

T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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1999 ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD IN GLOUCESTER

In September, the Board of Directors voted to hold the Society's 20th Annual meeting in Gloucester, Massachusetts, September 24 - 26, 1999. Gloucester was the summer home of the Eliot family starting in 1892, and in 1896 Henry Ware Eliot built "The Downs" on Eastern Point. It was on Cape Ann that young Tom learned to sail and to love the sea. The deep impression left on him by Gloucester and its adjoining waters is found throughout his poetry, notably in "The Dry Salvages." In prose, his preface to James B. Connolly's *Fishermen of the Banks* anticipates Sebastian Junger's current bestseller, *The Perfect Storm*.

The 20th Memorial lecturer will be Helen Vendler, A. Kingsley Porter Professor of English at Harvard University. Among the special activities being arranged for the meeting are a tour of Gloucester, including visits to the Eliot house, the site of the Massachusetts Bay Colony (1623), and Our Lady of Good Voyage Church; also included are a boat tour of Cape Ann and the Dry Salvages, and a gallery tour of the Fitz Hugh Lane collection at the Cape Ann Historical Association.

The Board encourages submissions of papers on the theme "T.S. Eliot and New England: Historical Contexts"; as usual, papers on other topics are also welcome. Some papers on "the local flavour" may be included in a panel co-sponsored by the Gloucester Lyceum/Sawyer Free Library, with which the Society is cooperating. The Lyceum numbers among its guest speakers Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, and has recently presented celebrations of authors with Gloucester connections, such as Rudyard Kipling and Charles Olson, featuring readings by renowned actor Michael York.

A special request: Ben Lockerd, who is coordinating local transportation for the Gloucester meeting, would like to know as early as possible how many members plan to

drive cars or vans to Gloucester. Please contact him at (616) 247-6916 or lockerdb@gvsu.edu. Address other questions about the conference to the Conference Coordinator, David Huisman, at (616) 452-0478.

Call for Papers ALA 1999: Baltimore

The ninth annual conference of the American Literature Association will be held from May 27 to 30, 1999, at the Renaissance Harborplace in Baltimore. The T. S. Eliot Society will sponsor one or two sessions. Papers must not be longer than 20 minutes. No person may present more than one paper at the conference, and chairs may not present a paper on panels they are moderating.

Members of the Society who have suggestions for organizing a topical session are urged to contact Linda Wyman **immediately**. She may be reached at 621-6 Woodlander Dr., Jefferson City, MO 65101; by phone at (573) 634-5431 or (573) 681-5233; by FAX at 573-681-5040; or by e-mail at wymanl@lincolnu.edu. Members who wish to submit one-page proposals for individual papers are invited to do so **by January 10, 1999**.

Members of the T. S. Eliot Society are automatically members of ALA and are entitled to attend its conference. Further information about the 1999 conference will appear in the Spring newsletter.

Highlights of Annual Meeting of the Board

Present at the September 25 Board meeting were officers Linda Wyman, Shyamal Bagchee, William Charron, Grover Smith, and Sanford Schwartz and

members Michael Coyle, Melanie Fathman, William Harmon, Earl Holt, David Huisman, and Benjamin Lockerd. Among actions taken by the Board were the following:

- Virginia Phelan was re-elected to a three-year term as Historian.
- The Society continues to work toward the establishment of its Web site; funds are budgeted for this project.
- The Board approved David Huisman's proposal to hold the 1999 annual meeting of the Society in Gloucester, Massachusetts (see article elsewhere in this issue). Preference will be given to papers which explore Eliot's relation to New England.

Eliot Memorial Plaques Unveiled

Sumana Senbagchee
Grant MacEwan College, Alberta

The Saturday afternoon excursion, a long-standing tradition during the Society's annual meetings, is always something special to look forward to and has taken us to interesting new venues each time. This year's event, in my view, was the highlight of the meeting, a ceremony long-awaited by both Society members as well as by those gracious, enthusiastic St. Louis residents who made it possible: the dedication of a sidewalk plaque at 4446 Westminster Place, "the teenage home" of Eliot.

It was a pleasantly sunny afternoon for this outdoor ceremony, under the tall shady trees of the quiet street, in front of the impressive Eliot house itself, flanked by others like it, and of the same vintage, if I am not mistaken. The occasion was jointly organised, with much love and dedication by the St. Louis T. S. Eliot Memorial Committee, the St Louis Authors Project, and, of course, the untiring efforts of our own members, Donna Charron and Melanie Fathman. The ceremony included "Recognitions" (of all who made the project possible) by Donna Charron, "Reflections" and "Projections" by various speakers, and ended, appropriately, with some recitations from Eliot by our own President, Linda Wyman.

The plaque itself, unveiled, showed an elegantly-conceived and impressively-executed work, and immediately there was a great flurry and

excitement amongst us for the best angle--from which to see it and to take pictures of it. Dr. and Mrs. Eric Richards, the new owners, later opened their house for a tour of the historic home and grounds and for the Society's customary evening festivities. This continuation of the afternoon's "dedication of the plaque" into the evening's socialising made for a thoughtful and graceful transition. I must confess that in 1991, on being taken to what was once the Eliot house on 2635 Locust Street--and what is now an asphalt parking lot--I was quite dismayed by its unmarked and unremarkable face. It felt good to know that a similar plaque has also been placed at the Locust Street location.

Abstracts: Annual Meeting, 1998

19th Memorial Lecture: "Eliot as Theorist of the Emotions"

Charles Altieri
University of California, Berkeley

Eliot's poetry offers such powerful and intelligent renderings of emotions that I think it worth trying to understand how they might help us actually engage contemporary theoretical discourses on that topic. So I adapt what I take his thinking on the emotions to be to four basic concerns. First, he engages the topic of intentionality within emotions by inviting us to look beyond the individual agent to more general structures of affective agency that can be embodied in lyric poetry. Emotions can take the shape of something like transpersonal forms that then have substantial effects on how we understand social bonds. Second, Eliot provides a suggestive means of correlating the active and passive aspects of affective life, those by which emotions shape sensibility and those by which distinctive sensibilities make their mark on how the emotion is experienced. Eliot's concern for Eastern religions helped him recognize the various ways that sitting still for him is not inseparable from the most active spiritual investments. Third, Eliot offers a poetic rendering of emotions that can be said to supplement reason while also inviting our attention to the limitations of such sanguine "cognitivist" views of

emotional functioning: poetry tests the social consequences of emotions by exploring what is possible and what is limited in the ways that we provide words for them. And finally, Eliot helps us think through what might be involved in treating emotions as ends in themselves while bracketing the frameworks that reason provides for assessing them. Most important here is the possibility of assessing emotions by the internal volumetric spaces they afford the psyche.

In order to clarify what these theoretical moves allow, the talk proposes three ways in which it makes sense to see Eliot on the emotions as offering substantial social news. First the failures of his efforts to historicize the dissociation of sensibility dramatize its persistence throughout western cultural life; second, his conceit-based style flaunts the limitations of our standard emotional grammars while pointing to layers of affective force that we can only engage by exploring new models of agency; third, his sense of the intricate interdependencies between these forces and the linguistic formulations attempting to embody them provides him (and us) an arena in which we can envision how modifying our writing can modify who we become as agents.

Among persons attending the 1998 annual meeting were members from Canada, Italy, and Japan.

Dramatizing Multiple Temporalities: Rhythm and Ritual in *The Family Reunion*

Miriam M. Chirico
Emory University

Agatha: What is in your mind, Harry?
I can guess about the past and what you mean about the future;
But a present is missing, needed to connect them.

Much of T. S. Eliot's work explores how various temporalities, such as the past, present, and future, or sacred and ordinary time, interpenetrate and influence each another. However, staging this time-philosophy in *The Family Reunion* results in difficulties for the audience. The action of the play, the spiritual transformation of the main character, requires

dramatizing multiple moments that occur simultaneously. The central character's spiritual transformation is prompted by his encounter with his family and friends and his acquaintance with the various selves of his past life; he relives memories that not only affect his present life, but shape his future. This concept of interwoven time is limited by the conventions of drama, a genre that is rooted in the present moment. Unlike poetry or the novel, which can represent the Bergsonian experience of a character's present impregnated with all of his or her past experiences, drama is fixed within the present by the very real quality of the actor's body upon the stage. How does Eliot manage to circumvent the theatrical conventions of time in order to dramatize the character's time-experience?

I argue that Eliot incorporates a keen sense of rhythm, not only in verse, but in ritual, to mark these temporal differences in performance. Using rhythm's ability to affect an audience on an emotive and visceral level, Eliot manipulates poetic forms to denote diverse temporalities. He alters the verse form from the quotidian, "language of the tribe," to a lyrical dialogue to indicate when the characters experience spiritual transcendence, thus moving the characters outside of time, as it were, and loosening the bonds of realism in order to encompass two temporalities. Furthermore, while the play appears to be a detective story regarding whether or not Harry killed his wife, the impetus behind the play directs the characters toward "sin and expiation." True to its mythic counterpart, the action of the play revolves around expiating the family curse, which Harry can only do by taking upon himself his father's sin. Ritual, by enabling the character to reenact the past, allows Harry to commit his father's sin symbolically. He enters into an ambiguous relation with Agatha--"half of a lover, half of a son,"¹--whereby he inherits his father's past act of adultery and can begin to atone for it in the present.

I suggest using the term "rhythm drama" for Eliot's plays instead of "verse drama" to emphasize ritual's importance alongside verse in depicting this interaction of temporalities. The direction of "The Family Reunion" must not only take into consideration the varying qualities of the verse, but the choreography of those transcendent moments that reenact the past. The rhythm created by repeated sounds (poetry) or repeated gestures (ritual) is Eliot's solution to a difficult dramatic problem. Awareness of such rhythm would permit the dramatic representation of the past

intersecting with the present, and would allow Eliot to collapse time on stage as he does in his poetry.

¹ Letter to E. Martin Browne. *The Making of T. S. Eliot's Plays*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969, p. 107.

PUBLICATION: Society member Richard Badenhausen has published "T.S. Eliot's Parenthetical Method in the Clark Lectures" in *South Atlantic Review*, 62.4 (1977): 57-72.

Baptism Averted: Bodily Waters in *The Waste Land*

Nancy Goldfarb
Western Kentucky University

Eliot's aversion to the body in *The Waste Land* short-circuit his quest for a mystical experience (Childs 117). The potentially mystical moment in the poem occurs in "What the Thunder Said" with "Who is the third who walks always beside you?" (V. 360). In his note on the line, Eliot refers to an account of an Arctic expedition in which "it was related that the party of explorers, at the extremity of their strength, had the constant delusion that there was one more member than could actually be counted." The transcendent moment the Arctic explorers achieved was a result of a heightened physical awareness and ability that Eliot, because of his horror of the body, can only imagine and marvel at.

This paper explores this body repulsion by examining Eliot's use of water and drowning imagery. The simultaneous search for and fear of water in *The Waste Land* corresponds to an abhorrence of the body. The hopeful third message of the thunder, "Damyata," offers a nautical image of control that consists not of mastery over the body, but of forging a relationship with it. The boat responds gaily to the expert hand that guides it because the hand, like a mind well-versed in the language of the body, is an extension of the boat.

By identifying with Ferdinand, who is used by shipwreck, and not with Prospero, who uses shipwreck to reclaim his rightful title as Duke of Milan, the allusions to Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* in *The Waste Land* overlook the redemptive potential of

shipwreck and drowning. The overwhelming sense of impotence that governs Eliot's poem, figured by an agricultural and interpersonal drought, inhibits an identification with Prospero, for whom shipwreck has a baptismal effect. Shipwrecking Alonso, Ferdinand and Antonio gives Prospero the opportunity to begin his life anew. In narrating his history to Miranda, he is able to "gain control of it, to revise and rectify the past" (Orgel 15). By contrast, the fragmented structure of *The Waste Land* and its periodic return of repressed sexuality, preclude any sense of narrative control.

Works Cited

- Childs, Donald J. *T. S. Eliot: Mystic, Son, and Lover*. New York: St. Martin's, 1997.
Orgel, Stephen, ed. *"The Tempest" by William Shakespeare*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987.

Nine of the ten persons who presented papers at the Society's 1998 annual meeting were first-time presenters. Seven of these persons were attending their first meeting of the Society.

The Theology of *Four Quartets*

Laurence Kriegshauser, O.S.B.
Saint Louis Abbey

Theological themes undergird T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*. The first is the theme of Incarnation, "the impossible union of spheres of existence," which offers to man a fusion of the transitory and the abiding, the past and future, the "fire and the rose." However, this state is won only through a renunciation "costing not less than everything," a suffering akin to death, a path of ascetical self-naughting which constitutes the second theological theme of the work. The third theme is the Church, the community/communion which through its sacraments and tradition provides the context for the mystical union aforementioned and at the same time embodies the "dance" of creatures "at the still point" of God. But these theological themes do not make *Four Quartets* a sermon or treatise, since they are woven into words and rhythms and images that provide an intense poetic experience, an experience of "quivering" joy.

The September 26 service at First Unitarian Church of St. Louis featured two musical compositions inspired by Eliot poems: an organ prelude *Journey of the Magi*, written and performed by Dennis Bergin, the church organist, and a trumpet solo, Persichetti's *The Hollow Men*, performed by Malcolm McDuffee.

Through a Window: Eliot's Female Readers

Gail McDonald

University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Speaking at the Mary Institute's centennial celebration in 1959, Eliot remembered himself, wryly, as a little boy crossing the boundary of the sexes when he came into the girls' schoolyard to play at the end of the day: "I was always on the other side of the wall; and on one occasion I remember, when I ventured into the schoolyard a little too early when there were still a few [girls] on the premises and I saw them staring at me through a window, I took flight at once." Eliot's anecdote furnishes controlling metaphors for the essay I propose: girls staring through a schoolhouse window at T. S. Eliot. The image is still resonant, but the components have been transformed: the schoolhouse has changed, the girls have changed, and so consequently has the object of their curious stares.

I begin with the assumption that a writer's reception is shaped by institutional and sociological dynamics. One of the most significant events in this century's academic history is the entrance of women into formerly male enclaves. Coincident with that event was an historic shift in the curriculum from ancient to modern literatures. Women became a part of the academy in significant numbers just as Eliot's influence began to loom large. My essay examines this "triangulation": female students, a modernized curriculum, and the rise of T. S. Eliot. Remarkably enough, given Eliot's current status in the academy as conservator of tradition, he was at first viewed by the academic power structure as largely subversive. As Muriel Bradbrook recalls in her essay "Growing Up with T. S. Eliot," at Oxford, "Eliot was officially without any attention;" at the more up-to-date Cambridge, however, Eliot became the basis of the

new *tripos* in 1926. A second significant event in academic history has been the rise of feminist approaches in literary criticism. Dating roughly from the 1960s, the perspectives born of feminism radically altered Eliot's status for a number of influential critics. No longer the spokesman of the younger generation, Eliot became for these readers a symbol of authoritarianism, patriarchy, and misogyny. The change of tone from Bradbrook to Gilbert and Gubar is dramatic.

As critical approaches gain and lose hegemony, so rise and fall the stock of literary reputations. How to account for these hydraulics? Clearly the answer must be complex, and the gender of Eliot's readers alone will not account for the shift of Eliot's influence from "subversive" to "oppressive." However, viewing Eliot from that purposely limited vantage point clarifies not only the range of positions among his female readers, but also offers insight into other academic values, in particular, the prestige of the "impersonal."

The meanings of impersonality, for the academy in general and for women in the academy especially, have been usefully explored by Suzanne Clark in *Sentimental Modernism*. Building on her model, I consider the academic status of sentimentality and self-indulgence—traits Eliot painstakingly avoided. I contend that a complex understanding of Eliot's "impersonality" leads to further insight into academic culture: the diminishing intellectual status of an authority outside or beyond the self.

Both orthodox religious belief and literary analysis of the New Critical variety derive from acceptance of an authority outside or beyond the personal or subjective, whether by reference to an established tradition or to the claims of an autotelic text. Because authoritative religious and literary discourses have long been associated with men, it is worthwhile to be alert to the voices of women, relatively recent arrivals on the institutional scene. How might being an unwanted newcomer on the university campus affect one's reading of Eliot? How eager might one be to align oneself with an acknowledged cultural authority? Or, conversely, how might one's position be enhanced by debunking that authority? How has the reputation of Eliot been changed as feminist scholarship gains legitimacy and alters the standards by which writing and the writer are evaluated?

To answer these questions, I compare the views of Eliot in the works of Helen Gardner, Kathleen Raine, and Muriel Bradbrook to more recent assessments by Lyndall Gordon, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. I draw also upon the under-utilized source of female critical opinion in the four-volume *Critical Assessments* series edited by Graham Clark. These include richly various views of Eliot by May Sinclair, Elinor Wylie, Babette Deutsch, and others.

Of course there is not unanimity among female readers on the question of Eliot's poetic, cultural, or academic authority; there is, however, a discernible and documentable generational shift that runs parallel to the increasing presence and power of female readers in the academy. To trace this shift is, as I have indicated, to trace an evolution in the inhabitants and design of the schoolhouse. Staring through the schoolhouse window at Eliot, we inevitably see a reflection of ourselves.

The River and the Sea: The Creation of Affect in "The Dry Salvages"

Lorne Mook
University of Cincinnati

In *The Myth of the Modern* (1987), Perry Meisel writes that by the time of *Four Quartets* Eliot's poetics rely on "the authority of a frankly divine agency whose truth the writer simply transcribes" (109); and in *T. S. Eliot and the Use of Memory* (1996), Grover Smith states that he finds in the three *Quartets* following "Burnt Norton" a "poverty of emotion" (98). Other critics have made similarities for the lack of affect in some or all of the *Quartets*. As part of an effort to demonstrate that these critics are missing something, I argue that Eliot successfully creates affect even in what is arguably the most didactic of the *Quartets*.

Two manipulations of the river and sea settings that are presented in the first section are integral to the creation of affect in the poem. Both manipulations prepare the way for the assertion near the poem's end that we "are only undefeated / Because we have gone on trying," because, as the closing lines suggest, we are river-like. First, the emphasis on the river as a power unregarded by adult humans in a mechanistic

world allows it to remain located emotionally in a world before adulthood and before "worshippers of the machine," and thus to be saved for metaphorical usage at the poem's end. Second, the displacement of a Heraclitean river-trope (the river of time keeps flowing continuously) from the river onto the sea allows the river to be associated at the poem's end not merely with time's mechanical continuing but with *our* spiritual continuing.

Eliot's Use of Literary Allusion in the Epigraph to "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar"

Patricia Sloan
City University of New York

The epigraph to T. S. Eliot's "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar" is made up of fragments from six different authors. In 1949, Worthington asked Eliot about the three scraps that had not been previously identified by F. O. Matthiessen (1935).¹ Worthington agrees with Matthiessen that the epigraph adds nothing to "Burbank", and is "less successful than most of Eliot's epigraphs." Yet I find, for two reasons, that this is Eliot's most complex epigraph.

(A) It introduces use of the double, or layered, allusion, in which the "source" text from which a fragment is lifted is so tightly tied to a second text that both texts may need to be considered. The first fragment, for example, is from Gautier's *Emaux et Camées*. The book, recommended to Eliot by Ezra Pound, was an icon for aesthetes. In Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*, Dorian effuses mightily over the gorgeous paper and binding, and over Gautier's "lovely lines." The fragment Eliot borrows comes from the very poem that thrills Dorian, and "Burbank" is loaded with borrowings from both *Dorian Gray* and *Emaux et Camées*. Those from *Dorian Gray* include the cigar-chomping Bleistein, whose name, however, is taken from that of a London furrier.

(B) Largely on the evidence of cross-referencing, Eliot may have developed "Burbank" as an improvisation on its own epigraph. A more interesting question concerns the extent to which he also developed *The Waste Land* as an improvisation on the epigraph of "Burbank." Though the two poems give an impression of being essentially

dissimilar, they seem to be unusually heavily cross-referenced. We know they were not written at the same time. One of the few remaining possibilities is that Eliot kept "Burbank" or its epigraph in mind while organizing *The Waste Land*.

¹Matthiessen, *The Achievement of T.S. Eliot: An Essay on the Nature of Poetry*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1959 [1938], p. 53; Jane Worthington, "The Epigraphs to the Poetry of T.S. Eliot." *American Literature* 21 (March 1949): 1-15. See also Grover Smith, *T.S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays: A Study in Sources and Meanings*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965, p. 52 and B.C. Southam, *A Guide to the Selected Poems of T.S. Eliot*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1968, pp. 81-86.

Allusive Practice as Political Theory: Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*

Jayne Stayer
Owens Community College, Ohio

In comparing two works of Eliot and Stravinsky, I focus on allusion, finding first an abundance of that trope; second, a variety of allusions from highbrow and lowbrow sources; third, the self-conscious use of allusion (both works "footnote" their allusions); and fourth, the stylistic use of allusion to disrupt the narrative or musical fabric. In addition to other technical congruences between the works, there is much that connects Eliot and Stravinsky politically, personally and historically; they pledged allegiance to the same aesthetics, comparable politics, and similarly conservative Christian religions, and as I illustrate in the paper, appropriated similar kinds of materials in similar ways for similar rhetorical effects.

Yet aside from the technical and the aesthetic, there is not much comparative work on Eliot and Stravinsky. One reason, besides the disciplinary gulf that divides them, may be that these artists have two very different reputations. Their current reputations are related to the academy's perception of their political commitments. The political thrust in literary studies that has abetted Eliot's downfall, had it ever been turned on Stravinsky, would have caused an even greater fall for the composer than it did for the poet. I briefly outline some of the reasons some Stravinsky scholars, and Stravinsky himself, have worked hard to separate his music from the political, historical and autobiographical currents that shaped it.

From these two vantage points--the tight congruence between their uses of allusion and their similar worldviews--I stumble into the question: is there a relationship between their interest in allusion and their politics? I do not try to assert an *a priori* relationship between form and ideology as some Marxists do. Rather, I move by indirection, asking why no committed Modernists of the Left (or at least none that I could think of) were as heavily invested in allusion as Eliot and Stravinsky. I also point, respectively, to T.E. Hulme and the conservative French paper, the *Nouvelle revue française*, as a way of reminding us of the conservative political roots of Eliot's and Stravinsky's interest in the Neoclassical discipline of form. In the conclusion of the paper, I move from the realm of text, allusion, history, and authorial intent into the realm of the contemporary interpreter with examples from two different recordings of *Oedipus Rex*. Following Richard Taruskin, I argue that the difference between Claudio Abbado's rough and dramatic approach and Esa-Pekka Salonen's sleek presentation exists less in their artistic approaches to the score than in their ideological approaches to music. Salonen's ideology I locate as loosely related to the "authentic music movement," even though Salonen is not normally associated with that set of practices, and Stravinsky's music does not normally fit that movement's purview. Considering the ideology of musical interpretation, it is worth noting that this "historical" movement's unhistorical ideology--the impersonal presentation, the absence of emotion, and a New Critical fidelity to what's on the page rather than to the interpreter's "subjective" response--has its roots, certainly not in the far history of Renaissance music, but in the nearer history of the Neo-classical posturing of Eliot and Stravinsky.

Eliot's Attempt at a Political *Via Media* as Revealed in His Journal *The Criterion*

Michael Stevens
Cornerstone College

My paper pursues a sort of unveiling of the socio-political development of Eliot, as worked out in *The Criterion*. I contend that the original motives for the review, ostensibly the "intellectual healing" of Europe after the First World War, were effectively snuffed out by the rise of totalitarian states in Europe, and

the subsequent closure of international discourse. However, this political shutdown actually served as a welcome confluence with Eliot's conversion to Christianity in 1927, since his development of a Christian social critique was pointedly anti-modern, and actually flowered into a defense of the need for what I call neo-Medievalism." Hence, I take *The Criterion* of the 1930s, with its round criticism of both Communism and Fascism (and it is in the journal that one sees clearly that Eliot was no Fascist), and with its celebration of Christian sociology, and the *via media* ideal of Anglican theology writ large, as the proving ground where Eliot worked out his final political vision.

In fact, if one might say that the "formation period" of the neo-Medieval vision had reached its culmination in the American lecture tour, then the return to England marked the beginning of Eliot's application of that vision to Western civilization. As the heir of the true "metaphysical" poets, as he implied in the 1933 Turnbull Lectures, and therefore the voice of synthesis in a time of dissolution, Eliot must have seen his role as analogous to that of Dante in the midst of Ghibellines and Guelphs.

Apparently, then, the preponderance of theology and ethics in *The Criterion* of the mid to late 1930s is not a sign of failure; it was an intentional response to the easy extremes of political ideology. It was the only *via media* tenable in a world without moderation. However, there can be no understanding of the outworking of Eliot's neo-Medieval vision until one particular conflation is resolved: the notion that Eliot's conservatism links him inextricably with fascism. The testament of *The Criterion* directly contradicts such a claim. So, interestingly enough, does the demise of the journal, if one sees it not as the result of stultified and embarrassing socio-political notions, but rather as a failure of medium. The closure of his quarterly review, followed by Eliot's rapid flowering in poetry, drama, and discursive sociological treatise, seems to represent a transfer to media more appropriate for the outworking of his vision. The journal, which had proven a most flexible and supple forum for the nascent neo-Medieval vision, could no longer sustain in short articles, book reviews, and reviews of foreign periodicals the "weight of the world" which Eliot was shouldering. He had grown yet more Dantescan; hence, *Four Quartets* as his *Commedia*, and *The Idea of a Christian Society* as his *De Monarchia*.

Thomas Jefferson University Press has announced the publication of its 1998 T. S. Eliot Prize winning book of poems, *Where Horizons Go* by Rhina P. Espaillat. The Press awards the annual prize, "in honour of T.S. Eliot's considerable intellectual and artistic legacy," to a book-length collection of poetry in English. The winning manuscript, chosen in an international competition, is published under the Press' "New Odyssey Press" imprint, and also receives a \$ 2000.00 cash reward. X.J. Kennedy was the judge for the 1998 competition. Further details can be had from the Press located at Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 63501, or on the web at <http://tjup.truman.edu/tseliot>.

FOR HELP WITH SOCIETY MATTERS

To submit papers for any reading session sponsored by the Society, or to make suggestions or inquiries regarding the annual meeting or other Society activities, please contact the president:

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