

T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Number 56

Spring-Summer 2005

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

T. S. Eliot Society
26th Annual Meeting: Sept. 23-25, 2005

Friday, Sept. 23

Garden Room, Inn at the Park

10:00 - 12:00 Board of Directors Meeting

St. Louis Woman's Club (4600 Lindell Boulevard)

10:00 - 12:00 Seminars

1:30 - 3:00 Conference Session I

Chair: Linda Wyman, *Lincoln University*

David Huisman, *Grand Valley State University*
"Henry Adams, English 14, and the Postgraduate Education of T. S. Eliot"

L. Michelle Baker, *The Catholic University of America*

"Locating the Turn: Conversion as an Objective Correlative in Eliot's Ash-Wednesday"

Deric Corlew, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

"Philosophical Affinities and Technical Masks: The Contextual Basis of T. S. Eliot's 'Dissociation of Sensibility'"

3:15 - 4:45 Conference Session II

Chair: Shyamal Bagchee, *University of Alberta*

Frances Dickey, *University of Missouri*

"The Parrot's Cry: The Problem of Other Minds in 'Portrait of a Lady'"

Matthew J. Bolton, *New York University*

"'Not Known, Because Not Looked For': Eliot's Debt to Browning"

William P. Yarrow, *Joliet Junior College*

"*The Waste Land's* Unacknowledged Source: Tennyson's 'The Lotus Eaters'"

4:45 - 5:45 Reception
(cash bar and hors d'oeuvres)

7:00 - 8:30 Conference Session III

Chair: Jewel Spears Brooker, *Eckerd College*

Dídac Llorens Cubedo, *Universitat Jaume I, Castelló, Spain*

"T. S. Eliot and Salvador Espriu"

Anderson D. Araujo, *University of Western Ontario*

"*'Le monde moderne avilit'*": Eliot, the French Intelligentsia, and the Death of Blasphemy"

William Marx, *Université de Paris-VIII*

"T. S. Eliot and *La Nouvelle Revue Française*"

8:30 - 9:00 Open Forum

Saturday, Sept. 24

St. Louis Woman's Club

8:45 - 10:15 Conference Session IV

Chair: Sanford Schwartz, *Pennsylvania State University*

Joong-Eun Ahn, *Andong National University, South Korea*

"'Gerontion': The Labyrinth of Interpretations"

Roger Craik, *Kent State University*

"'The Latest Pole': Elusiveness and Xenophobia in 'Portrait of a Lady'"

Jennifer Formichelli, *Stanford University*
“On the Edge of Confession: Confession Scenes
in Eliot’s Epigraphs”

10:30 - 11:30 Memorial Lecture
“More Distant than Stars and Nearer than the
Eye”
Robert Crawford, *University of St Andrews*

11:45 Lunch

Presentation: Musical Settings of Eliot’s Works

David Huisman, *Grand Valley State University*

1:45 - 3:15 Conference Session V
Chair: William Harmon, *University of North
Carolina at Chapel Hill*

Cyrena Pondrom, *University of Wisconsin-
Madison*
“*The Cocktail Party* and Gender Performance:
Evolution of a Concept in the Work of T. S.
Eliot”

Anthony Cuda, *Emory University*
“The Loop in Time”

Janet P. McCann, *Texas A&M University*
“Speaking the Unspeakable: T. S. Eliot’s Ap-
proach to the Mystery”

3:30 - 5:00 Conference Session VI
Chair: Michael Coyle, *Colgate University*

Ian Probst, *Touro College*
“*The Waste Land* as a Human Drama Revealed
by Eliot’s Dialogic Imagination”

Aaron Bibb, *University of Wisconsin-Madison*
“The Unitive Vision of *Four Quartets*”

Leon Surette, *University of Western Ontario*
“Bertrand Russell and Eliot’s Conversion”

6:00 - 7:30 Dinner

7:30 - 9:00 Lecture and Performance, *The
Waste Land: A Musical Drama*,
by Craig Benjamin

Sunday, Sept. 25

*First Unitarian Church (5007 Waterman Boule-
vard)*

9:30 Service. Sermon by The Rev. Earl K.
Holt III,
Minister, King’s Chapel, Boston

11:00 - 12:00

Awards Presentations.
Eliot Aloud: Readings of Eliot’s Works
Chair: Elisabeth Däumer, *Eastern Michigan
University*

Ω

Book Exhibit

A representative of Truman State University
Press, which each year awards the Eliot Prize for
poetry and publishes the winning book, will dis-
play those books at the conference. Society
members are invited to exhibit books, articles, or
other publishing information at the book table.

Ω

T. S. Eliot Bibliography 2004

[If you are aware of any 2004 citations that do
not appear here, please contact Jayme Stayer at
jstayer@jesuits.net. Omissions from the 2004
bibliography will be rectified in the 2005 bibli-
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—Jayme Strayer



Call for Nominations

The Board of Directors will be electing a new secretary at its meeting in September. At the end of this year, David Huisman will have served three terms as secretary to the Society, and he has indicated that he will not accept a nomination for a fourth term. All members of the Society are welcome to make nominations for this position, and any member of the Society is eligible to be nominated. According to the Society By-Laws, the Secretary is responsible

for recording the minutes of board meetings and assists the president with correspondence and with membership. Please send your nominations to the Supervisor of Elections, Dr. Shyamal Bagchee (shyamal.bagchee@ualberta.ca). Nominations must be received by August 15, 2005.

Members may also make nominations for honorary membership and for distinguished service awards. These nominations should be made to the president, Dr. Benjamin Lockerd (lockerd@gsu.edu) by August 15, 2005.



Call for Papers

The T. S. Eliot Society has been invited to offer a panel at the University of Louisville's Twentieth-Century Literature and Culture Conference, Feb. 23-25, 2006. Acceptance of the panel is guaranteed as long as the topics have to do with literature (including film and theory) after 1900. Participants are responsible for their own conference expenses, which include a registration charge of \$80 (\$50 for students).

Proposals, which should be submitted to wharmon03@mindspring.com no later than September 1, 2005, must include a presenter's name, home address, email address, academic affiliation, and title of paper.



Book Review

T. S. Eliot, The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot's Contemporary Prose, edited, with annotations and introduction, by Lawrence Rainey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005)

Lawrence Rainey, *Revisiting "The Waste Land"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005)

When on February 15, 1922, Conrad Aiken made a principled argument that his publisher also publish *The Waste Land*, he is unlikely to have known how much his conjecture would have pleased Eliot. "As I say," he wrote to

Maurice Firuski, "I have not seen the poem. It may or may not be good, or intelligible. But, reflect: Eliot has a real reputation; a poem of that length by him will be a real curiosity, even perhaps an event."¹ Or maybe Aiken and Eliot, old college friends, had discussed the things that on April 21, 1919 Eliot wrote to his former professor, J. H. Woods, about: "There are only two ways in which a writer can become important—to write a great deal, and have his writings appear everywhere, or to write very little. It is a question of temperament. I write very little... . . . The only thing that matters is that these [published poems] should be perfect in their kind, so that each should be an event."²

The Waste Land was an event, and its first publications—three within two months and a fourth nine months later—made it seem as if it were appearing everywhere. And always. The young American John Peale Bishop read it "about five times a day." He, too, had just been published and was beginning a Parisian year of writing, but it was Eliot's work that occupied him and threatened to remain in residence. The "chief difficulty is to eradicate T. S. Eliot from all future work,"³ he wrote to his own college friend, Edmund Wilson, then made a quick job of rubbing off the magnificence he found in his first and quintessential readings by domesticating the poem. His misunderstanding of the kind is understandable, for he had to get on with his work, and some writers, like some athletes and soldiers, can lose courage if the opposition is not diminished.

Bishop is the sad figure in the third section of Lawrence Rainey's May volume, *Revisiting "The Waste Land."* Ezra Pound, a different sort of writer, is the generous and ferocious figure in the second section. He fought alongside, and in the name of, Eliot for the perfection of *The Waste Land*, for its publication in the sorts of places that would create the right kinds of events, and for proper payment for Eliot. There

is pride and concern, but not anger or competition in his assertion and hope: "But I am in my own small way, a writer myself, and as before stated I shd. like (and won't in any case get) the chance of being considered as the author of my own poems rather than as a literary politician and a very active stage manager of rising talent."⁴

Eliot has to share the first section with the figure of the typist.

Now, to begin at the beginning. *Revisiting* follows *The Waste Land* from the early drafts, to the strategies and trials of the first publications, to the responses of early readers. The introduction of Rainey's April volume, *The Annotated Waste Land*, contains a condensed account of these matters, and a brief survey of Eliot's life before the poem. Because the structures of the two books differ, there are fewer repetitions of paragraphs than there are of sentences, though there are plenty of both. These repetitions seem to be part of the plan for the books, and the reader may quickly feel that he is expected to have both of them on hand.

Rainey thinks hard about the chronology of composition of various parts of the poem. He uses the tools of enumerative (gathering and identifying), descriptive (lots of measuring), and analytic (considerations of the technology used) bibliography, supported by biography. *Revisiting* ends with almost 50 pages of tables of "Eliot's writings, 1898-1922," describing the paper on which Eliot wrote letters (published and not), his university work (Harvard and Oxford), poetry and prose, and *The Waste Land* manuscripts; I count 791 sheets. The tables provide a variety of detail, and though a given reader may not care about watermark dimensions or paper thickness in millimeters, or another ever wonder about the color of ink or ribbon used, the information is there in the tables to be made something of by anyone who would. There is even a column in the tables to identify which of Eliot's two typewriters were used for each typed document. Anyone who has looked into Mrs. Eliot's Facsimile edition will have the two typescripts, but it is Rainey who has discovered that the previously mysterious machine,

¹ *Revisiting*, 96.

² *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, volume 1, 1898-1922, Valerie Eliot, editor (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1988) 285. Quoted in *Annotated*, 14-15.

³ *Revisiting*, 103.

⁴ *Revisiting*, 142, note 9. April 22 (?), 1922, to Margaret Anderson.

seen in the manuscript of “Twit twit twit . . .,”⁵ was a gift given Eliot by his brother, Henry, in the summer of 1921. Together, Eliot’s paper and typewriters are evidence used by Rainey to build a convincing chronology. The chapter ends with a coda of sorts, discussing Eliot’s typist home at teatime in relation to her counterparts in the contemporary literature.

Meanwhile, at the end of the corresponding section of *Annotated*, we learn that it “was not until 2004 that a scholar systematically compared the typewriters and the papers. . . . The result was unequivocal . . . and so resolved a long-standing debate.”⁶ The systematic scholar? The note at the end of these three long sentences cites *Revisiting*, pages 1-70, 153-201, with the corrected date of 2005. No need then to add my congratulations.

There are so many instances of withheld attribution in both books that the delay has the force of a stylistic choice. For example, readers must look in the notes to discover that “one of Eliot’s most astute readers”⁷ is Michael Levenson. And, the recipients of a run of Eliot’s letters from 1920 are described as a novelist, his brother, his mother, a friend, his mother, one correspondent, and the final one has no identification.⁸ In order to learn that Sydney Schiff is the novelist, Mary Hutchinson the friend, and Eliot’s mother received the last two letters, the reader must go to *The Letters*, another volume nice to keep close by. The worst cases lack all attribution: Rainey’s own note to *The Waste Land*, line 428, includes this: “Some critics are convinced Eliot is also referring in this line to ‘O Swallow, Swallow,’ a poem by Alfred Tennyson.”⁹ There is no identification of any of the some, so I went to the person who would tell, if he knew, Brian Southam. He is, in fact, at least one of those critics who have mentioned the

Tennyson.¹⁰ He isn’t insistent, though, and I wonder if Rainey’s convinced isn’t a fossil debate.

Another sort of withholding appears in *Annotated*, in a note just before the discussion of *The Waste Land*’s publication:

“41. For details of the poem’s publication I draw on my account in *Revisiting ‘The Waste Land,’* chapter 2, ‘The Price of Modernism: Publishing *The Waste Land,*’ 71-101, where all quotations and claims are annotated. To repeat them here would be superfluous.”¹¹

The first part of the note is proper and appreciated. Contrast it to a note that does not appear in *Revisiting*—not in the acknowledgments, the preface, or the first or last note of chapter 1—that chapter was published as “Eliot Among the Typists: Writing *The Waste Land,*” in the January 2005 issue of *Modernism/Modernity*. Perhaps its absence was forced by publishing schedules.

The second part of note 41 states an editorial principle, or rather a decision whose principle is not articulated. Why is it superfluous to provide the required scholarly credit? And while readers may come to wish that the good material in these two books had been shorn of what really is superfluous (I count at least four places just in *Annotated* where it is explained that The City is London’s financial district¹²) and made into one book, readers have had no say in the disposition of that material and are due, along with those who are uncited, proper citation.

Revisiting’s preface says this about chapter 2: “(This chapter, it should be noted, has been published in a previous collection of essays; but I have significantly revised and updated it here to take into account new information.)”¹³ It should be noted, but isn’t, that the collection is

⁵ T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*, Valerie Eliot, editor (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1971) 30.

⁶ *Annotated*, 18 and 42, note 34.

⁷ *Revisiting*, 50.

⁸ *Annotated*, 16-17.

⁹ *Annotated*, 122.

¹⁰ B. C. Southam, *A Guide to the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot*, 1968, sixth edition (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994) 198. (aka, *A Student’s Guide ...*)

¹¹ *Annotated*, reference on 24, note on 43.

¹² *Annotated*, 5, 81 (line 60), 110 (line 258) and 233 (note 24).

¹³ *Revisiting*, x.

Ronald Bush's *T. S. Eliot: The Modernist in History* (CUP, 1991).

This chapter is important to Rainey's continued consideration of Eliot and his notes. Eliot mentions them in a 1921 letter to Aiken's publisher, Firuski: "some notes that I intend to add."¹⁴ When a seven-line sentence in the Bush version, in which Rainey claims that the letter "affects the long-standing debate about the poem's notes,"¹⁵ is dropped from *Revisiting*, the reader wants to know why. There can be no objection to Rainey's revising what remains a valuable argument about how "the publication of *The Waste Land* marked the crucial moment in the transition of modernism from a minority culture to one supported by an important institutional and financial apparatus."¹⁶ If there is, though, to be no accounting for the significant changes to the earlier version, why not just send readers to Bush armed with a list of those changes?

The chapter's notes, too, show traces of incomplete revision. Note 21 promises a useful estimation of "value in current dollars for a specific income from 1922." The conversion, then, is "based on the consumer price index, which by 1986 (to take a random year) . . ." Why take a random year if current dollars are involved? Because the note is taken from the 1989 *Critical Review* version of the essay (" . . . Reconsidering the Publication of . . ."), when the 1986 data would have been fresh. Yet, the note is attached to a sentence that does use 2003 dollars.¹⁷

Revisiting's third chapter—on reading the poem—returns to a concern Rainey begins with: "the plan or program which shaped the poem's composition."¹⁸ Eliot's early readers included serious writers who thought about the poem's structure and coherence and the kind the poem is. Puzzling, some assumed greatness close to

perfection, while others had yet no standard by which to judge. John Peale Bishop never recovered from the poem.

Annotated follows its short version of these chapters with notes on textual variation; a more formal collation of variants appears after the poem and its annotations. Then follows a conversation between Eliot and Rainey—*The Waste Land* and its notes, then Rainey's notes; Eliot's 1921 prose, and again Rainey's notes. There is much in the annotations that is generous and useful: the Buddha's complete Fire Sermon, casts of plays Eliot attended,¹⁹ complete poems, much needed translations, glosses on glosses, brief biographical sketches, and contemporary news reports. Good notes will include the amusing and odd; Rainey's do. The long note tracing Horatio Bottomley's chequered career ends, "He was sent to prison for seven years . . . He became a minor performer in music hall programs."²⁰ This is lovely timing and a reminder of Eliot's love of the music hall.

Though the annotations are generous, there are problems. Superfluity might have been reduced by removing identifications of those such as Ovid, Yeats, Pound—the guardian angel of these books—and Falstaff. An appendix of people and events would be easier and less repetitious than the notes. It would be useful were subsequent publications, Gallup numbers, and Gallup's dates given for the prose. There are too many types and instances of mistakes: Squire Western is identified as a character in Henry Fielding's play *The Fathers*, rather than in his novel *Tom Jones*;²¹ two different dates are provided for Eliot's Firuski letter; the indices are too slim and can be wrong (*Revisiting*'s should list "Tradition and the Individual Talent" on 50-51, 52 not 40-41, 53). The extra *n* in "Monna Lisas of prose"²² is not flagged in the citation of Walter Pater's essay. Who is responsible—Rainey, Eliot, or Pater? Is it a variant or an error? There are, though, at least two places where we are told that La Gioconda is also

¹⁴ The letter appears in *Annotated*, 26 and *Revisiting*, 37-38 and 97. I am referring to the third citation. It does not appear in *Letters*.

¹⁵ Bush, 117.

¹⁶ *Revisiting*, 86.

¹⁷ *Revisiting*, 144-145, note 21 and 77-78.

¹⁸ *Revisiting*, 2.

¹⁹ *Annotated* 99-100; 210, note 28 and 226, note 5.

²⁰ *Annotated*, 212-213, note 7.

²¹ *Annotated* 210, note 2

²² *Annotated* 165 and 225, note 26.

known as the Mona Lisa.²³

Omissions, too, are felt. It is a shame that Rainey's brief discussion of the prose is in the other book²⁴ and a shame not to mention William Empson's fine writing when Marvell's He-
liades and their amber tears are glossed.²⁵ And finally, Southam. In sequential notes Rainey says that Sweeney is "the object of ribald teasing by nightingales" and that "Red Wing" is "an anonymous, popular ballad."²⁶ The first note makes no sense without Southam's reminder that nightingales "is also a slang term for prostitutes" and the second must take into account Southam's identification of the author of "Red Wing" as Thurland Chattaway.²⁷ Like Empson and Rainey, Southam has earned his place in the commonwealth of learning, and not only because he can supplement or challenge Rainey's notes. There is a matter of priority and respect, yet Southam is never mentioned. He isn't included even in the one bibliography, in *Annotated*, shared between these books whose publication might have been more eventful for the study of *The Waste Land* had the editing been more careful. Take note.

—Marcia Karp
Boston University

²³ *Annotated*, 81, line 49 and 224, note 16.

²⁴ *Revisiting*, 50-51.

²⁵ *Annotated*, 220, note 36. William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, 1930, revised (New York: New Directions, 1966) 167-68.

²⁶ *Annotated*, 104, lines 198 and 199.

²⁷ Southam, 121 and 169.

Abstract from the ALA Meeting, May 2005

The Women of *The Waste Land*: Synopsis

One can demonstrate that everything in *The Waste Land* reaches us via the consciousness of a figure that I call (with Gish) “the narrator.” This person is neither Tiresias (Smith) nor a versatile and talented “mimic” (Bedient); nor is he omniscient. He errs repeatedly, and only discovers his errors when it is too late to undo them: “What might have been is an abstraction.”

The Waste Land possesses a “plan” (Eliot’s term) that centers about the relationship of the narrator to the women he has known. First among them is the hyacinth girl. Examination of Eliot’s life, his writings, his statements, his sources all indicate that we are to regard “looking into the heart of light” as an instance of actual *communion* with incarnate deity. In effect, the narrator drinks *with his eyes* from the Grail. (There are parallels in Dante.) The Quest for the Grail is manifest as his desire to drink again from that Source. The hyacinth girl is essential in this relation, serving—without her knowledge or consent—as mediator or intercessor between man and God. Her role is similar to that of Beatrice in the *Vita Nuova* and *Commedia*.

The narrator abandons the girl, without warning or explanation, when she can no longer serve this function and looks for another to replace her. “Mrs. Equitone” is one such; “Belladonna,” the woman of the first part of “A Game of Chess” is another. They, too, are rejected when they prove “deficient.” A careful reading indicates that Sosostris suspects the narrator’s (undisclosed) intention to forsake Equitone; and his obvious withdrawal makes it clear that he has abandoned Belladonna in thought if not in fact. The brief encounter of typist and clerk is the much-degraded image of such relationships. Hence the importance Eliot attaches to this seemingly trivial event (“What Tiresias *sees*, in fact, is the substance of the poem.”). It is noteworthy that Eliot—who insisted that *The Waste Land* was not “criticism of the contemporary world” but “personal”—abruptly, and sometimes furtively, terminated relationships.

Eliot figures the narrator’s Quest as a sea-voyage, drawing upon Eastern and Western symbols of the sea as images of becoming. One seeks to cross to the Farther Shore of timeless reality (cf. “Marina”). The sea-going Phoenicians were noted for their duplicity (v. “Punic”). Hence, Eliot represents his faithless narrator as a “Phoenician sailor,” and likens him to other seafarers, such as Aeneas, who abandoned the women who loved them (cf. *The Waste Land*, l. 92). Sosostris obliquely warns the narrator that his treachery may prevent success in the Quest, or lead to “death by water.” The latter proves to be the case.

Betrayal unexpectedly brings in its wake consuming guilt. The women one has in effect abandoned to the Sea of the sensible are figured as the drowned or the dead. Those corpses perversely refuse to remain interred. They pursue the narrator with “The rattle of the bones.” (See “Elegy” in Valerie Eliot’s *Facsimile* [p. 117] for an explicit instance.) Flight then supplants Quest. It is as unsuccessful, terminating in the overwhelming guilt and remorse represented as “burning,” when the “drowned,” for whose death one feels responsible, return in the guise of the Thames-daughters—who represent *all* women *everywhere* so abused—to confront one. The daughters are kindred to the Eumenides of *The Family Reunion*, whose protagonist, Harry, also thinks himself responsible for the “death by water” of another.

The hyacinth girl reappears in the final episode. She is the “you” to whom the narrator speaks (l. 360). As befits an intercessor or mediator between man and God she *simultaneously* accompanies the narrator and the hooded figure that Eliot associates with the resurrected Christ, who glides some distance ahead. The encounter ultimately leads to the narrator’s realization that he has betrayed the divinely appointed instrument of his salvation. The consequences of that painful, unanticipated insight are explicated in “The Hollow Men” and “Ash-Wednesday.”

—Burton Blistein
St. John’s College, Annapolis



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email: dchinit@luc.edu.

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 and Program of Comparative
Literature
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

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