

Time Present

The Newsletter of the International T. S. Eliot Society

Number 104

Summer 2021

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ANNUAL MEETING REGISTRATION

Register now for our annual meeting on September 23-25, 2021

Visit our events portal:

<https://tseliotssociety.wildapricot.org>

Charlotte Eliot's "The Wednesday Club"

Frances Dickey
University of Missouri

Emily Hale's personal introduction to Eliot's letters, first printed in the pages of *Time Present*, reminds us that the historical archive of Eliot's life and work extends beyond his own writings to those of the friends and family who supported and shaped him. Arguably no person had a greater impact on him than his mother, Charlotte Stearns Eliot, who raised five children, worked energetically for social and environmental reforms in St. Louis, and wrote poetry and a biography of William Greenleaf Eliot on the side. Her scrapbook, preserved among the Eliot family papers at the Houghton Library, contains a record of her religious and occasional verse, including the typescript of "The Wednesday Club," a poem that she probably composed for one of the club's literary contests (the club she helped to found, now 131 years old, still sponsors a city-wide poetry contest each year). Her poem commemorates the progressive spirit of the Wednesday Club at the turn of the century, documenting its social and educational aims and displaying Charlotte Eliot's vision and her poetic ability.

In 1889, Charlotte Eliot was among the founding members of the Shelley Club, a female literary society dedicated to reading and appreciating the poetry of Percy Shelley, whose reputation as an atheist and revolutionary may have caused the group to rename themselves the Wednesday Club in 1890. The husbands of many of the members were captains of industry, such as Edward C. Sterling, president of the Hydraulic Press Brick Company, where Henry Ware Eliot then served as secretary and treasurer. Cordelia Sterling became the Club's first president. According to its articles of incorporation, "The object of [the Wednesday Club] shall be to create and maintain an organized center of thought and action among the women of Saint Louis, and to aid in the promotion of their mutual interest in the advancement of science, education, philanthropy, literature and art, and to provide a place of meeting for the comfort and convenience of its members." Charlotte's poem reflects this diversity of aims, from self-improvement to self-sacrifice for others less fortunate. The Club was and still is organized into "sections" or committees based on areas of interest in which members worked to educate themselves, organize events for the members, and become involved in civic affairs. While praising science, art, education, economics, history, and literature as the objects of study, Charlotte gives a special voice to Current Events as perhaps a poor relative of the Arts but the prime mover of history and a guide to useful social action among

FROM THE ARCHIVE

the members. Her poem registers tensions or at least differing visions within the Club about the direction of their organization.

Although undated, the poem refers to contemporary events including the dawn of the twentieth century and the re-election of the Club's president for a second term, perhaps Mrs. George H. Shields, who served from 1900 to 1902. Club members at that time threw themselves into progressive causes; subcommittees worked on a range of endeavors including improvement of the city's streets and air, protection of indigent children, and the creation of a juvenile justice system, for which Charlotte Eliot successfully advocated. Behind these causes, and motivating the existence of the club itself, lay the considerable energies of a class of well-to-do women who sought productive roles in society (one of the Club's members, Kate Chopin, used her talents to imagine what happens to a woman without such outlets).

With its membership growing quickly, in 1896 the club moved to the Central YMCA at the corner of Franklin and Grand Avenue, where Charlotte would have attended meetings during Tom's childhood. Lee Oser and Melanie Fathman have suggested that Eliot had the Wednesday Club ladies in mind when he wrote,

*In the room the women come and go,
Talking of Michaelangelo.*

If so, the room he recalled was in this building.



St. Louis Central Y.M.C.A. building from historic postcard

In 1908, the club commissioned architect Theodore Link, famous for his Carcassonne-inspired design of St. Louis's Union Station, to create a new headquarters at the corner of Westminster Place and Taylor Avenue in the Central West End, just half a block from the new residence where T. S. Eliot's

parents had moved following his departure for Milton and Harvard. The building, which still stands, features an auditorium seating five hundred and is a landmark of early modernism. The building's magnitude and experimental style give some indication of the social importance and aspirations of the Wednesday Club in Charlotte Eliot's time.



Westminster Place home of the Wednesday Club, 1908-1971

The Wednesday Club

By Charlotte Eliot

Part I.

A mandate has gone abroad
From a Wednesday Club Committee,
That its members compete in prose or verse,
In song or in story clear and terse.
And so in very pity
And scorn of ourselves, we attempt to write.
Alas! That women might all be bright
And all be wise and witty.

When for a theme we inquire,
What theme can better inspire
Than the Club itself? And a celebration
Like President's Day is an inspiration
Worthy a poet's lyre.
Honor to those who conceived the plan
Of a Woman's Club and then began
To realize their desire.
Not on a single line
Was formed the first design.

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CONFERENCE PROGRAM

International T. S. Eliot Society 42nd Annual Meeting

September 23-25, 2021

Online via Zoom

All times are Eastern Daylight Time: Use a [time zone converter](#) to figure your local time

PEER SEMINARS

*Participants listed at end of program
No auditors, please*

Seminar 1: Eliot's Influence

Thurs., Sept. 23, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Led by Anthony Cuda, U of North Carolina Greensboro

Seminar 2: *The Waste Land* in 2021

Friday, Sept. 24, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Led by Megan Quigley, Villanova U

Seminar 3: The Secular, the Religious, and the Modern in Eliot

Thurs., Sept. 23, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Led by Patrick Query, West Point

Seminar 4: Eliot's Plays, the Stage, and the Dramatic Arts

Thurs., Sept. 23, 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Led by Dídac Llorens Cubedo, U Nacional de Educación a Distancia, and Fabio Vericat, U Complutense de Madrid

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

7:00 - 8:15 p.m. Workshop

Open to all conference participants; no advance registration required

Techniques for Teaching Eliot in 2021

Led by Megan Quigley, Villanova U, and John Whittier-Ferguson, U of Michigan

Lightning Round Speakers

Ria Banerjee, Guttman Community College, CUNY

Josh Epstein, Portland State U

Patrick Query, West Point

Johanna Winant, West Virginia U

Followed by extended discussion, Q&A

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

12:00-12:15 p.m.

President's Welcome

Jayne Stayer, Loyola U Chicago

12:15-1:15 p.m. Session 1

Chair: Ria Banerjee, Guttman Community College, CUNY

Elysia Balavage, U of North Carolina Greensboro

Dissatisfied Diners: Eliot, Food, and Drink

Kevin Rulo, Catholic U of America
Transient Dwelling Spaces in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot

Suzannah V. Evans, Durham U
T. S. Eliot, Corbière, and Salt

1:15-1:30 p.m. Break

1:30-2:15 p.m. Session 2

Chair: Megan Quigley, Villanova U

Sarah E Coogan, U of Oxford
The Dove Descending: Competing Typologies and Modernism's Representation of Violence

Magdalena Kay, U of Victoria
Unity and Nostalgia: Eliot's Anti-Modernist Afterlife in the Work of Philip Larkin

2:15-2:30 p.m. Break

2:30-3:30 p.m. Session 3

Chair: Annarose Steinke, U of Nebraska-Kearney

Cécile Varry, U de Paris
T. S. Eliot, Out of Breath

Ruth Clemens, Utrecht U
Bombast and Sesquipedalian Words in the Epigraph to *The Waste Land*

Patrick Eichholz, Virginia Military Institute
Conflicting Classicisms in Early Eliot

3:30-3:45 p.m. Break

3:45-4:30 p.m. Session 4

Chair: Frances Dickey, U of Missouri

Sara Fitzgerald, Independent Scholar

Emily Hale: The Woman Behind the Curtain

Jewel Spears Brooker, Eckerd C
The Destruction of Emily Hale's Letters: Why, When, by Whom

4:30-6:00 p.m. Social Hour

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

9:00-10:00 a.m. Session 5

Chair: John Whittier-Ferguson, U of Michigan

Aurelia Cojocaru, U of California Berkeley

Before and After the "Shred of Platinum": Eliot and the Rhetoric of Method

Emma Felin, U of Oxford
Standing Science on its Head: T. S. Eliot's Philosophy of Art and Science, 1918-1923

Joanna Rzepa, U of Essex
T. S. Eliot, Theological Modernism, and the "Pure Poetry" Debate

10:00-10:15 a.m. Break

10:15-11:15 a.m. Session 6

Chair: Christopher McVey, Boston U

Junichi Saito, Kanagawa U, Japan
Teaching Eliot to Japanese Students

Soham Deb Barman, Presidency U, Kolkata, India
Of Ganga, Himavante, and the Thunder: Re-evaluating Eliot's Use of the Indic Tradition in *The Waste Land*

David Chinitz, Loyola U Chicago
Eliot Now and Eliot Later

11:15-11:30 a.m. Break

11:30am-12:30 p.m. Session 7

Chair: Patrick Query, West Point

Wendy Queen, Director, Project Muse

Introduction to the Redesigned *Complete Prose* on Project Muse

Anthony Cuda, U of North Carolina Greensboro
The Incomplete Story of *The Complete Prose*

David Chinitz, Loyola U Chicago
Demonstration of the New Platform

12:30-1:30 p.m. Lunch Break

1:30-2:45 p.m. Session 8

Chair: Jayme Stayer, Loyola U Chicago

42nd Annual International T. S. Eliot Society Memorial Lecture

T. S. ELIOT, 1933, 1958, 1962,
2016

ROBERT PINSKY
Boston University

2:45-3:00 p.m. Break

3:00-4:00 p.m. Session 9

Chair: David Chinitz, Loyola U Chicago

Michael Rutherglen, U of Chicago
Intermittency, Transparency, and Parody: On Eliot's Rhymes

Matt Kilbane, U of Notre Dame
Eliot and the Modernist Pericles

Michael Rizq, U of Cambridge
Eliot's "Thrill": Moral Apprehension from F. H. Bradley to *Marina*

4:00-4:15 p.m. Break

4:15-5:00 p.m. Session 10

Chair: Kevin Rulo, Catholic U of America

Parker T. Gordon, U of St Andrews
Publishers, Permissions, and Printing: T. S. Eliot and Hugh Walpole

John R. O. Gery, U of New Orleans
"Chilled Delirium": The Devolution of the Dramatic I from Prufrock to the Magus

5:00 p.m. Conclusion

Announcement of Awards

5:10-6:30 p.m. Social Hour

Peer Seminar Participants

Seminar 1

Natasha Karageorgos, Wesleyan U
Lizi Dzagnidze, Tbilisi State U, Georgia

Gerald E. Schwartz, Independent Scholar

Suzannah V. Evans, Durham U
Len Diepeveen, Dalhousie U
Roksana Zgierska, U of Gdansk
Juan Manuel Escamilla, U of Sussex

Christopher McVey, Boston U
Jack Baker, Durham U
Jack L. Hart, U of Oxford
Victor Strandberg, Duke U
John Melillo, U of Arizona
Huiming Liu, U of Edinburgh

Seminar 2

Marianne Huntington, Independent Scholar
Ann Marie Jakubowski, Washington U
Patrick Eichholz, Virginia Military Institute
Maria Rossini, U of Virginia

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Charles Sumner, U of Southern Mississippi
 Michaela Atienza, U of the Philippines, Diliman
 Prerana Saikia, U of Delhi
 Jonathan Chang, Loyola U Chicago
 Sirsha Nandi, Texas A&M
 Lakshmi Mitra, Jadavpur U
 Sushobhan Das, Jadavpur U
 John Gillespie, San Jacinto C
 Mohit Abrol, Indian Institute of Technology

Seminar 3

Annarose Steinke, U of Nebraska-Kearney
 Benjamin D. Crace, American U of Kuwait

Camilo Peralta, Fort Hays State U
 Tanya Woodward, U of Nebraska-Kearney
 Lucas D. Silver, Queen's U, Kingston
 Clint Wilson, Rice U
 Joshua Richards, MidAmerica Nazarene U
 LeeAnn Derdeyn, U of Texas Dallas
 Jamie Callison, Nord U, Norway
 Catherine Enwright, Boston C
 Adil Khan, Bangor U
 Elena Valli, Trinity C Dublin

Seminar 4

Ester Díaz Morillo, U Nacional de Educación a Distancia
 Zachary Erickson, Columbia U

Michael Sutherlin, U Tennessee Knoxville
 Christina J. Lambert, Baylor U
 Sara Fitzgerald, Independent Scholar
 Shannon McClernon, University of Mary, Bismarck
 Alex Davis, U College Cork
 Callie Messerschmidt, Purdue U Global
 Gabriela Minden, U of Oxford
 Viorica Patea, U of Salamanca

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

It's not too late to register, using our events portal:

<https://tseliotociety.wildapricot.org>

REVIEWS

Decadent Catholicism and the Making of Modernism

by Martin Lockerd

Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. xiii + 231 pages.

Reviewed by Michael Rizq
 U of Cambridge

Eliot's conversion to Anglo-Catholicism is still sometimes taken as an austere, self-bankrupting turn in his career: from modernist thrill-seeker to, in Karl Shapiro's phrase, "his caricature of the modern poet-priest." Recent readers, however—Barry Spurr, Anthony Domestico, and Joanna Rzepa among others—have provided more rewarding and historically textured accounts of Eliot's religion and its contexts, and Martin Lockerd's *Decadent Catholicism and the Making of Modernism* usefully contributes to this ongoing project. Uncommonly entertaining and well-written, it traces a modernist response to the "Decadent Catholicism" variously practiced by British and Irish writers and artists of the 1890s, especially Ernest

Dowson, Lionel Johnson, Aubrey Beardsley, and—at a stretch—Oscar Wilde. Lockerd jauntily introduces this company as "profligates, priests, pornographers, and pontiffs" (23) and weaves an appreciation of their work into his reading of the modernists who followed them: not least in the chapter on Eliot, which finds refreshing points of intersection between Eliot's poetry and the unorthodox, "decadent" Catholics who anticipated him.

As Lockerd acknowledges, the connection between modernism and decadence is not new. Extending the argument of Ellis Hanson's *Decadence and Catholicism* (1998), however, Lockerd's original emphasis is on its religious overtones: the book aims at an "anamnesis of a literary movement . . . the lasting legacy of decadent Catholicism in the age of high modernism" (2). That anamnesis, or "unforgetting," is neatly presented as a corrective to W. B. Yeats's own potted literary history. "In 1900 everybody got down off his stilts," he wrote; "nobody joined the Catholic church; or if they did I have forgotten." Like Ezra Pound, as *Decadent Catholicism's* second chapter shows, Yeats was committed to a modernist chronology which tended to disavow its more immediate pasts, but Lockerd rebuts such "historical fantasies and assertions of shifting paradigms," as he calls them (65). And at stake here, one suspects, is more than a slight historical addendum.

Review of *Decadent Catholicism*, *cont.*

Taken further, Lockerd's readings might suggest a renewed account of early 20th-century Catholic art and literature in general: its longevity and maturity, that is, as against the avant-garde, secularising narrative which modernism is often presumed to epitomise.

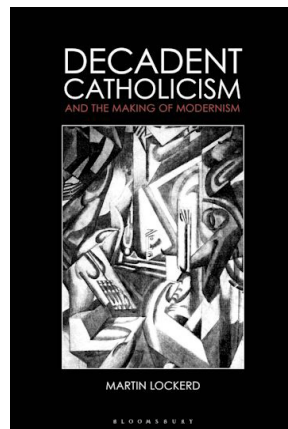
Eliot proves an important part of this revision. What he called the "current of feeling" that links Richard Crashaw to Cardinal Newman and reaches forward to "Lionel Johnson, Aubrey Beardsley, and even, in a degraded and popular form, to Oscar Wilde" (78), is shown to find new expression in his own work. Indeed, Lockerd explores a "shared artistic sensibility" between Eliot's unpublished "Opera" (1909) and Beardsley's illustration, *The Wagnerites* (1894); between "The Love Song of Saint Sebastian" (1914) and Beardsley's poem "The Ballad of a Barber" (1896); and, most substantially, between "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and Beardsley's illustrations for Wilde's *Salomé* (1891). Helped by fast-paced accounts of the decadents' own influences—*À rebours* (1884) is a constant presence—Lockerd positions Eliot as Beardsley and Wilde's inheritor, suggesting a rather more colorful artistic context than we are often used to. Prufrock's "head (grown slightly bald) upon a platter" may allude, Lockerd hints, not only to the *Salomé* story, but that story as depicted in Beardsley's overwrought style: where *Salomé*'s parodic, "crazed look" and "twisted facial features" intensify her necrophiliac desire (92-5). This is certainly decadent, but as Lockerd insists, it is also Catholic, buttressing Eliot's critique of a gruesome and spiritually vapid modernity. To find Beardsley anticipating Eliot in this respect is refreshing, and gives insight not only into Eliot's religious habits of mind, but also into their more vivid imaginative undercurrents.

Unfortunately, Lockerd concedes, the evidence here is sometimes insufficient to show "direct influence," and the arguments instead tend to rest on "commonality of thought and expression" (88). But the chapter on Eliot is more often convincing than not, and especially so when it challenges the critical tendency to split Eliot's work into pre- and post-conversion. Eliot knew of "Wilde and his circle," as he called them, before he left for college, and by 1923 was prepared to praise their "moral quality": a coded reference, Lockerd suggests, to Catholic leanings (102).

And that reading gains some credence when Lockerd notes the thematic parallels between *Ash-Wednesday* (1930) and Lionel Johnson's "Ash Wednesday" (1893), especially both poems' struggles to "reconcile their spiritual needs with fleshly desires" (105). To be sure, this is a thematic, broad-brush comparison, and Lockerd is not always able to pin his argument onto textual and historical detail. But for students of Eliot, the connection is useful nonetheless, as Eliot's idea of religious poetry seems at least to have been encouraged by Johnson's own confessional and liturgical verse, even as he encountered it years before converting. While "the reality of Sin," to use Eliot's phrase, had already been given poetic expression by Dante and Baudelaire, Lockerd shows that Dowson, Johnson, and Beardsley also serve as important—and more immediate—forbears to Eliot's expressions of faith (91).

Eliot's own wide-ranging critical purview is a good fit for Lockerd's argument here, which covers poetry, prose, and illustration and insists on the enduring variety of Catholic art. Eliot is quoted in chapter four, in fact, as lamenting the secularization of novelists, "except Mr. James Joyce" (129); and indeed, Lockerd argues, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914-15) exemplifies Joyce's own, albeit more combative, response to his Irish Catholic (and anti-Catholic) context. Perhaps the book's highlight, however, is the fifth chapter's extended reading of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), which allows for that novel's apparently orthodox, Catholic conclusion to admit stranger, erotic possibilities (179-80). But the implication here is less acutely aesthetic than broadly historical: that Joyce and Waugh themselves sustain Eliot's Catholic "current of feeling" in their work, and that "decadent Catholic" themes might persist across very different forms and situations.

Lockerd concludes, rather less optimistically, with a coda on more recent authors: "Catholicism in post-secular literature is almost never a legitimate source of salvation and inspiration" (190). Broadly speaking, however, *Decadent Catholicism* suggests a more renovating account of the literary interest of religious faith, evincing that flavor of Catholicism—decadent or otherwise—which animates the achievements of modernism. As a result, Eliot's poetry emerges not as anachronistically, artificially, or austere Anglo-Catholic, but as drawing upon diverse artistic contexts which are in their own right compelling.



PUBLIC SIGHTINGS

Compiled by David Chinitz

Prufrock depantsed. In the comic strip *Frazz* for Sunday, May 9, 2021, Caulfield dissects the lines “I grow old . . . I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled,” claiming to his teacher, Mrs. Olsen, that rolling trousers is only something older people do with their waistbands to accommodate their bellies, and that Eliot “painfully forces the meter.” Later, Frazz asks Caulfield, “You trashed a Nobel laureate on the basis of one couplet about pants?” Caulfield explains, “It wasn’t personal. Every poet taken off the lesson plan means more room for Shel Silverstein.” (<https://www.gocomics.com/frazz/2021/05/09>)

The circulation of culture. In an op-ed on the value of local newspapers, Art Marmorstein praises the Aberdeen, SD *American News* as “the kind of paper where (nearly) every column inch is worth reading, the kind of a paper where a farm editor can weave Chaucer and T. S. Eliot into a column without losing the local feel for a second.” One hears an echo of *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* in Marmorstein’s concern for the future: “Localized journalism has been in trouble for decades, and things are getting worse.” (“More Than Ever, Local Newspapers Worth Looking Into,” aberdeennews.com, 5 Aug. 2020)

Second Life. In the *National Catholic Register*, Regis Martin criticizes an NPR broadcast about “a middle-aged single mom who, for many years now,” has been immersed in the simulated world of *Second Life* as an escape from the difficult realities of her own life and responsibilities. Martin finds NPR far too “accepting” of this woman’s mode of escape. He argues: “Whether she knows it or not, she’s living a nightmare, lost in what T. S. Eliot describes as ‘a place of disaffection,’ where there is ‘neither daylight / Investing form with lucid stillness / . . . / Nor darkness to purify the soul.’” Despite the quotation from *Burnt Norton*, another modernist walks away with title credit. (“How to Destroy Virtual Idols? Flannery O’Connor Has the Answer,” ncregister.com, 29 Aug. 2020)

Collusion. From Louise Gluck’s acceptance speech for the 2020 Nobel Prize in Literature:

The poems to which I have, all my life, been most ardently drawn are . . . poems to which the listener or reader makes an essential contribution, as recipient of a confidence or an outcry, sometimes as co-conspirator. “I’m nobody,” Dickinson says. “Are you nobody, too? / Then there’s a pair of us – don’t tell....” Or Eliot: “Let us go then, you

and I, / When the evening is spread out against the sky / Like a patient etherised upon a table....” Eliot is not summoning the boy scout troop. He is asking something of the reader. As opposed, say, to Shakespeare’s “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day”: Shakespeare is not comparing me to a summer’s day. I am being allowed to overhear dazzling virtuosity, but the poem does not require my presence. (<https://www.nobelprize.org>, 7 Dec. 2020)

Lost in information. In *Fortune*, Jeremy Kahn describes his experience using the latest tools in Artificial Intelligence from Primer Labs (San Francisco). To try out the software on one of the most difficult of AI tasks, summarization, he fed “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” into the system. “The results,” he reports, “were not pretty. Other than the fact that ‘the women come and go, speaking [sic] of Michelangelo,’ the system wasn’t really sure what was happening. A lot of high school students could probably sympathize. But no English teacher would give Primer’s results high marks.” (“Can A.I. Understand Poetry?” fortune.com, 18 Aug. 2020)

Not Prince Hamlet. In Season 1, Episode 2 of the HBO series *Succession*, Kendall—the son of a media mogul who is seriously ill—seeks to find a replacement Chief Operating Officer for his father’s company. Frank, a former company employee and close friend of the family, turns down the offer, explaining “I don’t want to be [acting] chairman. I am just an attendant lord, here to swell a scene or two.” Kendall responds, astutely, “What the fuck does that mean?”

Oopsa Cats. How to explore ALL your options to avoid the in-flight movie *Cats*:



<https://www.reddit.com/r/disneyvacation>, 11 Jan 2020

The Wednesday Club

continued from page 2

A club that is large must needs divide
That every taste be gratified
When many together combine.
Sections were formed while over the whole
The central authority held control,
With influence benign.

And now for a decade and more,
The Wednesday Club has stood
For the highest aim, the greatest good,
The broadest and noblest womanhood,
A wider life than before,
Reciprocal help and reciprocal gain,
Grace to receive and strength to sustain,
To take and to restore.

Here may the mind behold
Marvels of Science unfold,
For God reveals in infinite ways,
The central sun in the separate rays,
A hint of secrets untold.
In the universe finite thought shall find
Itself as a part of the Infinite Mind
That works to shape and mold.

Art shall her story repeat,
Ever entrancing and sweet.
Art is the pure creative fire,
A gift of the gods to warm and inspire
With heaven's celestial heat.
The artist's soul must expression find,
And give of its riches to all mankind,
Their vision to complete.

Is there aught in the nation,
In club or federation,
That holds a more important place
Than that which in letters of light we trace,
The Science of Education?
The active mind or the sluggish brain,
Rich and poor must knowledge attain,
Whatever the rank or station.

Economy shall here
As Economies appear.
No longer of quiet domestic taste,
Anxious to save, unwilling to waste,
It strives to enlarge its sphere,
Reciprocity, tariff and tax,

Whatever the mind of the statesman racks,
To us it maketh clear.

History and Literature
The studious mind allure.
The dream of the poet, the thought of the sage,
Fact and fancy from age to age
Abide forever sure.
Tower and turret may crumble with time,
Deeds heroic and thoughts sublime
Enshrined in language endure.

The Current Event demands a song.
Pray listen for it will not be long:

"I am ever new and never old,
Listen while I the riddle unfold.
The very latest event am I,
You cannot afford to pass me by.
Out of fashion and out of date
Are what progressive people hate."

"I ride on the crest of the highest wave,
An automobile is what I crave.
The telegraph and the telephone
My messages hear from zone to zone.
If aught be quicker, pray let me know,
It never would do for me to be slow."

"Let History turn from me with scorn,
Were it not for me she had never been born.
I am life and action, the storm and stress
Of the strenuous life, its joy and distress.
In my outstretched palm the present I hold,
Future events I shape and mould."

"The threads of circumstance all are mine,
In darkness and light they twist and entwine
Although there is blemish and seam and stain
No human effort has been in vain
Then strive that good may overrule,
The current event is the workman's tool."

The circle is complete!
Its arcs together meet
In the one full orb of influence
That widely diffuses its radiance with love's
intenser heat.
Though culture may be our corner stone,
We cannot exist for culture alone
In scholarly retreat.
For lo! Grave problems press.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

The pleadings of distress
Will follow the mind's sublimest flight.
A voice from the depths disturb the height,
When wrongs demand redress.
The Wednesday Club in its action leads,
Crowning progressive thought with deeds.
It works for righteousness.

Each year we grow more wise,
To plan and to devise.
United in work beneficent,
Forces that else were wasted and spent,
The Club will organize.
Vacation Playgrounds will multiply,
And Social Settlements testify
To the power of sacrifice.

Part II.

The Twentieth Century dawns,
Its tender leaves unfold,
And bud and flower their future dower
Of hidden fruitage hold.
An epoch 'tis that comes
But once each hundred years.
The old old world then masquerades,
And young again appears.

Its promise lights the sky,
Its rapture fills the breeze,
Success awaits the outstretched hand,
Courageously to seize.

So in this larger hope,
To-day we gather here,
With resolution to fulfil
Our part this coming year.

To her who here presides,
Give honor! She will be
Impartial always, as befits
One in authority.

'Tis hers to reconcile
Opinions that diverge
Until the larger, better thought,
Born of debate, emerge.

Hail to our President!
This day the common voice
To her allegiance will renew,

A second time our choice.

She comes, the tried and true,
Again she rules and serves,
And we again accord to her
The praise that she deserves.

Part III.

As signal fires that flash from height to height
Rise each responsive with an instant light,
Club answers unto club throughout this land,
On broader lines the work of each is planned.
No longer solitary and apart
Need women work—they labor heart to heart,
Two hundred thousand and many more
Wait ready at the threshold of the door,
To enter in and share the common good
In one strong bond of nobler womanhood.
From city, town and hamlet comes the cry:
"Ours 'tis to think, to work, to fail and try
Yet once again; ~ to learn to overcome,
To find a voice where erstwhile we were dumb,
And through the larger life to make complete
Life's daily round of duties, grown more sweet,
Since clearer mind and sympathetic soul
Find every part illumined by the whole."

In the clear wine of social inspiration
We pledge to-day our Club and Federation,
A century dawns with problems new and strange
The false yields to the true, old customs change.
These are the days when women must be wise
And crown their effort with self sacrifice.
Clubs there shall be, not for life's petty needs,
Nor pride nor fashion, but for noble deeds.
Thus organized, what may not women do?
What will they not, if only they be true
To high ideals and if they unite
With noble purpose to achieve the right.
In numbers large and of expansive creed,
"Noblesse oblige" the Wednesday Club must lead,
When all on living issues concentrate
To work reform in city or in state,
There be our influence felt, and in the nation
Whose clubs combine in one great Federation.

Houghton Library bMS Am 2560 (68), folder 2

ELIOT NEWS

Letters. We welcome the publication of *The Letters of T. S. Eliot Volume 9 (1939-41)*, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden. From Faber's description: "This volume covers the production of Eliot's play *The Family Reunion*; the publication of *The Idea of a Christian Society*; and the joyous versifying of *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*. After exhausting himself through nights of fire-watching in the London wartime blackout, [Eliot] travels the country, attends meetings of The Moot, delivers talks, and advises a fresh generation of writers including Cyril Connolly, Keith Douglas, Kathleen Raine and Vernon Watkins. Major correspondents include W. H. Auden, George Barker, William Empson, Geoffrey Faber, John Hayward, James Laughlin, Hope Mirrlees, Mervyn Peake, Ezra Pound, Michael Roberts, Stephen Spender, Tambimuttu, Allen Tate, Michael Tippet, Charles Williams and Virginia Woolf. *Four Quartets*, Eliot's culminating masterpiece, is discussed in detail." *Time Present* will, of course, review this volume in an upcoming issue.

T. S. Eliot International Summer School Director Anthony Cuda is delighted to announce that the Summer School currently plans to reconvene in-person next year at Senate House in London, 9-17 July 2022. Our readers will not need reminding that this will be the centenary year of *The Waste Land*, and attendees will be in the heart of *Waste Land* territory (a phrase not used in ordinary tourist brochures, but you'll all know what we mean). Applications for scholarships will be accepted beginning no later than November via online portal. All participants who were awarded scholarships for the 2020 program will be automatically offered the opportunity to claim those scholarships for the 2022 session without applying anew. This promises to be a particularly exciting and important session for all who gather in London next July.



An [article](#) in *The New York Times* about artists who become couples contains a paragraph on **Eliot and Emily Hale**, who make their appearance as the piece turns toward the "harsher realities" often undercutting fantasies of "artistic marital bliss."

The National Philharmonic (a Washington area symphony orchestra) is premiering a new work called "Prufrock" to open its next season this October. The concert had been planned for April 2020 but was delayed because of the pandemic. Ticket information may be found [here](#).

SOCIETY NOTES

Applause for **Josh Richards**, bibliographer for *Time Present*, who is now Associate Professor of English at MidAmerica Nazarene University.

Congratulations to new Society member, **Rick de Villiers**, on his forthcoming monograph: [Eliot and Beckett's Low Modernism: Humility and Humiliation](#), which is to be published by Edinburgh University Press in October.

And cheers to **Massimo Bacigalupo**, whose study *Ezra Pound, Italy, and The Cantos* came out last year from Clemson University Press and has been well reviewed in 2021. Massimo also sends us this interesting note:

An innovative translation of *The Waste Land* was published in early 2021 by Il Saggiatore, the Milan publisher that has acquired the Italian rights to Louise Glück's work. Carmen Gallo, born in Naples in 1983 and a lecturer at La Sapienza University in Rome, also a poet, has chosen to translate the title as *La terra devastata*, thus departing from the Italian title current since Mario Praz's translation of 1932, *La terra desolata*. Gallo explains that "waste" and "devastata" have the same root and wants to emphasize World War One and its desolate or devastated landscapes as the essential background of the poem. She also provides maps and ample critical notes, thus opening the great poem to new readers and fresh readings as its centenary approaches. The Italian occasionally condenses the English, as in "E quando da bambini, ospiti dell'arciduca / mio cugino, lui mi portò fuori in slitta, / io avevo paura" ("And when as children, guests of the arch-duke / my cousin, he took me out on a sled, / I was frightened"). Two sentences ("he took me out . . . and I was") have become one

ELIOT NEWS & SOCIETY NOTES

sentence, thus making fear, not the connection with the arch-duke, the center of attention. Translations make us think again of overfamiliar passages.

Dídac Llorens Cubedo announces that, in April 2022, the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED) is hosting the bi-annual conference of the European Association for American Studies ([EAAS](#)). The topic is “Wastelands” and David Chinitz will be one of the plenary speakers. The CFP is open until September 20. (Make sure and visit the EAAS home page for the conference: it makes arresting uses of various “waste land” images)

Barry Spurr (author of *Anglo-Catholic in Religion: T. S. Eliot and Christianity*) is presenting a series of lectures this year on “Great Books” at the Australian Club in Sydney. The third in the series, on *The Waste Land*, will take place on 24 September, 2021, in anticipation of the centenary of the poem’s publication next year. The talk is being recorded with the intention of making it widely available online. (We don’t yet have information about its online location.)

Send news of Eliot-related events and professional milestones to tseliotssociety@gmail.com

ABSTRACTS

AMERICAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

Online, June 4, 2021

Organized and Chaired by Nancy Gish

The Digital Waste Land: 2020

Scholarship over the past few decades has often focused on intertextuality in T. S. Eliot’s poetry and poetics (notably in *The Waste Land* and “Tradition and the Individual Talent”) as largely an elitist reinforcement of the English literary canon, a patriarchal reaction to a sense of cultural destabilization in the early 20th century. My contention is that this intertextuality in *The Waste Land* functions differently when the poem is digitized on the Web. Using primarily Julia Kristeva’s semiotic theory and Katherine Hayles’s new media theory, I analyze various digital versions of *The Waste Land* to determine how the medium informs the poetry and vice versa. A digital *Waste Land* encourages an “active intertextuality,” which does not merely recall and refashion the pre-read, but demands a multidirectional departure from the poem that undercuts the poem’s direction of its own reading. A digital *Waste Land* thereby demonstrates that canonicity is integral to yet malleable in all literature by nature of its inherent intertextuality. This is true of *The Waste Land* in particular, though this “active intertextuality” raises broader questions of readerly agency in online reading.

Will Best
U Calgary

His Heart on His Sleeve: Eliot, Emily Hale, and the Personal Work of Art

This paper tests Eliot’s enigmatic poem “Gerontion” and his famously Olympian claims in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” against the theory he privately articulated to Emily Hale in a letter: “The poet wears his heart upon his sleeve.” Drawing on his comments to her about the identity of the poem’s characters, his published correspondence with Richard Aldington, Eleanor Hinkley, Mary Hutchinson, and others during the summer of 1919, and insights from Ann Pasternak Slater’s new biography of Vivien Eliot, *The Fall of a Sparrow*, this paper interprets the guilt driving the speaker of “Gerontion” in light of his outsized sense of responsibility in his role as the caregiver of a substance abuser. Moreover, I examine his introduction of the phrases “extinction of personality” and “depersonalization” into “Tradition” in light of Richard Aldington’s criticism of Eliot’s poetry as “over-intellectual and afraid of those essential emotions which make poetry.” The new biographical information suggests that both “Gerontion” and Eliot’s much-quoted essay bear the impress of a personal crisis perhaps more ordinary, though no less searing, than we have thought.

Frances Dickey
U of Missouri

Eliot at the Border: Reimagining *The Waste Land* as a “Translation Space” in *Lost Children Archive*

This paper examines the place of *The Waste Land* in Valeria Luiselli’s *Lost Children Archive* (2019). Luiselli has described the generative effect that Eliot’s “paradigmatic modernist poem” had on Latin American writers when it appeared in Enrique Manguía’s prose translation in the July 1930 issue of the Mexico-City based journal *Contemporáneos*. Luiselli makes the textual body of the poem a place that her migrant child characters enter and in which they threaten to disappear when she superimposes Eliot’s “heart of light” onto the U.S.-Mexico border in the culminating sections of her novel. At the same time, she positions *The Waste Land* as the moveable or translatable place of origin for the themes, forms and methods on which *Lost Children Archive* as a whole depends.

Susan Edmunds
Syracuse U

“The Darkness of God”: T. S. Eliot and the Miltonic Allusions of *East Coker III*

This paper explores T. S. Eliot’s use of allusion from John Milton’s *Samson Agonistes* in *East Coker III* (1940). While Eliot’s use of allusion is widely acknowledged throughout his entire oeuvre and has been well studied in *Four Quartets*, the Miltonic allusion in *East Coker III* has only briefly and cursorily been examined in literary criticism of the poem. The allusion is generally noticed, acknowledged, and then dropped. It is the contention of this paper that Eliot’s use of the allusion from *Samson Agonistes* in *East Coker III* is essential to understanding *East Coker* and *Four Quartets* as a whole. Using Gregory Machacek’s understanding of how allusion works, this paper argues that the Samson allusion which begins the third part of *East Coker* is the dramatic turning point of the poem, and the dramatic turning point of *Four Quartets*. The allusion to Milton places Eliot’s speaker-poet in dialogue with and direct contrast to the Miltonic hero, both in his verbal and active responses to a seemingly absent God, and in his reactions to his existential despair. This paper places *East Coker III* into the allusive context of Milton’s *Samson Agonistes* and the historical context of its publication on Good Friday 1940, to show how these contexts can enlighten the darkness of the speaker and the speaker’s God.

Kate Jorgenson
U New Hampshire

To Translate or Not to Translate: Foreign Language Citations in *The Waste Land*.

In *The Waste Land*, Eliot conspicuously uses German (*Tristan*, etc), French, Latin, and Italian (Dante), even Sanskrit, but the Prophets and Old Testament are considered basically “English” from the King James Bible. The Biblical “belongs” to England in a curious way. This essay investigates Eliot’s use of foreign citations in *The Waste Land* (there are 12 citations in all) and asks the question: why does Eliot sometimes translate his source—e.g., “I had not thought death had undone so many,” and sometimes leaves it in the original language, as in “Poi s’ascose nel fuoco che gli affina.” I pay special attention to the use of Sanskrit, which I take to be problematic, and the non-use of Hebrew in the passage of citations from the Hebrew Prophets.

Marjorie Perloff
Stanford U

Delivering the Impossible: Voice, Affect, and Intimacy in the Eliot / Emily Hale Letters

This paper considers the letters from T. S. Eliot to Emily Hale, her accompanying narrative, and the resulting commentary, by way of intimate life writing studies and relationality. This unique cache of life writing materials, and its readers, offer an opportunity for further comprehension and conceptualizing of the nature of intimacy. This paper offers reflections on absence, affects, and the conjuring of a “we”/ “not-we,” both through intimate exchange and via the readers of that exchange in their reception of the archive and suggests some possible themes and questions that future readers might consider. Most salient is the proposition that we might read Eliot’s letters to Hale, and Hale’s own narrativizing of their relationship, as exemplars of the affects of intimate and relational life writing.

Janine Utell
Widener U

T. S. Eliot Bibliography 2020

By Josh Richards

MidAmerica Nazarene U

If you are aware of any 2020 citations that do not appear here, please contact Josh Richards (josh.c.richards@gmail.com). Omissions will be rectified in the 2021 listing.

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***Time Present* Pieces on the Eliot / Hale Correspondence**

[*Bibliographer's Note: Time Present made a concerted effort to run short essays on the newly opened Eliot-Hale correspondence in each of its issues for 2020. Here is a gathering of the year's work in our newsletter.*]

Brooker, Jewel Spears. "Eliot's Ghost Story: Reflections on His Letters to Emily Hale." *Time Present*, Summer 2020.

Christensen, Karen. "The Love of a Good Woman." *Time Present*, Spring 2020.

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ELECTION OUTCOME

Megan Quigley and Ria Banerjee were nominated to fill the seats vacated by Nancy Gish and Cyrena Pondrom, and no election was held because the seats

were uncontested. Congratulations and welcome, Megan and Ria, and thank you, Nancy and Cyrena, for your years of service.

The International T. S. Eliot Society

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To make suggestions or inquiries regarding the annual meeting or other Society activities, please contact the president, Jayme Stayer, at jstayer@luc.edu

Conference Proposals

To submit papers for any conference session sponsored by the Society, please send your abstract to tseliotsociety@gmail.com, or to the specific individual named in the call for papers.

Time Present

For matters having to do with *Time Present: The Newsletter of the International T. S. Eliot Society*, please contact the vice president, John Whittier-Ferguson, at johnaw@umich.edu

Reviews

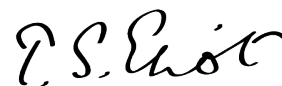
To inquire about reviewing a book or having a book reviewed, please contact Book Review Editor Ria Banerjee at Ria.Banerjee@guttman.cuny.edu.

Membership and Registration

To join the Society, renew your membership, make a donation, or report a change of address, please visit the "Membership and Events Portal" accessed from the [Membership page](#) of our website. You can register for our conference via the [Annual Meeting page](#) (click on "Membership and Events Portal"). For questions regarding payment of membership dues or conference fees, contact the treasurer, David Chinitz, at Dchinit@luc.edu or by mail at:

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Crown Center for the Humanities
1032 W. Sheridan Road
Chicago, IL 60660

Published on behalf of
the International T. S. Eliot Society by
John Whittier-Ferguson, Editor
Frances Dickey, Associate Editor
and with the generous assistance of
the T. S. Eliot Foundation and
Baylor University English Department



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