

T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Number 54

Fall 2004

Published by the T. S. Eliot Society (incorporated in the State of Missouri as a literary non-profit organization);
5007 Waterman Boulevard; St. Louis, Missouri 63108

2005 MEETING

The Eliot Society Meeting in 2005 will be held in St. Louis, September 23-25. We will return to our home territory and to our tradition of holding the meeting on the weekend nearest the poet's birthday, September 26.

CALL FOR PAPERS
ALA Annual Meeting, Boston, 2005

The Society will hold two sessions at the 2005 Annual Meeting of the American Literature Association, to be held May 26-29 at the Westin Copley Place Hotel in Boston. Members wishing to read papers are invited to send proposals or abstracts—between 300 and 500 words long—to the President, Professor Benjamin Lockerd, Department of English, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI 49401. Electronic submissions are preferred and should be sent to him at lockerdb@gvsu.edu. Submissions must be received no later than January 15, 2005.

Individual presentation time is limited to twenty minutes. Readers and presenters must have current membership in The T.S. Eliot Society. Note: it is a general conference rule that no one may present more than one paper at the ALA conference. Further information about the conference is available at the ALA website: www.calstatela.edu/academic/english/ala2.

20TH CENTURY LITERATURE CONFERENCE, LOUISVILLE, KY, FEBRUARY 24-26, 2005
T. S. Eliot Society Panel

The three papers all address Eliot's two long poems, *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets*. In different ways, they speak of Eliot's response to life in the modern, mechanized world, and particularly to city life.

Chair: Benjamin G. Lockerd, Jr., President, T. S. Eliot Society

J. N. Nodelman, University of Alberta
"Gear-and-girder-age Narrative and T. S. Eliot's 'The Dry Salvages'"

Patricia S. Garofalo, Grand Valley State University
"In Scorn of Eyes: Tiresias and the Lady in the Pub in *The Waste Land*"

Richard Badenhausen, Westminster College
"Totalizing the City: Eliot, de Certeau, and the Evolution of *The Waste Land*"

[Editor's Note: In October 2004 the Boston Red Sox of the American League became, for the first time since 1918, World Champions of Baseball by defeating the St. Louis Cardinals of the National League in four straight games. The two cities are those in the United States best known by T. S. Eliot.]

Alec Marsh

THE PROMISED LAND

For Max Mason
Il miglior fabbro

I. The Resurrection of the Sox

October as the reddest month? Breeding
Champions out of the dead land, nixing
Memories with its fire, stirring
Old roots with fall rain?
The Curse kept us cold, shivering
Us with fretful snow, feeding
Our baseball life with false rumors.
October surprised us, three down in clammy Fen-
way
Then the Bosox power train; Ortiz's and Damon's
cannonade
And Bellhorn ringing the foul pole bells: one, two,
three
As we went out in moonlight out of the beer gar-
dens
And talked amongst ourselves, of the almosts, the
exile
"I know it's been eighty-six years; I'm eighty-
four."
When I was young it was St. Louis and Pesky held
the ball

And later Gibson, Burton, Buckner, Boone-- and
down we went
But now, in the moonlight, now we feel free
We can sleep now at night; go south in the spring.

What of the teams that choked, what crochets grew
Out of that moldy rubbish? Red Sox Fan,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
That heap of broken images, those ancient defeats
Have been scattered helter skelter, 'cuz Foulkie's
in relief
Gone the ghost of Enos Slaughter—finally!
There is glory over these Red Sox
(Enter into the glory of these red socks)

And they will show you something better that
ever:

The Yankees and Cardinals bowing before you
The resurrected Babe rising to meet you,
Stepping out of the ghostly infield dust.

High drive...
Deep to right field
You can forget about this one...
That ball is...Gone!

"Game Seven a year ago...
...the collapse of Pedro..."
--yet this year, when we came back, late, to sweep
the Bombers
Lowe. Schilling. Pedro, Then Lowe again. I could
not
Speak, and my mind failed. I was in heaven
Not dead, and I knew winning,
Looking into my baseball life, the brilliance.

"Grand Slam! Johnny Damon!"

Terry Francona? No well-known savant,
Nobody's choice for wisest skipper in baseball
Faced a wicked pack of Cards. Here, he said,
Is Rolen, Pujols, Edmonds in center.
(Look, look at the collars on those guys!)
And Marquis, Suppan and Morris, masters of
walks
And lazy in situations.
Here is one with three K's and won't steal
And here is LaRussa intent. And this card,
Who he is I am forbidden to see, carries
Something on his back—our ancient cross,
The Hanged Fan! Fear the media.
I see crowds of people, singing loud in a ring
Yankees Suck! Yankees Suck! That's all,
And thank you. Check out the trophy yourself
And oh Baby, those double plays!

Unreal Vic'try!
Under the bright red of an autumn dawn
A crown overflows Kenmore Square, so many
I had not thought joy could release so many
Yells, long, and obstreperous were exhaled
And each high-fived all he met
Flowed o'er the bridge and turned down Jersey St.
To where the sainted Tom Yawkey kept his hours
Putting all he had into the Boston nine.
There I saw one I knew, and stopped him crying, "Ma-
son!"
You who were with me in the stands for Game Two!

That corpse long planted in the garden,
 The Babe—has he come out? After all—this is the
 year!
 Has this miracle win disturbed his bed?
 Oh keep his ghost far hence, nor e'er again
 The old lefthander that disturbed our youth!
 Fellow sufferer for fifty years —we're all the
 world's daddy now—not Ruth!

II. The Game; the Press

The throne they sat in, those Yanks, burnished
 From overuse, glowed, and the media glass
 Held them to high standards between the lines
 Behind which Pluto's gold winked out
 (So much one had to shield one's eyes)
 Doubled in the fevered mind of the press
 Reflecting its sycophantic light on the breakfast
 table,
 Or blaring from back-page headlines of the tab-
 loids
 On the subway, pouring in over-rich profusion
 From TV's, reflecting in the barroom glass
 Where brokers and their minions, rapt in synthetic
 perfumes
 Rich and strange, count their money, hardly trou-
 bled or confused
 But drowned in their own self-satisfactions, the
 odours stirred
 By whirring fans, the AC, cold air behind tinted
 windows
 Unguents, powders, liquids, aethereal/commercial
 brew
 Ascending into the electronic ether, caught in the
 steam-trays
 Puffing clouds above the corporate cafeteria,
 Making patterns of pinstripes on the walls of office
 Cubicles, while out in Westchester,
 The season ticket holder, swings his Navigator
 Into port with a few power-assisted turns of the
 wheel,
 Six speakers bring WFAN, Steve
 Sommers schmoozing on, trying to make sense
 Of the change; the Yankees, so rudely forced,
 Where once Rizzuto filled the airwaves
 With incomprehensible voice, and the Yankee
 faithful
 Cry, I can still hear how they sulk, blubbering
 "But...But..." to my thirsty ears.
 The Yankees withered before their time!
 Old portraits yellow on the walls, staring forms
 Mummified Murderer's Row in airless rooms
 Tired footsteps shuffling on the stair

WORLD CHAMPION RED SOX—
 It can't be there—over the CITGO sign
 The words glowing, making their point
 In the October chill.

"My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad. When
 Brown
 Smashed his hand on the dugout wall. It pained
 me.
 Speak. Why do you never speak. What was he
 thinking?
 What? A moment of frustration. A moment."

A moment put us in the alley
 And your Yankees lost their throne.

"What is that noise?"
 The Sox fans letting out a roar.
 "What is that noise now? What are they doing?"
 Roaring again roaring
 "Do

You know nothing—you're my GM—do you
 remember

Nothing?
 I remember
 Ortiz's shots against the skies
 "Are you alive/ Is their nothing in your head?"
 But

No, No, No, A-Rod a-slappin' at Arroyo's tag
 So inelegant
 So unintelligent

"What shall I do now. Who shall I buy?
 I shall outbid them all, empty Wall St.
 Bring the House down, so. Who shall we buy
 tomorrow?
 Who's on the market, who?
 Mania again

There's Lowe! If that fails...Pedro...
 We shall play a game of cash
 Beltran...Pavano..."

When the Yankees went down, I'm like...
 I didn't mess around, I'm like
 SHUT UP PLEASE IT'S OUR TIME
 Now George is coming back; he thinks he's so
 smart
 He'll want to know what I did with that extension
 he gave me
 To get himself another ring. He will. He'll be
 there,
 Kick us all out, even me, Joe Torre.

He'll say, I swear, I can't bear to look at you.
 Neither me you, I'll say, and think of ol' Zim
 Been in the big leagues fifty years, who did his
 time.
 If I didn't give it to you this year, other's will, I'll
 bet.
 Oh, really, he'll say. You heard me, sez me.
 Then I'll know who to blame,, sez he and gives me
 a dirty look.
 SHUT UP PLEASE IT'S OUR TIME
 You can take this job and shove it I sez.
 Managers are a dime a dozen
 But if George screws up, it won't be for lack of
 telling.
 He oughta be ashamed, I think, you old antique
 (what's he—seventy three?)
 He can't help it, Cashman sez, pulling a long face
 It's those trades we made to bring it off
 Vasquez—Great move!—Loiza anyone?
 His "baseball people" said they were alright, but
 we've never been the same.
 A jerk's a jerk, I'm thinkin'
 Well, if George needs to meddle, there it is, I sez
 What you'd take *your* millions for if you didn't
 want trouble.
 SHUT UP PLEASE IT'S *OUR* TIME.
 Those last two games at home; that hot Damon
 Christ they served 'em up with gravy, when he
 was so hot--
 SHUT UP PLEASE IT'S *OUR* TIME
 SHUT UP PLEASE IT'S *OUR* TIME
 Goodnight Yankees. Goodnight Lou. Goodnight Babe.
 Goonight
 SEE YA! Goonight Goonight
 It is high. It is deep. It is GONE! Johnny
 Damon's second homer of the game!

III. Hell Freezes Over

The Yankee's spell is broken, the last pitchers of
 relief
 Move slowly, heads down into the dugout, the
 wind
 Whips at the still stands, unheard. The Champs are
 departed.
 Sweet Charles run softly, till I end my song.
 That river bears those soda bottles, scorecards,
 Mustard-covered pretzels, popcorn boxes, peanut
 shells
 And other souvenirs of summer nights. The Champs
 have departed.
 Yankee fans, the loitering heirs of Wall St., and
 suburban contractors,

(The champs departed, gone up to Boston)
 O New York, by the East River sit down and
 weep.
 But, sweet Charles run softly while Them play that
 song:
 "Down by the river,/ Down by the banks of the river
 Charles...
 At the crack of the bat, that's all I hear
 Cabrera's got another hit, he's grinning from ear to
 ear...

A fan strode quickly, taut with elation
 Stopping to get money from the bank
 After drinking in a sports saloon
 On an October evening watching the Series
 Musing on the Cardinal's wreck
 And on the Yankees wreck before them.
 Home-white players slumped in the dank dugouts
 Bats scattered on the bat racks
 To be chewed over by the fans year after year
 While at this fan's back he hears
 The sounds of horns and sirens, which shall bring
 All Sox fans through from winter into spring
 O may fame shine bright on the Red Sox troika
 Curt and Pedro dance a polka
 Lowe, Timlin, Embree, Foulke-a!

The big right-hander looks rocks and deals...

Hit hit hit
 Boom boom boom boom boom boom
 A sweep!
 Ya-hoo!

Unreal vic'try
 Under the red eclipse of an autumn moon
 Mr. Manny Ramirez, the Boston slugger
 Unshaven, with a unkempt hair-do full of mari-
 juana
 Digs in at the plate
 Later in his barrio-inglez
 To relate his cannon-shot home run
 Laughs off his wooden glove—who cares? We
 won. . .

Sunday, past the witching hour, when the eyes
 and back
 Ache at the bar and the ads roll on between innings
 We all need taxis, throbbing, waiting
 I, Henry the fan, half-drunk, and middle aged
 Old and grey, yet still checking out the bartender's
 rack
 Consider the time, the extra-inning grind

Consider trudging homeward. Thus uncaged
 To picture the barkeep home at three, doing
 yesterday's dishes
 She lights a joint and burns some incense for
 her sins--
 Out the window perilously cast
 A "GO SOX!" banner waits for dawn's first rays.
 On her sofa she heaps the reeking garments
 Of her trade, black T-shirt, jeans and vest.
 I, Henry, old, but not too old
 To imagine that--could not have guessed—
This collapse—like the collapse of the West.
 Rivera, with his zombie's glassy stare
 Rivera, on whom assurance sat
 Like a Yankee cap on a millionaire
 Tho' the situation is not propitious
 With Red Sox on first and third.
 He gives up Varitek's shanked sac fly
 But gets the other guys, the pennants waffle in the
 breeze
 Later, and later, then it's Damon and then Ortiz
 Foul ball and foul ball, and even Rivera sighs
 And I recall game seven when last the Red Sox
 died
 Foul ball and foul ball and then a sharper sound
 A chopper up the middle and Rivera pounds the
 ground.
 (And now I've seen it all, I swear)
 Methought I saw the barmaid stumble into bed
 To her snoring lover, tossing and mutt'ring there
 She kisses at the dreadlocks that coil round his
 sleeping head
 And smiles into the darkness—

When she wakes, she hums a moment at the glass
 Hardly aware her boyfriend's off to work
 Her brain allows one muzzy thought to pass
 "The Sox actually won!" Quoting: "It ain't over
 till its over."
 O excellent woman, suddenly smelling clover,
 Pacing through her rooms again, alone
 If we win games Five, Six and Seven
 Closer, closer to baseball heaven.
 And when we do: "Everybody must get stoned."

"Hip-hop throbs by me out of windows"
 Thumping along Tilghman, down Allen Street,
 Even in Allentown I heard one repeat
 Inside of Stooze's honky-tonk
 Amidst clatter and chatter of the company
 A Bronx cheer for the Bronx
 When baseball fans come and go
 When the walls of TV's hold

Unexpected reversals of Curses old.

"Swing and a ground
 Ball stabbed by
 Foulke. He has it.
 He underhands it to first
 And the Red
 Sox
 Are World Champions
 For the first time
 In eighty-six years.
 The Red Sox have
 Won baseball's World
 Championship..."

Hurrah, hurrah
 Hurrah, hurrah!

....CAN YOU BELIEVE IT!"

Hugh Duffy and Tris Speaker
 Stand at ease
 With Harry Hooper
 Back in the day
 When it was Duffy's cliff
 And no wall
 In dead ball Fenway
 At all. How pleased
 The best outfield
 Of that Homeric age must feel.

Hurrah, hurrah
 Hurrah, hurrah!

"Trams and dusty trees
 Jersey St. elms. Mother and father
 Daddy carried me. First memory...
 Williams striking out against the Tigers"

"My feet are at homeplate, and my heart
 Under my feet. After we won
 I wept. A new century, a new start."
 Too full to comment, I walked until dawn
 "Under the grandstands
 I can collect
 A little something
 To mend a century's broken dreams.
 Citizens of Red Sox nation, we expected
 nothing"
 ha HA
 To Canaan then we came!

Yearning yearning yearning yearning

O baby we pulled it out
O Baby we won it!

winning

IV. Swept by the Father of Waters

The St. Louis Cardinals, a fortnight dead
Forget the cries from the stands, the boos and the
catcalls
And the profit and the loss

The Mississippi

Picks their bones in whispers. They rise and fall
They forget the one hundred and five wins
The see-saw series with Houston

Juggernaut—

And those who have been favored, seen unstop-
pable
Consider the Cardinals, and what the Red Sox
wrought.

V. What the Winter Meant

After the lights forget the sweaty faces
Now the frosty silence in the gardens
After the *agon* of victory and defeat
Past the shouting and the crying
After the gigantic parade
Already the thought of spring intrudes
We who are now champions
Already scattering, already
Becoming free agents.

Here after the desert, water and rock
Rock and roll heaven eight wins in a row
Four on the road winding—it seemed like forever--
To the big rock candy mountain where water
Runs wild like champions' champagne
Now we can stop and enjoy a drink
Deafened by the rock one can scarcely think
Sweat is dry and the feet tap time to the band
No more waiting: Rock on! See Bronson Arroyo
Shakin' it up, bubbly in his cornrows
One doesn't know whether to dance or to chill
There's no need for silence in the promised land
Have a little Moet-Chandon champagne
Let the Yankee-lovers say what they will,
Their sad sullen faces sneer and snarl
In living rooms in dull tract houses
Let all be champagne
And hard rock

It's all Hendrix
And John Coltrane
Playing
the blues
away
So cool amidst the rock
The sound of masters only
And the maraca
And even blue-grass singing
The sound of baseballs, the smell of turf
And a heartfelt *sayonara*
There is no more curse.

Who's on third? Whose walks inspired us?
Mueller and Millar at the corners
When we stared down nine miles of bad track
Who led us back: Varitek. He calmly murmurs
To Wakefield or whoever, strong in his red armor
Always carrying the load, right or left hander
It doesn't matter, he's behind you.

Whose is that ball high in the air
Sending us into sudden celebration?
Who are those gleeful hordes swarming
Over barricades, kissing the good earth
Entering the promised land boldly
What was that city beside the big river
Who did we not crack and sweep in the chill Octo-
ber air
Falling powers
Anaheim, New York. St. Louis
Anaheim, New York
St. Louis
Unreal!

Damon draws his long black hair behind his ears
And scuffs his spikes in at the plate
And grips his bat and stills his fears
A slump has bedeviled him of late
He keeps his head down as he begins to swing
And crushes the baseball deep to right
Toll on New England churchyard bells, in steeples
ring!
Shout out New England voices, pulled over on
avenues in the night!

In watering holes and on fishing boats
From Calais to Westerly, the fans are singing
Over the recent graves of family, over Frazee's
Grave the wind is singing' *Here we go*
Red Sox, here we go! Here's to you, Royal Rooters
Of long ago, here's to you
Dominic DiMaggio!

And Doerr and Pesky
Yaz and Rico, you too, Jose Santiago
And let bygones be bygones, let every goat
We dare not name, let him
be welcomed home again.

The Charles was glassy and the limp fans
Waited forever, for the Townies
To get over October—get over the hump
The pennants flapped in autumn silence
Then spoke the thunder:

BOOM

Ortiz: What you gave us
Amigo. Hope evacuated the heart
After that 19-8 surrender
In Game Three—but enough of that--
For this, and this only we have existed
Your deeds will lead your obituary
Be praised by sports page writers
And spoken of by dim Commissioners
In raucous locker rooms.

BOOM

Ramirez: I have seen you hit
Those climbing drives so often—
Those over-everything monster shots
But the line drive at Busch, who'd a thought
It--the pitch so high it caused a lunar eclipse--
Revived forever a haunted franchise

BOOM

And Schilling: How you responded
Bravely, to the ankle stapled and wrapped
Blood seeping through the sock, all heart, re-
sponded,
Bravely. The ball, searing, obedient
To your controlling hand.

The Fan sat at the bar
Drinking, the epic games behind him
Have we not set our house in order?
The A.L. cosmos is turning round, turning round turn-
ing round
Mezcle bien mis lanzamientos. ¡Ponchado, Pedro!
El hombre esta lesionado.
These memories have I glued into my scrapbooks.
We're sitting pretty. George is mad again.
Ortiz, Ramirez, Schilling
Pitching pitching pitching

Notes

Not only the title, but the entire plan and a great many lines and incidental language of the poem are derived from Mr. T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922). Indeed, so deeply am I indebted, that Mr. Eliot's poem will elucidate most of the difficulties of this poem much better than my notes can do—since they are his notes too) and I recommend it (apart from the importance of the poem itself) to any who think such elucidation worth the trouble. To another work of scholarship I am indebted in general, which has made a great impression on me; I mean *The Red Sox Century* by Glenn Stout and Richard A. Johnson (Houghton Mifflin, Boston 2000). I have read very closely the chapters on the early championship teams, on the Ruth sale and on the 1940's clubs. Anyone acquainted with this work will immediately recognize in my poem certain references to photographs in that book.

The call of the final world championship out is the voice of WEEI Red Sox Radio, Joe Castiglione, quoted in *The Boston Globe*, October 2004

The Spanish in the final strophe is from an article by Bob Ryan, "Pedro Contesta con Pura Verdad," *The Boston Globe* October, 17, 1999 C8.

Book Review

David E. Chintz. *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003. Pp. 264, cloth.

In the story of the artistic period we term High Modernist, T. S. Eliot's name stands as tall as anyone else's—perhaps even taller. It is also true that thanks to the effects of canon-building and academic preference, Eliot is a perpetual presence in textbooks, anthologies and course syllabi. And this Eliot is not the critic or the playwright that he also was, but primarily the poet. Such is the effect of his dominance that, perhaps next only to Shakespeare, Eliot's lines and phrases lie strewn about the popular and mass cultural spaces of our times. As William Harmon pointed out some years back in his Memorial Lecture to the members of this Society, we meet Eliot at virtually every turn of our reading and ambulation—on billboards, sports page captions and news tickers making their way across the bottom of the television screen. Surely, such a phenomenon raises important questions about the relationship between the popular and elitist in the contempo-

rary cultural landscape. Although these are not quite the issues David E. Chinitz addresses in his fine book on Eliot and the “cultural divide,” he provides enough material to make further inquiries about the osmotic nature of culture itself. Chinitz addresses more directly a corollary issue: what elements of popular and mass culture made their way into the making of Eliot’s mind, and consequently, into his work, both creative and critical? Also, he considers at some length the matter of Eliot’s reputation as a definer and defender of “high” culture.

The main strength of *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide* is its meticulous documentation of the components of popular culture that entered, sometimes willy-nilly, Eliot’s poetry and plays. Some of these influences or presences are well known—as in the case of music hall performances—some others not so. Even when a particular influence does not recognizably enter the art, Chinitz is able to demonstrate its traces in the life of the poet, in his taste for that popular form of entertainment, or in his various prose writings. Eliot, moreover, appears to have been aware of the futility of separating the usually value-laden categories “art” and “entertainment,” although he veered at times toward the position that privileged the former over the latter. The author of this study demonstrates that Eliot’s personal enthusiasms did not always carry through effectively enough in the influence Eliot produced as a cultural arbitrator and a shaper of taste during the mid 20th century. That legacy was created by the later Eliot’s often modulated but seldom absent tone of sober-sounding pessimism. Chinitz reveals for us a more divided taste than is usually suspected in the case of Eliot as a cultural icon. Thus, we note how the poet’s personal and often persistent fondness for elements of so-called “low brow” stuff of culture did not prevent him from making often-quoted and widely noted remarks about the supposedly urgent necessity of preserving a “higher” order of cultural awareness and appreciation. The influential criticism failed to carry forward the formative impulses of the poet’s mind—ones that were syncretic, comedic, and free from any acute sense of cultural hierarchy. The pervasive effect of Eliot’s writing unfortunately promoted a bifurcation between “high” and “low” cultures and art.

In the last chapter of this study, one wittily titled “The T. S. Eliot Identity Crisis,” David Chinitz studies closely the generation and propagation of what we might call the Eliot Effect, one that inculcates in its adherents an elitist and exclusionary notion of culture. In this section of the book Chinitz highlights and anatomizes the academic and institutional forces that perpetuated an uppity Eliot, *pace*, it seems, Eliot him-

self. This task or project was made the more easy for a person like F.R. Leavis by Eliot’s own many loudly-announced conservative pronouncements and prejudices.

Chinitz’s well-written, clearly documented and persuasively argued study takes us beyond the heated and often intemperate writing about Eliot we have seen emerge in the last two decades. Looking carefully past simplistic and one-sided positions, *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide* demonstrates a useful method for studying Eliot in which one excavates often overlooked constituents of the poet’s work and his imaginative make-up. The resulting Eliot is complex, multi-faceted, and deserving of careful scrutiny and well-tempered judgement.

Shyamal Bagchee
University of Alberta

Editor’s Note

[In 1994 and 1995 my wife and I visited St. Michael’s parish church in East Coker. In addition to the plaque dedicated to T. S. Eliot’s memory, the church also contains an elaborate tribute to William Dampier, whose portrait in the National Portrait Gallery identifies him as “Pirate and Hydrographer.”

Eliot is known to have visited the village during the 1930s; about fifteen years earlier, he had written to his father from Torquay, noting that he had passed through “Eliot country” (Somerset), but it is not known that he visited East Coker or that he had any knowledge of Dampier.

Many elements in our East Coker experience appealed to a side of my life beyond the academy: I spent several years (1960-1967) on active duty with the U. S. Navy, and have kept up an interest in matters nautical.

I took an interest in all this when I saw in *The American Neptune* a call for papers for the World Millennial Marine Conference. My proposal was called “T. S. Eliot, Seafarer,” and the paper was presented on April 1, 2000. I have kept only a draft, but I reproduce an adapted version of it here to recognize the publication of Diana and Michael Preston’s *A Pirate of Exquisite Mind: Explorer, Naturalist, and Buccaneer: The Life of William Dampier* (New York: Walker, 2004) and also as a way of noting with regret that publication of *The American Neptune* has been suspended until March 2005 for reappraisal and reorganization.]

Long before his death in 1965, the Anglo-American writer Thomas Stearns Eliot had achieved the status of a world-class personage, influential not only as a poet but also as a critic, playwright, editor,

and publisher; beyond literature, he was also important as a thinker on subjects religious, philosophical, sociological, and educational. After 1982, moreover, he was all but ubiquitous as the originator of the creatures that became the stuff of the longest-running musical on both sides of the Atlantic, with an income counted in billions.

Despite that lofty standing in the world at large, however, T. S. Eliot possesses a particular significance for us here and now, at the World Marine Millennial Conference at the Peabody Essex Museum on East India Square in Salem, Massachusetts on the first of April in 2000. Like Chaucer, Eliot said something memorable about the beginning of April—the first line of *The Waste Land* is “April is the cruellest month”—an ironic reminder of the ritualized cruelty of the practical jokes played on this day and also, maybe, of the medieval traditions that held that the Creation took place in April, as did the Fall and the Crucifixion. (One could add here that various April calamities—the massacre of Piedmontese Waldensians in 1655, the assassination of Lincoln in 1865, the sinking of *Titanic* in 1912, the failure of the Easter Insurrection in Ireland in 1916—have provoked great poetry from Milton, Whitman, Hardy, and Yeats, forerunners of whom Eliot was richly aware.)

Furthermore, Eliot is not only a poet of April but also a poet of New England—you could even specify a *Massachusetts* poet. (Recall, however, that Eliot, skeptical of such preemptive local identifications, said once that Frost was no more a poet of New England than Goethe was a poet of the Rhineland.) Eliot was born in Missouri, but the Eliots were thought to be a family that had come from Somerset to Massachusetts in the seventeenth century and by Eliot’s time were well established in the Unitarian clergy and the administration of Harvard. On at least one occasion, Eliot vividly allied himself with his Salem ancestors. *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, which Eliot edited, includes a remark about William Carlos Williams—“he has not in his ancestral endocrines the arid curse of our nation. None of his immediate ancestors burnt witches in Salem”—to which Eliot added a footnote: “We didn’t burn them, we hanged them.” That’s right: “We.”

Eliot’s poems “Cape Ann” and “The Dry Salvages” bear the names of places only a few miles northeast of Salem, and other poems present images from the landscape and weather of the New England shoreline, concerning places in New Hampshire and Maine as well as Massachusetts.

And, in this most particular setting on this particular occasion, it is certainly worth mentioning that Thomas Stearns Eliot was related to Samuel Eliot Mo-

riison, one of the founders of *The American Neptune*. I wrote to Admiral Morison about twenty-five years ago (be assured that I signed myself “Lieutenant Commander, USNR”), and he answered with a prompt and friendly postcard, saying that he was T. S. Eliot’s seventh cousin, meaning, as I understand it, that they had great-great-great-great-great-great-grandparents in common.

Eliot, then, was born near the Mississippi, spent many boyhood summers at the Massachusetts shore, went to college on the banks of the Charles, and lived much of his adult life within yards of the Thames. Rivers, oceans, pools, ponds, marshes, capes, straits, and beaches are important settings and symbols in much of his writing, beginning with juvenile jokes with titles like “A Tale of a Whale.” The speaker of “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” who is acquainted with “sawdust restaurants with oyster shells” and decides to “put on white flannel trousers / And walk upon the beach,” says that he has “heard the mermaids singing,” which recalls a passage from Robert Louis Stevenson: “We sail in leaky bottoms and on great and perilous waters; and to take a cue from the dolorous old naval ballad, we have heard the mermaidens singing, and know that we shall never see dry land any more.”

The speaker of “Gerontion” sounds like an old sailor with memories of the Horn and the windy straits of Belle Isle—in South and North America—as well as the Trades. *The Waste Land* is very much a poem of London and the Thames, but also containing the Rhine and the Ganges as well as suppressed connections to the Congo. The five poems in Eliot’s *Landscapes* involve rivers and coastal bird sanctuaries. “The Dry Salvages,” third of *Four Quartets*, is named for a group of rocks off Cape Ann; it has to do with rivers and seas and fishermen. More than once, early and late, Eliot used the gull’s cry as an emblem of wandering and transitoriness.

In *The Waste Land* Eliot joins another river-and-sea poet, Richard Wagner, in treating water as an agent and symbol of destruction and renewal. (The most salient Wagner works for Eliot are *Tristan und Isolde*, *The Ring of the Nibelung*, and *Parsifal*, but one may also think of *Lohengrin*, set beside the River Scheldt in Belgium, and *The Flying Dutchman*.) Joseph Conrad’s fiction—especially *An Outcast of the Islands* and *Heart of Darkness*—also makes crucial contributions to Eliot’s poetry of the 1920s. (I can mention here also that Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now*, a retelling of *Heart of Darkness* transposed from Africa to Asia, adds a dash of Wagner and several dashes of Eliot to Conrad’s recipe. A later film of *Heart of*

Darkness, with John Malkovich as Kurtz, includes a snippet of Wagner's *Rienzi*.

"Ash Wednesday" contains a memorable seascape with "white sails . . . seaward flying" as though seen from the Eliot summer home near Gloucester. "Marina," one of the Ariel Poems, is a great lyric of the sea (based on Shakespeare's *Pericles*); in a remarkable concentration on the details of navigation and marine architecture, the poem uses such esoteric technical terms as "garboard strake." Even among the accessible creatures in *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* we encounter Growltiger, a "Bravo Cat, who lived upon a barge," known as "The Terror of the Thames," and Cat Morgan, once "a Pirate who sailed the 'igh seas," like Henry Morgan.

At some point before 1915 Eliot learned that his family traced its origin to an Andrew Eliot (1627-1703) who came to Salem, Massachusetts, from East Coker in Somerset during the 1670s. (There was a William Eliot of Salisbury who was in Salem even earlier.) Captain William Dampier (1651-1715) also happened to come from East Coker, and it seems likely that, in so small a place, the Eliots and Dampiers were acquainted. Dampier was born in Hymerford House, still standing, and is honored by a memorial brass in the same church. It is possible that Eliot in "Gerontion" and elsewhere used some incidental materials from Dampier's life and writing, especially in references to currents, the Trades, the Horn, and violent life with one who has struggled "knee-deep in the salt-marsh, / Heaving a cutlass" (the cutlass has been long associated with sailors). One could speculate that, at some time early in the century, Eliot read the fine two-volume *Dampier's Voyages* (1906), edited by John Masefield, who was to be Poet Laureate between 1930 and 1967 and is remembered as a poet of the sea.

It is well known that Dampier had dealings with Alexander Selkirk, whose adventures provided materials for important works by Defoe and Cowper; likewise, Dampier's importance for Swift and Coleridge has long been appreciated. But I do not know that anyone has ever looked into possible kinship between Dampier and Eliot, with East Coker serving as catalyst. In a cursory survey, I have seen enough to make me want to go back through Dampier much more scrupulously, to see what Eliot could have found there by way of inspiration and suggestion. In some cases, a phrase like "dry season" or "the wind sprang up" may just be a common locution; but to find "salt," "dry season," and "goats" within one of Dampier's paragraphs suggests a possible connection with "Gerontion." The line "The goat coughs at night in the field overhead" also suggests something from a graphic chart of the River Avon

made by Dampier's contemporary Greenville Collins, which I found in a book by Samuel Eliot Morison: the chart, much more than a two-dimensional overhead view, includes also some Hot Wells and a goat on a hill, suggesting passages from "Gerontion." A few other suggestive texts from Dampier include "the River Plate" (as in "Sweeney Among the Nightingales"), the Isle of Cannibals (similar to "I'll carry you off / To a Cannibal Isle"), and "a Piece of Wood curiously carv'd and painted much like a Dolphin" ("carvèd dolphin" in *The Waste Land*).

Additional Selected Abstracts from the London Meeting

Caterina D. Fornero

"Chess Is the Game Wherein I'll Catch the Conscience of the King: The Metaphor of the Game of Chess in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*"

What is the point of playing a game of chess with impotent, dead, or, at best, de-centered kings and crumbling rooks? Is *The Waste Land* fatally trapped in stalemate?

The answer this paper tries to give is No. "A Game of Chess" in the title of section II opens up a different perspective in a literary game where functional relations between pieces re-shape the notions of semantic value and synchronic existence within the literary system.

This paper is organized around five moves:

1. It starts off by tracing the tortuous genesis of the title of section II and gives a detailed analysis of the substitutions of the title (originally the Dickensian "He Do the Police in Different Voices"), sub-title ("In the Cage," cryptically reminiscent of a short story by Henry James), and two references to chess in lines 62 and 63 (the Middletonian line) in part II in the original manuscript.

2. The paper then examines the structural impact of the substitutions and reaches the conclusion that with those permutations Eliot shifted the focus from a mode of inter-textual discourse coordinated by a "central intelligence" to an intra-textual model of significance in which echoes regulate themselves according to intra-textual rules, as in a game of chess, where moves are never directed from the outside, but are always determined by the contingent network of relations holding between the pieces on the chessboard at any given time.

3. The paper then tackles the implications of the intra-textual model of significance in the light of the Saussurean concept of value and the modernist epistemological concept of functional relativity.

4. Having postulated the functioning of linguistic signs whose value is given by relations of reciprocal correlation and coordination within the system, the paper goes on to discuss the anomaly of the king, which is the only piece on the chessboard which retains intrinsic value and therefore is thought of in terms of the central authority around whose essence the game revolves. The paper discusses the immobile centrality of the king and the panorama of sterile, dying kings and crumbling towers offered by *The Waste Land* and shows how Eliot solved the problem of another “central intelligence” by moving the king(s) to a de-centered, peripheral position.

5. If the kings have departed from the center, what is there to fill up the vacuum? The center of *The Waste Land* is occupied, both physically and structurally, by two specular elements: Tiresias and the church of St. Magnus Martyr. The paper will argue the synchronic nature of both elements in the light of Eliot’s notion of the literary system as successive states of synchronic balance.

Conclusion: the metaphor of the game of chess, which Eliot crystallized in the final version of *The Waste Land* functions as a structural node that coordinates the dynamics of meaning within the poem. By a series of permutations Eliot shifted the focus from a mode of inter-textual discourse to an intra-textual model of significance, given by the synchronic network of relations holding between the fragments in a de-centered literary circuit.

§

Will Gray

“From Jack Donne to George Herbert: Eliot and ‘The End of the Journey’”

The history of T. S. Eliot is a record of conversions. Eliot as a “man who suffers” adapted from Unitarianism to Anglicanism, from average academic records to scholarly respect, from American citizenship to British, from Vivienne to Valerie. Meanwhile, as a result of the “mind which creates,” his work transformed from uncomplicated imitation to juvenile rib-

aldry, from dense fragmentation to religious lyricism. His influences shifted from Laforgue to Baudelaire, from Dante to St. John of the Cross, from John Donne to George Herbert.

Since Eliot focused much of his attentions--critical and poetic--on the writers of the seventeenth century, perhaps this last shift in interest, from Donne to Herbert, can serve as an indicator by which we can gauge the nature of his conversion. Donne himself underwent significant transformation in his person and poetic career, what he referred to as the difference between “Jack Donne” and “Dr. Donne.” Eliot’s interest in Donne accompanied his own transformation: in the same few years at Harvard, he studied Donne and came to the edge of conversion; shortly after he delivered the Clark Lectures, he fell before the Pietà in Rome; and following his conversion to Christianity, he absorbed himself in Dr. Donne’s sermons.

However, moving from Jack Donne to Dr. Donne was only the first part of Eliot’s journey. His journey’s end was to come at “Little Gidding,” and Donne had to be left behind. Eliot had begun his career by suggesting that “the progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality,” and in his old age he sought someone who could guide him to what he now realized was humility. He found this guide in Donne’s contemporary George Herbert. Though he had published “Donne in Our Time” in 1931, he followed it the next year with an essay on Herbert, and with another six years after that. By 1944, in “What is Minor Poetry?” Eliot had completely re-evaluated his prior opinion of Herbert, insisting that he now classified him as a major poet. It was Herbert, not Donne, who inspired Eliot’s last major essay (“George Herbert,” 1962). And it was Herbert who was to infuse Eliot’s last poem as well, “Little Gidding,” where he functions “as a spiritual architect.”

Though there is far more complexity to Eliot’s conversions than can be seen in his turning from one poet to another, his favorites John Donne and George Herbert do more than merely reflect his thoughts. Eliot’s movement between these seventeenth century religious poets echoes his belief that “last year’s words belong to last year’s language / And next year’s words await another voice.” Through an analysis of Eliot’s evolving interest in Donne and Herbert, and of their resonance in his poetry, we can come to a better understanding of the journey Eliot took, and why it ended at “Little Gidding.”

According to a feature on East Coker in a recent issue of *Country Life*, a local agent reports “selling the beautifully restored, three-bedroom, Verandah Cottage in the heart of the village, on behalf of ex-BBC broadcaster Peter Hobday, who is retiring to Umbria. The asking price is £395,000.” The note goes on, “Property prices round here have fallen by 5-10% in the past three months . . . as a result of which the average four-to five-bedroom family house costs between £450,000 and £550,000. A manor house in the area recently sold for £1.2 m.” Humankind cannot bear very much reality. Ed.

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. For matters having to do with the *T. S. Society Newsletter*, please contact the Vice-President and Editor. To pay dues, inquire about membership, report a change of address, or report failure to received the Newsletter, please contact the Treasurer. Those having business with the Secretary are advised to contact him directly.

President: Benjamin Lockerd
Dept. of English
Grand Valley State University
Allendale, MI 49401
(616) 331-3575
lockerdb@gvsu.edu

Vice President: William Harmon
Dept. of English
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3520
(919) 489-2766
wharmon03@mindspring.com

Treasurer: John Karel
Tower Grove Park
4256 Magnolia
St. Louis, MO 63110
jkarel@towergrovepark.org

Secretary: David Huisman
1134 Giddings Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
(616) 45200478
huisda@provide.net

Historian: David Chinitz
Dept. of English
Loyola University Chicago
6525 N. Sheridan Road
Chicago, IL 60626
(773) 508-2241.
dchinit@luc.edu.

You are invited to visit
The Society's website
at www.luc.edu/eliot.