of sunlight.” The garden importantly captures a moment in time and out of time; it is a space in which past, present and future are one. Both gardens, I would like to suggest, depict a space of intensely sublimated emotion. Both gardens are mysterious sites of unspoken desire, silence and imagined death or, at least, a state beyond mere living. In both garden passages, Eliot reworks the nineteenth-century poetic trope of love-in-death and death-in-love, nowhere more famously expressed than in Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*, the work that powerfully impressed this trope on Eliot’s psyche. So the two gardens of Eliot’s poetic masterpieces are, above all, a space in which he confronts the problem of desire – or, to put it in the philosophical language that inspired Wagner’s opera, the problem of will.

In both *The Waste Land* and *Burnt Norton* the tragic-ecstatic moments in the garden are merged with Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of the will, as developed by Wagner and Nietzsche. Schopenhauer in his *World as Will and Representation* (1818) suggests three ways of escape from an endless and painful cycle of desire: art, compassion and asceticism. Wagner’s reading of Schopenhauer in 1854 is a turning point in his understanding of music and drama, and the philosopher’s understanding of will is at the centre of Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde*. In December 1854, Wagner in a letter to Liszt makes his earliest reference to

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<sup>1</sup> Letters of November 3, 1930; January 20, 1931; July 24, 1931. Emily Hale Letters from T. S. Eliot, C0686, Manuscripts Division, Department of Special Collections, Princeton University Library. My account of these letters, not yet published at the time of writing this essay, is drawn from Frances Dickey’s Reports from the Emily Hale archive (<https://tseliotociety.wildapricot.org/news>), her article “May the Record Speak: The Correspondence of T. S. Eliot and Emily Hale,” *Twentieth-Century Literature* 66.4 (December 2020), 431-462, and personal correspondence.

*Tristan*; here, he also describes Schopenhauer's "principal idea, the final denial of the will to live," an idea of "terrible seriousness," but "uniquely redeeming."<sup>2</sup> Performed eleven years later, *Tristan* centrally explores the renunciation or annihilation of the will. Nietzsche, in turn, discusses *Tristan* at length in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). For Nietzsche, Wagner's opera is the modern example of Greek tragedy whose tragic spirit is born from music – the art which, as per Schopenhauer's hierarchy, best reflects and expresses the movements of the world will. While building on Schopenhauer, Nietzsche moves away from an emphasis on resignation.<sup>3</sup> Instead, he proclaims music as Dionysian or tragic art which breaks through from the individual to the universal. Nevertheless, with a shift of emphasis and terminology, Nietzsche, like Schopenhauer, offers another form of philosophical or artistic alchemy by which desire can be depersonalised and abstracted as world will.<sup>4</sup> Eliot himself clearly sees Nietzsche as a stoic figure. In his 1927 essay "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca," Eliot writes, "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."<sup>5</sup> Of course, cheering oneself up has its uses and especially to those unhappy in love. I'd like to suggest that in both his poetic masterpieces, separated by a span of fifteen years, Eliot turns to Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's metaphysics as a solution to suffering.

Eliot's thinking on Nietzsche can be traced back to his 1916 review of Abraham Wolf's *The Philosophy of Nietzsche* (1915). Eliot's review shows him to be dissatisfied with the slimness of this volume of lectures which he describes as "interestingly, if rather carelessly written."<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, Eliot writes, "In treating Nietzsche's theory of the universe, Dr. Wolf is more successful. Correctly, we think, he holds Nietzsche's view of nature to be essentially Schopenhauerian. It is not clear as to how nearly Nietzsche comes to making will (to power) or the various centres of will, *ultimate* reality..."<sup>7</sup> Eliot concludes the review with his chief disappointment that Wolf does not give enough space to "Nietzsche's views on art" – and Eliot is curious too about the interesting pessimism on the future of art evinced in *Human, All Too Human* (1878).<sup>8</sup> Of course, the most enduring tenets of Nietzsche's aesthetics are found in *The Birth of Tragedy*, which extensively develops Schopenhauer's metaphysics and aesthetics. Here, Nietzsche quotes at length from Schopenhauer, building on his aesthetic distinction between music and all other arts and reconfiguring this hierarchy into the familiar paradigms of the Apollonian and Dionysian. Nietzsche writes,

This extraordinary antithesis, which opens up yawningly between plastic art as the Apollonian and music as the Dionysian art, has become manifest to only one of the great thinkers...he allowed to music a different character and origin in advance of all

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<sup>2</sup> Wagner, quoted in Eric Chafe, *The Tragic and the Ecstatic: The Musical Revolution of Wagner's Tristan and Isolde* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), 6.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. F. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy or Hellenism and Pessimism*, trans. W.M. A. Haussmann (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1910) <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/51356/51356-h/51356-h.htm>, Section 6.

<sup>4</sup> Schopenhauer's influence on Eliot's "objective correlative" is discussed in Virkar-Yates, "An objective chemistry: what T. S. Eliot borrowed from Schopenhauer," *Philosophy and Literature* 39.2 (Oct 2015): 527-537.

<sup>5</sup> *Complete Prose* 3, 249.

<sup>6</sup> Eliot, "A review of *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, by A. Wolf," *The International Journal of Ethics*, 26 (Apr 1916) 426-27, in *Complete Prose* 1, 401.

<sup>7</sup> *Complete Prose* 1, 402.

<sup>8</sup> *Complete Prose* 1, 402

the other arts, because, unlike them, it is not a copy of the phenomenon, but a direct copy of the will itself, and therefore represents *the metaphysical of everything physical in the world*, the thing-in-itself of every phenomenon. (Schopenhauer, *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, I. 310.)<sup>9</sup>

Schopenhauer's musical aesthetics find their place in Eliot's *Four Quartets* in part through Wagner's essay "Beethoven" (1870). I would like to suggest that the influence of both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche is also keenly felt in *The Waste Land* and that an important textual source is Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*. If, for Nietzsche, Greek tragedy is generated through the coupling of the Apollonian art of sculpture, and the non-imagistic, Dionysian art of music, the transcendent moments in the gardens of the *The Waste Land* and *Burnt Norton* are similarly configured in tragic terms, through the counterpointing of the Apollonian and the Dionysian. In each case, the Dionysian dimension is felt through music, song or sound, whilst the Apollonian is connected with light and images of the natural world. By infusing his verse with the Dionysian spirit of music, Eliot opens the door onto the eternal reality of the world will. Art is one form of consolation and Eliot in his verse seeks the sublimation of desire in varied ways; through the metaphysical abstractions of philosophy and, as scholars such as Schuchard have argued, through the devotion of religious belief.<sup>10</sup>

In his short note, "T. S. Eliot and Nietzsche" (1964), F. N. Lees notes the prominence given to *Tristan* in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* – in particular the line quoted by Eliot in *The Waste Land*: "Oed' und leer das Meer," as spoken by the shepherd in Act II of *Tristan*.<sup>11</sup> Lees cites the extended passage in which the quotation occurs, taken from Nietzsche's discussion of Act III in *Birth of Tragedy* Section 22. In Wagner's opera, the act opens with Tristan lying unconscious; swelling symphonic music is soon followed by the sad strains of the shepherd's pipe. Kurwenal, Tristan's loyal aide, speaks with the shepherd; but when Tristan awakes it is only to wish himself dead again. The music itself, Nietzsche writes, threatens to overwhelm us – but the saving power of Apollonian illusion intervenes: "all of a sudden we imagine we see only Tristan, motionless, with hushed voice, saying to himself: 'the old tune, why does it wake me?' And what formerly interested us like a hollow sigh echoing from the heart of being, seems now only to tell us how 'waste and void is the sea.'"<sup>12</sup> As Lees observes, Nietzsche suggests that when we think we might "expire" through the unbearable intensity of feeling communicated by the music, "we now hear and see only the hero wounded to death and still not dying, with his despairing cry: 'Longing! Longing! In dying still longing!'"<sup>13</sup> In these words, Lees observes a further similarity with the Cumaean Sibyl of the epigraph of *The Waste Land*: "I wish to die." Lees' brief reading of the importance of Nietzsche's interpretation of *Tristan* to Eliot's *Waste Land* is certainly accurate. However, Lees disregards the aesthetic terms of Nietzsche's discussion; the point Nietzsche is making is a distinction between the Apollonian spectacle of the hero and the Dionysian power of the music.

For Eliot too, the significance of this image of the desolate, empty sea takes its place within a far larger set of aesthetic and metaphysical ideas that Eliot derives from Nietzsche. In

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<sup>9</sup> Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, Section 16, 122.

<sup>10</sup> Eliot himself in his 1929 essay "Dante" describes the *Vita Nuova* as a "sound psychological treatise on something related to what is now called 'sublimation'" (*Compte Prose* 3, 733. Eliot's own views on sublimation are discussed by Frances Dickey in "T. S. Eliot and the Color Line of St. Louis," *Modernism/Modernity* 5.4 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.26597/mod.0187>.

<sup>11</sup> F. N. Lees, "Eliot and Nietzsche," *Notes and Queries* 11 (1964), 386-7.

<sup>12</sup> Nietzsche, quoted in Lees, "Eliot and Nietzsche," 386. Lees notes, "I quote, for obvious reasons, from the translation by W. A. Haussmann (London, 1909; 161-162)."

<sup>13</sup> Lees, "Eliot and Nietzsche," 387.

this passage of Section 22 of *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche himself describes the “cosmic will” as a thundering stream or a brook. For Nietzsche, the sea too is an image of both music and will, as for Wagner before him, and for Eliot in his turn. In the opening stanzas of “The Burial of the Dead,” Eliot uses Wagner’s image of the desolate and empty sea to evoke a state beyond death and life – the eternal, universal will. As Eliot writes,

*Frisch weht der Wind  
Der Heimat zu  
Mein Irisch Kind,  
Wo weilest du?*

“You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;  
“They called me the hyacinth girl.”  
—Yet when we came back, late, from the hyacinth garden,  
Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not  
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither  
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,  
Looking into the heart of light, the silence.

*Oed’ und leer das Meer.*<sup>14</sup>

Four years later, in his 1926 Clark lectures, Eliot notes that the words “*inconscient*,” “*néant*” and “*l’absolu*” are philosophical terms from Schopenhauer and Hartmann which find their musical equivalent in Wagner.<sup>15</sup> His awareness of these ideas, however, probably dates back to his much earlier reading in Nietzsche, at a time when his memory of *Tristan* was still fresh in his mind. When he came to write *The Waste Land*, the entire complex of emotions and ideas had been germinating in his imagination for years. The hyacinth garden scene rests, as it were, on his contemplation of nothingness, ultimate reality or the absolute (will as *thing-in-itself*).

In *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche’s aesthetic analysis of *Tristan* similarly centres on these ideas. In discussing Act III of *Tristan*, Nietzsche contrasts the Dionysiac universality or sublimity of music with the Apollonian individuality or beauty of scenic or verbal elements, clearly attributing the Dionysian nature of music to its Schopenhauerian status as *universalia ante rem* [“universals before the thing”]. As Schopenhauer reflects in his *World as Will and Representation*, the phenomenal world may just as well be called embodied music as embodied will; while concepts offer universality through abstraction, music alone expresses the Dionysian oneness of the will as it precedes both phenomena and language. For Nietzsche as for Eliot, to experience this Dionysian unity is at once a sublime and terrifying experience, bringing with it the annihilation of the individual as phenomenon. As Nietzsche observes in *Birth of Tragedy*, to hear unimpeded the “re-echo of the *universalia ante rem*” would be an act of self-destruction: to listen to the third act of *Tristan* as a symphonic movement unaided by word or imagery would be to put one’s “ear to the heart-chamber of the cosmic will” and so to “collapse all at once.”<sup>16</sup> However, the Apollonian dimension of the opera, its narrative order articulated in language, protects the hearer from this experience, restoring the individual with “the healing balm of a blissful illusion.”<sup>17</sup> For Nietzsche, the shepherd’s words “Oed und leer das Meer” (“desolate and empty the sea”) sung to Tristan on his deathbed as he awaits Isolde,

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<sup>14</sup> *Poems*, 1, 56.

<sup>15</sup> *Complete Prose* 2, 745.

<sup>16</sup> Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, Section 21, 161.

<sup>17</sup> Nietzsche, *Tragedy*, Section 21, 163.

shield us with the Apollonian mask of language from the devastating effect of purely instrumental music. As Nietzsche suggests, if we perceived as solely Dionysiac beings, the myth or story embodied in language “would stand by us absolutely ineffective and unnoticed, and would never for a moment prevent us from giving ear to the re-echo of the *universalia ante rem*.”<sup>18</sup> The shepherd’s words become an image or symbolical expression of what is otherwise only a “hollow sigh from the heart of being.”<sup>19</sup> Vitaly, throughout Section 21, Nietzsche echoes the language of Schopenhauer, whose understanding of music he quotes at length in Section 16. For Schopenhauer, as Nietzsche recounts, music gives the “inmost kernel...or the heart of things.”<sup>20</sup> For Nietzsche in turn, *Tristan* becomes the palpable expression of Schopenhauer’s doctrine that music expresses the innermost essence of the world.

Eliot’s reference to the desolate sea can similarly be understood through Schopenhauer’s metaphysics as an expression of both music and the universal will. Indeed, perhaps the very word “heart,” in “the heart of light,” may echo his reading of Nietzsche in the afterglow of a passion ignited by a performance of *Tristan*. The Dionysian is Nietzsche’s word for Schopenhauer’s sublime, and through the sublime experience of Dionysian art or tragedy we are brought face to face with what directly opposes our personal will, forcing an *elevation* to an apprehension of the universal will. As Nietzsche writes,

it is only through the spirit of music that we understand the joy in the annihilation of the individual. For in the particular examples of such annihilation only is the eternal phenomenon of Dionysian art made clear to us, which gives expression to the will in its omnipotence, as it were, behind the *principium individuationis*, the eternal life beyond all phenomena, and in spite of all annihilation.<sup>21</sup>

In Eliot’s hyacinth garden, the pain of longing is also a desire for annihilation— “I was neither living nor dead...” Eliot’s Wagnerian allusions intimate the music that that speaks from the “heart” of things – the eternal life or will, past all phenomena. Eliot too is concerned with the annihilation of the individual. As commentators have noted, the hyacinth garden is specifically connected with the drowned sailor in Eliot’s drafts of *The Waste Land*. Here, in “A Game of Chess” the nervous lady asks: “Do you know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember / Nothing?” Her husband meditates, “I remember / the hyacinth garden. Those are pearls that were his eyes, yes!”<sup>22</sup> Death by water is also death by music; Eliot, reaching past language, draws upon Wagner’s musical refrain to suggest through the Apollonian “image” of the sea the Dionysian oneness of music or will. In this way does his poetry gesture toward what Nietzsche describes as the eternal will behind all phenomena and despite all annihilation. Eliot’s poetics are fundamentally Nietzschean; while images of water or sea evoke Dionysian music, images of light evoke the visual world of the Apollonian. The “heart of light,” however, suggests an inner reality past all appearance; this is Eliot’s poetic image of the will as *thing-in-itself*, the universal will as essence of the world. Nothingness is another way to describe the eternal will existing beyond life and death – this is Eliot’s desired place, beyond human desire.

The Wagnerian allusion that opens the hyacinth sequence in “The Burial of the Dead” suggests this very idea of transcending desire. Eliot in his poem quotes the words of the sailor heard at the very opening of *Tristan and Isolde*: “Fresh blows the wind / to the homeland / my

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<sup>18</sup> Nietzsche, *Tragedy*, Section 21, 163.

<sup>19</sup> Nietzsche, *Tragedy*, Section 21, 163.

<sup>20</sup> Nietzsche, *Tragedy*, Section 16, 126.

<sup>21</sup> Nietzsche, *Tragedy*, Section 16, 128.

<sup>22</sup> *Poems* 1, 330.

Irish child / where are you tarrying?” In the opera, Wagner’s libretto continues: “Is it the breath of your sighs / that swells my sails? / Blow, blow you wind! / Sigh, ah sigh, my child!”<sup>23</sup> In *The Tragic and the Ecstatic: the Musical Revolution of Wagner’s Tristan und Isolde*, Eric Chafe argues that Wagner’s opera is a musical and dramatic exposition of metaphysical ideas inspired by Schopenhauer. As Chafe observes, these opening notes comprise the “desire music” of Wagner’s opera, one of the most analysed passages in the corpus of western music, “the first and most universal of Wagner’s ‘psychic motives,’ desire, or will, the ground of human life and all existence.”<sup>24</sup> Wagner himself cited the opening notes of this prelude—the chromatic tones from A flat to B—as a symbol of the “Buddhist theory of the origin of the world,”<sup>25</sup> suggesting that these notes express an idea of creation in which the will emerges as the principle behind all existence.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the A flat to B tones which accompany the sailor’s words symbolise the lovers’ metaphysical journey and are particularly focused in Isolde’s transfiguration. These notes return in the *Liebtestod* (love-death) at the climax of which Isolde dies, her consciousness dissolving into “the wafting Universe of the World-Breath.” As Chafe writes, through a series of transformations, the breath of desire has become one with the world soul or will.<sup>27</sup>

Over the years, Eliot wove this Schopenhauerian metaphysics of will, as developed and expressed by Wagner and Nietzsche, into his world view and personal approach to suffering. When he began writing love letters to Hale in 1930, he explained to her that after writing *The Waste Land*, he believed his heart was dead and “I thought my life was done.”<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, seeing Hale in London in 1923 (in a private meeting about which little is known) caused “everything...to be reorganized” and was the starting point of his “active spiritual life.” While Eliot figured Hale as Isolde in *The Waste Land*—the object of an adulterous passion—he now came to imagine her as Beatrice, his spiritual guide “leading me to the Altar.”<sup>29</sup> Eliot’s sublimation of his earthly passion into religious love (accurately described, without the benefit of Hale’s letters, by both Ronald Schuchard and Lyndall Gordon<sup>30</sup>) is reflected in *Ash-Wednesday*, which, he told Hale, he didn’t need to explain to her—but “No one else will ever understand it.” Initiating contact with Hale shortly after the publication of this poem, Eliot told her that her letters brought him “the only kind of happiness now possible for the rest of my life...a kind of supernatural ecstasy.”<sup>31</sup> While he suggests that he has solved the problem of desire, a further chapter lay in store for them that brought its return.

Hale and Eliot enjoyed frequent visits together in England during 1934 and 1935, when she had taken a leave of absence from her job at Scripps College and shared a house in Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, with her relatives, John and Edith Perkins. Eliot visited her there often, enjoying afternoons and evenings in the rose garden that Edith Perkins cultivated; Hale would give him a flower or a bouquet to take back to London with him at the end of the weekend, which he never failed to mention in his Monday morning letter of appreciation.

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<sup>23</sup> Eric Chafe, *The Tragic and the Ecstatic: The Musical Revolution of Wagner’s Tristan and Isolde* (Oxford: OUP), 85.

<sup>24</sup> Chafe, *The Tragic and the Ecstatic*, 86.

<sup>25</sup> Wagner writing to Mathilde Wesendonck soon after the completion of *Tristan*, quoted in Chafe, 85.

<sup>26</sup> Chafe, 85.

<sup>27</sup> Chafe, 86.

<sup>28</sup> November 3, 1930, Emily Hale Letters from T. S. Eliot.

<sup>29</sup> October 3, 1930, Emily Hale Letters from T. S. Eliot.

<sup>30</sup> Lyndall Gordon, *T. S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 1999); Ronald Schuchard, *T. S. Eliot’s Dark Angel: Intersections of Life and Art* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>31</sup> 3 November, 1930, Emily Hale Letters from T. S. Eliot.

Sometime in August or September 1935, they spent a day sightseeing in the countryside near Chipping Campden, including a visit to the manor house of Burnt Norton. This was not the height of their romance, but its prelude. The months of October and November brought an intensification of feeling and physical closeness, with a turning point on November 18, when Hale seems to have reciprocated Eliot's desire more overtly. Yet the period of happiness was short lived; Hale had to return to the States to find another job on December 12. Eliot had already begun composing a "new kind of love poem"<sup>32</sup> for Hale by repurposing lines cut from *Murder in the Cathedral* that became the opening passage of *Burnt Norton*, and he continued writing at great heat throughout January 1936. His poem is set in a rose garden reminiscent of both the manor and Hale's residence, Stamford House in Chipping Campden, a choice of setting probably shaped by his earlier framing of her in the hyacinth garden. There is a deliberateness in this return that seems as much shaped by literary and philosophical sources as by life itself, for Eliot and Hale's separation was not pre-ordained and did not have to mean a lifetime of ungratified desire. The problem of desire was also a poetic inspiration.

In *Burnt Norton*, once again, Eliot seeks sublimation of desire through a metaphysics of will; dissolution of the personal in the universal is the mystical death envisaged in the "heart of light" in both Eliot's 1922 and 1936 verse. The poetic motifs are similar: music, water, sunlight:

The unheard music hidden in the shrubbery...  
 Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged,  
 the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,  
 And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,  
 The surface glittered out of heart of light.<sup>33</sup>

Music leads the speaker to a "pool...filled with water" where he finds that the water is actually sunlight, in which floats the image of a lotus (like the hyacinth, a flower that grows in water). Music and water are Dionysian elements, while light and flower images evoke the Apollonian. But the "heart of light" moves beyond all duality, a poetic attempt at describing the inner reality of all appearance—the will as *thing-in-itself*. In *Burnt Norton* Eliot is especially concerned with these "two worlds," the aural and visual world.<sup>34</sup> As in *The Waste Land*, the "heart of light" described in *Burnt Norton* becomes an image of the will as thing-in-itself—here, at this point, there can be only unity and reconciliation, an apprehension of the universal which is also an elevation beyond suffering. In *Burnt Norton II* Eliot writes,

Except for the point, the still point,  
 There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.  
 I can only say, there we have been: but I cannot say where.  
 And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time.  
 The inner freedom from the practical desire,  
 The release from action and suffering, release from the inner  
 And the outer compulsion, yet surrounded  
 By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving,  
*Erhebung* without motion...<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> January 13, 1936, Emily Hale Letters from T. S. Eliot.

<sup>33</sup> *Poems* 1, 180.

<sup>34</sup> This is discussed in Virkar-Yates, 'Schopenhauer, Wagner, and the Music of the Will in *Four Quartets*' in *The Edinburgh Companion to T. S. Eliot and the Arts* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2016), pp. 171-78.

<sup>35</sup> *Poems* 1, 181.

As Christopher Janaway observes, “negation of the will is a state of renunciation (*Entsagung*) or resignation (*Resignation*) from desires...which Schopenhauer characterizes using other psychological terms... blissfulness, peace, rest, cheerfulness, elevation, composure, joyfulness, contentment...”<sup>36</sup> This group of words is different to the ‘happiness’ group.<sup>37</sup> Perhaps we find ourselves returned to that other kind of happiness, a version of “cheering oneself up”—or as Eliot had written to Hale in 1930, “the deepest happiness which is identical with my deepest loss and sorrow...a kind of supernatural ecstasy.”<sup>38</sup> Nietzsche may move away from resignation, but his conception of the Dionysian simply performs a different sublimation of the will. In *Burnt Norton*, Eliot’s evocation of “dance” together with Schopenhauer’s conception of “elevation” (*erhebung*) through the sublime suggests again that he is reading Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in parallel. Elevation through art is one form of release from suffering and Nietzsche’s conception of the Dionysian is another word for the sublime. Of course, to apprehend the universal is to leave behind the personal or individual. However momentary or imagined, this is the release that Eliot seeks, “release from action, and suffering.” In the gardens of *The Waste Land* and *Burnt Norton*, Eliot’s deliberately and indefinitely deferred passion for Hale finds expression through the unresolved harmonies of Wagner’s *Tristan*, the music that accompanied his awakening to unsatisfied love. Through Nietzsche’s treatment of the Schopenhauerian metaphysics of this music in *Birth of Tragedy*, Eliot transforms the longing of desire into a metaphysical vision of the eternal will, existing beyond life and death.

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<sup>36</sup> Christopher Janaway, ‘What’s so good about negation of the will: Schopenhauer and the problem of the summum bonum’ in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 54.4 (2016), 653.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> October 3, 1930, Emily Hale Letters from T. S. Eliot.