

Time Present

The Newsletter of the T. S. Eliot Society

Number 87

Fall 2015

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***The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Volume 5: 1930-31*, edited by Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden.** Faber and Faber, 2014 (£50), and Yale UP, 2015 (\$85).

Reviewed by Timothy Materer
University of Missouri

Like Volumes 3 and 4, Volume 5 of T. S. Eliot's *Letters* covers only two years and in what Robert Crawford in *Young Eliot* describes as "exhaustive, exhausting detail." John Haffenden's prefatory essay "Valerie Eliot: Editing the Letters" (xix-xxxvii) describes the rationale for the documentary quality of these editions and also Mrs. Eliot's dedication to her husband's memory. Even as he acknowledges criticism of her long delays in producing the letters, Haffenden sympathetically describes the challenges she faced and explains the pattern she set for the editions that followed her death in 2012. Mrs. Eliot continues to be acknowledged as the co-editor of these volumes.

Haffenden cites Eliot's December 1960 memo to his executors forbidding any cooperation with a biography but allowing the publication of a selection of letters "if the selection is made by my wife" (xx). Neither Eliot nor his widow could have anticipated the challenges posed by the task of assembling the vast number of letters in Eliot's files and those continually becoming available. The initial projection of three volumes went up to four by 1980 (xxviii), and soon after it became obvious that only the quantity of available letters could dictate the number of volumes. Thus the nature of the project changed radically from the "selection" of letters Eliot himself seemed to have envisioned. In the revised Volume 1 (2009), the co-editor Hugh Haughton explained that the new volumes attempted to include all available letters and not merely a selection for the given years. The twenty-year delay between the original publication of Volume I and its revision was necessitated by Mrs. Eliot's attempt to make a complete epistolary record of Eliot's life during 1898-1925. As she assembled the edition, letters by key figures, including James Joyce and Ezra Pound, were becoming available in auction houses and libraries throughout the world. She naturally did not want to bring out editions (in a pre-digital era) that would need to be republished with appendices.

As Haffenden appreciates, the irony of Mrs. Eliot's enterprise is that she in effect circumvented her husband's desire to leave no biographical

record. In 1930 Eliot wrote to his brother, “if I could destroy every letter I have ever written in my life I would do so before I die. I should like to leave as little biography as possible” (203). Yet in 1966 Mrs. Eliot told a correspondent: “Tom has forbidden a biography [but] I hope to incorporate interesting biographical facts which seem relevant” (xxxii); and she clearly subverted his wishes in telling another correspondent: “the letters will make a most marvelous autobiography, and be a quarry for biographers fifty years hence!” (xxxiii). Haffenden concludes that she took “infinite pains to be the helpmeet of a future biographer: gathering the raw material whilst she may” (xxxiii).

Haffenden carries on the biographical project. He dispenses with the customary editorial duties of clarifying the texts by translating foreign phrases or annotating obscure references. For example, there is no note on the Frankish emperor referred to when Eliot curtly summarizes his attitude toward conversion (“Clovis, etc.” [495]), or when Eliot’s brother sends him the family’s “Apostles’ Bell” (a bell decorated by images of biblical apostles [202]). Haffenden apparently privileges information about Eliot’s life over information that readers can look up for themselves. By the same rationale, extensive information is given on various events that might save a future biographer difficult research. For example, there are many pages and lengthy notes on Richard Aldington’s satiric fiction about Eliot’s marriage in *Stepping Heavenward*, including seven letters between Geoffrey Faber and the New York publisher of Aldington’s novel, Harold Raymond. Notes on correspondents regularly give an intensive biographical picture of the correspondents. For example, the note on a letter in which Jacob Bronowski briefly asks for permission to anthologize three Eliot poems tells us that Bronowski later wrote about the effect of the atomic bombs dropped on Japan and served on the National Coal Board in 1950. A depressing note to a brief, friendly letter to D. S. Mirsky tells us that Mirsky in 1935 did Eliot a “crude disservice” (252) by describing him as an enemy of democracy and that Mirsky died in a Siberian labor camp in 1939.

In the nearly 800 pages of letters, there are of course numerous passages to close relatives and friends that reveal Eliot as a person and poet. Alarmed at a rumor that his Aunt Rose was planning to burn some family letters, Eliot asks his brother Henry to intervene since “it would be a crime if all this stuff were destroyed without some scholar going through them with a view to publication” (44). To add to the irony of Eliot’s desire to preserve the historical record through letters,

Eliot also mentions that he is publishing a book with some unpublished letters of Percy Shelley in which (as the footnote explains) Shelley tells his wife Harriet he is in love with Mary Godwin. Later, when Henry sends Eliot his own letters to the family, he is glad to have them “to make ashes of . . . with all the folly and selfishness” (203). Among other family letters are those to his first cousin Eleanor Hinkley, who sent him a murder mystery play she had written, and charming illustrated letters to his godson Tom Faber (b. 1927) containing news of Eliot’s “Pollicle Dogs and Jellicle Cats,” whom he invites from their “Kennels & Houses & Flats” (534) to attend Tom’s fourth birthday party.

As he writes to close friends, Eliot often seems in a confessional mood. To his invalid friend John Hayward, he writes that it has taken him forty-two years to have a “faint perception of the meaning of Humility . . . as if one had been living on drugs and stimulants all one’s life and had suddenly been taken off them” (163). In another letter to Hayward, he again sounds a theme, like the need for humility, that he will take up in *Four Quartets*. Admitting that he knows relatively little of physical suffering, he reports that he has had “considerable mental agony” and “once or twice have felt on the verge of insanity.” Nevertheless, he could find no “conscious use of suffering . . . just waste and muddle” until “a pattern suddenly emerges from it” (495). The author of “Gerontion” writes to Frederick Manning, a veteran of the battle of the Somme, that those who did not fight in the war will be haunted by the question, “‘how would I have behaved?’ And that question will be a tormenting nuisance to me for the rest of life” (198). After the scholar Paul Elmer More wrote to congratulate Eliot on his *Dante*, he replies that “I am really shocked by your assertion that God did not make Hell” (209) and asks him, “Is your god Santa Claus?” (210). He tells More that religion has not brought him consolation or happiness

but the sense of something above happiness and therefore more terrifying than ordinary pain and misery; the very dark night and the desert. To me, the [Dantean] phrase ‘to be damned for the glory of God’ is sense not paradox; I had far rather walk, as I do, in the daily terror of eternity, than feel that this was only a children’s game in which all the contestants would get equally worthless prizes in the end. (210)

In the same letter, Eliot explains that his poem “Ash Wednesday is really a first attempt at a sketchy

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Rapallo, Italy, June 17-21, 2016

CALL FOR PAPERS

Clearly organized proposals of about 300 words, on any topic reasonably related to Eliot, along with biographical sketches, should be emailed by 1 January 2016, to tseliotsociety@gmail.com, with the subject heading “conference proposal.” For this special international meeting, the Society is also pleased to welcome Ezra Pound society members and proposals pertaining to any aspect of the connections between Pound and Eliot.

Each year the Society awards a prize to the best paper given by a young Eliot scholar. Graduate students and recent PhDs are eligible (degree received in 2012 or later for those not yet employed in a tenure-track position; 2014 or later for those holding tenure-track positions). If you are eligible for the award, please mention this fact in your submission. The Fathman Young Scholar Award, which includes a monetary prize, will be announced at the final session of the meeting.

Memorial Lecturer: Lyndall Gordon

Our annual T. S. Eliot Memorial Lecture will be given by Lyndall Gordon, author of *Eliot's Early Years* and *Eliot's New Life*. *Eliot's Early Years*, winner of the British Academy's Rose Mary Crawshay Prize, brought attention to Eliot's spiritual and personal life and has shaped Eliot studies since its publication in 1977. A revised version, *T. S. Eliot's Imperfect Life*, was published by Virago in 2012. A noted literary biographer, Gordon has written about Virginia Woolf (*A Writer's Life*, winner of the James Tait Black Memorial Prize), Charlotte Brontë (*A Passionate Life*, winner of the Cheltenham Prize for Literature), Mary Wollstonecraft (*Vindication*, shortlisted for the BBC Four Samuel Johnson Prize), Henry James (*His Women and His Art*), and most recently, Emily Dickinson (*Lives Like Loaded Guns: Emily Dickinson and her Family's Feuds*). She has also written the memoirs *Shared Lives*, about a group of girls growing up in Cape Town in the nineteen-fifties, and *Divided Lives: Dreams of a Mother and Daughter*.

Gordon grew up in Cape Town, South Africa, emigrating to the United States at the age of 22 to study and eventually teach American literature at Columbia University in New York. Here she wrote her doctoral dissertation on T. S. Eliot under the direction of Sacvan Bercovitch. In 1973 she moved to England to become a Rhodes Fellow at St. Hilda's College, Oxford. Her personal mode of biographical writing was not immediately accepted. As she writes:

I made no concession to the “death of the author” on the one hand nor, on the other, to “definitive” biography which seemed a fiction of the marketplace. My deviant form of biography remained something to be cultivated in private, looking past the present to the future development of this genre, and hoping it might come into its own as an art.... Of late, biography has drawn closer to the approach that outraged some reviewers of *Eliot's Early Years* in the late seventies.

Gordon became a lecturer at Jesus College and continued to research and write biographies, retiring from teaching after twenty years in order to devote herself full-time to writing. She is now Senior Research Fellow at St. Hilda's College. Gordon is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and member of PEN. She is married to Professor of Cellular Pathology, Siamon Gordon; they live in Oxford and have two adult daughters.

Peer Seminars

This year, the Eliot Society is sponsoring three peer seminars with leading scholars: Ronald Schuchard, on the Prose of T. S. Eliot, Jahan Ramazani on Global Eliot, and Peter Nicholls on Pound and Eliot (see over for details). The peer seminar format offers the opportunity to share your work in a more in-depth way with a group of participants who share your interests, and to get to know a leading scholar in the field. For each peer seminar, participants will pre-circulate short position papers (5 pp) on the topic of the seminar by June 1, 2016 for discussion at a two-hour meeting at the conference. Membership in the peer seminars is limited to fifteen in each, on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please enroll by April 15, by sending an email with the subject line “peer seminar” to tseliotsociety@gmail.com with your contact information. No paper or proposal is required to enroll.

SEMINAR 1: ELIOT'S PROSE

Led by Ronald Schuchard

The recent groundbreaking publication of three volumes of Eliot's *Complete Prose* has led to a resurgence of interest in his criticism and other prose writings. Our 2015 peer seminar with Ronald Schuchard, general editor of these volumes, will focus upon any aspect of Eliot's non-fiction prose, including:

- his philosophical writing and dissertation;
- his literary criticism and theories;
- his writings on theology and religion;
- his social theories and writings;
- the change or development in any of these areas over the course of his career;
- the legacy of his prose writing in twentieth and twenty-first century literature and culture.

Ronald Schuchard, the Goodrich C. White Professor of English Emeritus at Emory University, is a leading scholar of Eliot and Yeats. He is general editor of *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition*, a treasure trove for Eliot scholars that, when finished, will contain nearly 1000 essays, book reviews, commentaries, and other prose works by Eliot, most never before collected and some previously unpublished. The first four volumes have recently appeared, published on Project Muse by Johns Hopkins University Press and Faber & Faber. Schuchard's editing of Eliot began with the poet's Clark and Turnbull Lectures, *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*. His study of Eliot's intellectual and spiritual development, *Eliot's Dark Angel*, won the Robert Penn Warren-Cleanth Brooks Award for Outstanding Literary Criticism. Schuchard's work on Yeats has also received



Ronald Schuchard and Jewel Spears Brooker

awards, including *The Last Minstrels: Yeats and the Revival of the Bardic Arts* (winner of the Robert Rhodes Book Prize of the American Council for Irish Studies and co-winner of the book prize of the Modernist Studies Association). He has edited several volumes of *The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats*, including Volume 4 (2005), which won the MLA's Morton N. Cohen Award for a Distinguished Volume of Letters. Founder of the T. S. Eliot International Summer School, Schuchard is a permanent Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of English Studies at the University of London, a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, an Honorary Member of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association, and an Honorary Member of the T. S. Eliot Society.

SEMINAR 2: T. S. ELIOT AND THE GLOBAL

Led by Jahan Ramazani

This seminar invites papers that explore the transnational range, dynamics, and subsequent influences of T. S. Eliot's poetry. Although Eliot has often been considered either canonically English or quintessentially American, we will examine his poetry's overflowing of national borders, its global horizons and reach. Possible topics for exploration include:

- how, why, and to what extent his poems traverse a variety of literary and cultural traditions, as well as multiple geographies, languages, and religions;
- the meaning and significance of his appropriation of East Asian cultural materials in *The Waste Land*, *Four Quartets*, and elsewhere;
- the interrelations between the local and the foreign or even planetary in his work;
- Eliot's influence on poets from the global South, as well as other countries of the global North.

Jahan Ramazani returns to the Society this year after giving the 2013 Eliot Society Memorial Lecture on "T. S. Eliot, Poetry, and Prayer." He is University Professor and Edgar F. Shannon Professor of English at the University of Virginia and, most recently, author of *Poetry and Its Others: News, Prayer, Song, and the Dialogue of Genres*. His *A Transnational Poetics* (2009) won the 2011 Harry Levin Prize of the American Comparative Literature Association, awarded for the best book in comparative literary history published in the years 2008 to 2010. Previous books include *The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English* (2001); *Poetry of Mourning:*

The Modern Elegy from Hardy to Heaney (1994), a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award; and *Yeats and the Poetry of Death: Elegy, Self-Elegy, and the Sublime* (1990). He edited the most recent edition of the *Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry* (2003) and, with Jon Stallworthy, *The Twentieth Century and After* in the *Norton Anthology of English Literature* (2006, 2012). He is also an associate editor of the new *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (2012). He has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, an NEH Fellowship, the William Riley Parker Prize of the MLA, and the Thomas Jefferson Award, the University of Virginia's highest honor.

SEMINAR 3: ELIOT AND POUND

Led by Peter Nicholls

This seminar invites 5-page papers treating any aspect of the connection or relations between T. S.

Eliot and Ezra Pound. The seminar will be held on Tuesday, June 21.

Peter Nicholls, the Henry James Professor of English at New York University, has written widely on Ezra Pound and modernism more generally. He is the author of *Politics, Economics and Writing: A Study of Ezra Pound's 'Cantos'* (1984); "Bravado or Bravura? Reading Ezra Pound's *Cantos*," in *Modernism and Masculinity: Literary and Cultural Transformations*, ed. Lusty and Murphet (2014); and "'You in the dinghy astern there': Learning from Ezra Pound," in *Ezra Pound and Education*, ed. Yao and Coyle (2012). In the wider field of modernist studies, his *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (1995; 2nd expanded ed. 2009) is essential reading, and he has also edited *Regarding the Popular: Modernism, the Avant-Garde, and High and Low Culture* (with Sascha Bru, 2012); and *On Bathos: Literature, Art, Music* (with Sara Crangle, 2010). His *George Oppen and the Fate of Modernism* appeared in 2007.

REVIEWS

Mortality and Form in Late Modernist Literature, by John Whittier-Ferguson.

Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Reviewed by Matthew Seybold
Elmira College

I would like to propose *The Geriatric Verb* as an alternate title for John Whittier-Ferguson's *Mortality and Form in Late Modernist Literature*. The current title seems more appropriate to the modernist scholarship that this book explicitly resists, that which charts a general trend toward reticence and solipsism as canonical writers approach their golden years. According to this convention, whether or not their cause had really failed, the beloved writers of Bloomsbury and their satellites came to believe it had. They looked backward with reverence and regret, and, so far as they spoke of the future, it was only to welcome their own demise and the world's also. While Whittier-Ferguson ratifies aspects of this narrative, he argues that Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, Wyndham Lewis, and T. S. Eliot were not so much interested in the anticipation of death as in the *activity* of dying. The

novels and poems that he addresses do not suffer from rigor mortis, but, to the contrary, demonstrate that writers on the downhill slope of life's bell curve have the advantage of momentum.

Mortality and Form in Late Modernist Literature begins and ends with a reading of Eliot's "East Coker," in which Whittier-Ferguson emphasizes "the irony that embodied form is an ultimately doomed but therefore consequential act of resistance to time's passing" (1). He examines and extrapolates the polysemous derivations of *timekeeping*, which Eliot introduces with his dancing couples, until they become "the lesson and promise offered us by all of the writing in [Whittier-Ferguson's] book" (210). In their choreographed spinning, the dancers are both collaborating in defiance of linearity and engaging in a routine as predictable as the metronome. Similarly, the crises of encroaching mortality evident in the late works of the authors Whittier-Ferguson analyzes are summarized by a verb, *turn*, which both acknowledges the inevitability of death and denies its motivational primacy. In Lewis's case, he turned toward a brand of satiric nihilism that welcomed a just apocalypse. Eliot, of course, turned toward devotional poetry. This poetry, Whittier-Ferguson insists, captures less of the comforts of faith and more of "the full force of [Eliot's] anguish over his inadequate practice of that faith" (34).

Whittier-Ferguson's readings provide psycho-theological explanations for formal aspects of Eliot's "late style," a style that has often confused scholars and even caused the works in question to be "dismissed as bad poetry" (32). He provides numerous examples and detailed explanations of four standard critiques, which may be summarized as too prosaic, too repetitive, too nonsensical, and too many religious allusions. He asserts that the "new" aspects of Eliot's style cohere only when viewed as "fights against the poet's occupational hazard[s]" (44). The poems are the frontline in Eliot's uphill battle toward genuine piety. They are in form, even when not in content, acts of humility, confession, chastisement, and prayer, as Eliot resists the desire to be both secular seducer and the seduced.

While the works Whittier-Ferguson identifies as the beginnings of "late style" for Woolf, Stein, and Lewis appear when each author is at least fifty years old, in comical contrast, the poem that signals Eliot's active preparation for his imminent demise was published a month before his thirty-ninth birthday. Eliot was a prodigy at all things, including being a codger. This conforms to a stereotype of the mature Eliot, increasingly comfortable with his position as the stodgy, well-heeled, Anglo gatekeeper to literary culture. Whittier-Ferguson admits that his Eliot is "the antithesis to [the] newly redeemed Eliot" (32) of David Chinitz, Marjorie Perloff, and Christopher Ricks. He, somewhat paradoxically, embraces Eliot as "the poet who publishes Christian polemics, is socially conservative, and is to some degree anti-Semitic" (32), but also offers "an edgy, unsettling, and unsettled Eliot to take the place of a poet whom contemporary readers have, for some decades now, too quickly assumed they knew (and, often, were embarrassed by)" (31). He does not accept that Eliot's religion had anything to do with making life easier. He repeatedly emphasizes Eliot's own response to accusations that his religious "conversion" was evidence of his pacification: "It is rather trying to be supposed to have settled oneself in an easy chair when one has just begun a long journey on foot" (38).

The key to Whittier-Ferguson's readings is that we

take Eliot at his word. He asks readers of *Mortality and Form* to suspend their dis-Belief. Unless we join "for as long as the chapter lasts" (34) in "the complexities of the turn Eliot fears and desires, the turn that he is in the process of redefining"(40), "these late poems must inevitably fail for us" (34). And thus he reproduces *Ash-Wednesday*, "Marina," and *Four Quartets* as engaging thought experiments. What if not only Eliot, but his readers also (ourselves included), were trying to live according to Anglican doctrine?

I, for one, will admit that I don't wholly trust Eliot. He is a little too capable, a little too sociable, a little too adept at feigning sincerity. He sees a little too far beyond the horizon of my own experience and expertise for me to buy his unflinching (or even flinching) devotion to such an institution as the Anglo-Catholic Church. Even in the late works, there are enough glimmers of the secular pragmatist who buys cheap and sells dear, who plays his friends against his wife to satisfy his own need for solace, and who understands, preternaturally, the message in the medium, for me to believe fully that he is not an antiheroic thief in the temple.



John Whittier-Ferguson

In the sober light of day, I'm not sure I trust Eliot any more than before, but Whittier-Ferguson allowed me to experience familiar poems as somebody who does. Without dogma, the chapter on Eliot compels its readers to imagine themselves as a very particular (and, for many of us, radically different) kind of reader. This strikes me as an admirable, though rarely attainable, ambition for literary criticism. At the very least, Whittier-Ferguson catalogs a matrix of appeals in Eliot's later poetry designed to produce particular responses in likeminded members of the votary. Even to skeptics such as myself, this reveals the deeper intricacy of Eliot's Technicolor Christian disguise. It may be enough to convince me that Eliot was inventing a new genre of High Modernist prayer, which, rather than "making new," "recount[s] news that is nothing new, telling us that we will pass through our last, feverish, local urgencies only to arrive at the same, still, blessed place" (65).

Letters of T. S. Eliot, Volume 5

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application of the philosophy of [Dante's] *Vita Nuova* to modern life" (209). Another letter contains Eliot's remark (quoted only as hearsay in the facsimile edition of *The Waste Land*) that in this poem he was "merely working off a grouch against life while passing the time in a Swiss sanatorium" (484).

Covering the period of "Ash Wednesday," "Marina," and the composition of "Coriolan," the letters are rich in Eliot's observations about his poetry. He is perplexed by reviews of "Ash Wednesday," writing that some think that Old Testament quotations are "as if original" to him (207); on the other hand, he asks "Can't I sometimes invent nonsense, instead of always being supposed to borrow it?" (197). In one letter he denies that "the three leopards or the unicorn contain any allusions literary" (197), but in a later one, while maintaining that "the yew trees, the nun, the garden god—come direct out of recurrent dreams" (257), states that the three leopards are deliberately "the world, the Flesh and the Devil" (258). He explains to G. Wilson Knight that the surprising world/whirled pun in "Against the Word the unstilled world still whirled" was inspired by John Donne, but that he "hesitate[d] three times before using a word in verse that I should shrink from using in speech" (204). More general remarks about writing poetry include his statements that "to hearken to criticism is to invite paralysis" (489), that active poets should not read their contemporaries (140), and that bad obscurity in poetry merely puzzles whereas the good kind is "the obscurity of any flower: something simple and to be simply enjoyed" (220).



Nancy Gish, Nancy Hargrove, Tim Materer, and
Lynette Ballard

Many of Eliot's most memorable statements are quoted in the Biographical Commentary, and the Biographical Register is also valuable. Although eleven letters from Vivien Eliot are included in this edition, they merely show that she was continually ill and fretting over social gatherings. (Other letters are missing: as Helen Gardner noted in her *Guardian* review of 21 March 2015, two of Eliot's letters to Emily Hale in 1930, which are not sequestered at Princeton, do not appear here.) Those who track Eliot's racist remarks may puzzle over Eliot's warm support of young Jewish writers despite his ingrained racial or ethnic biases, including a reference to an author who is "half-Scotch and half-vermouth" (117). Among the important letters to his peers are fourteen to James Joyce and eight to Ezra Pound. For the student of Eliot's religious and social opinions, there is much to learn from Eliot's responses to the Anglican Communion's Lambeth Conference (1930). One sees Eliot's conservatism hardening as he dissents from the Church's position that the decision to practice birth control could be left to the individual's conscience; he instead insists on the faithful consulting with their priests. This volume is a crucial record of Eliot's transition from the adventurous author of "Ash Wednesday" and *Dante* (1929) to the more conservative one of *Murder in the Cathedral* and *Thoughts after Lambeth* (1931).

I am grateful to Anne Barker and the University of Missouri library for making this expensive volume available for review.

Modernist Literatures, by Sarah Davison. Palgrave MacMillan, 2015.

Reviewed by Maggie Greaves
Skidmore College

Sarah Davison's *Modernist Literatures* is marketed as a readers' guide to essential modernist criticism. But it also has an unstated, perhaps unconscious purpose: this is a book that wants to help us catch our breaths. Davison's guide comes to us at a rich but overwhelming moment in modernist studies, when the concept of "modernism" is expanding at the same time that ventures like *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot* are supplying an unprecedented amount of primary source material. Situating itself in the midst of these changes, *Modernist Literatures* takes stock of

125 years of criticism to give both veteran and aspiring modernists a way forward.

Davison's book is in dialogue with the New Modernist Studies, which she characterizes as being "concerned with investigating the cultural, aesthetic, political, national and linguistic boundaries that modernity traverses," leading to "a radical expansion of the concept of 'modernist'" (1). Her book's plural title, then, refers not so much to comparative modernist literatures as to diverse and expansive understandings of the term "modernist." Readers shouldn't expect to encounter modernism in its Turkish or Chinese literary manifestations; the usual suspects of British, Irish, and American modernisms dominate against a sturdy backdrop of European Continental influences. Rather than a book on global modernist literatures, readers will find an account of why modernist literatures and literary criticisms have developed in the increasingly capacious ways that they have.

The guide is divided into two parts: before and after 1930. But the book couldn't be bisected, with modernist manifestos in one half and literary criticism in the other. Its cohesion lies in its storytelling, which also sets it apart from the Cambridge Introductions, handbooks, and glossaries available on the subject. The primary plot explains how modernist literatures grew up alongside the institutionalization of literature as a discipline, with the practices and implications embedded in modernist texts yielding early forms of established literary criticism. For instance, Davison alluringly claims that "New Criticism can be usefully considered as a branch of modernist writing" due to the Eliot-influenced values it placed on impersonality, the timelessness of great art, and form (104). (It would have been rewarding to see Davison push her discussion of New Criticism and its now-conservative sounding values one step further, acknowledging how revolutionary and shockingly "new" it was in its day.) While she does not quite claim a cause-and-effect relationship between modernism and the rise of literary studies, Davison seamlessly transitions between these topics by suggesting that the difficulty of high modernism addressed in part one demanded the "systematic analytical procedures" covered in part two (103).

Part one follows a roughly chronological course, presenting manifestos and critical statements through a mixture of author-based and thematic approaches. While Davison incorporates the subheadings expected in readers' guides, she never uses them to excuse herself

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The Waste Land: A Performance/Installation: A Painter, an Actor, a Poem at the Nineteenth Annual New York International Fringe Festival

Reviewed by Patrick Query
West Point

Just two chairs, a table, a tuxedo, and a puppet head. And a push broom. These are the only props the brothers Christopher and Daniel Domig used to bring *The Waste Land* to life for a black-box theater audience in the Bowery. The tuxedoed actor, Christopher, read the titles of the poem's sections from note cards he carried in his pocket, drawing them out and reciting the words as though announcing the next contestant in a spelling bee. Otherwise, he did the whole thing from memory alone and flawlessly. (Oh, perhaps there was a tiny slip or two, but who wants an English professor in the audience, anyway?)

The project welcomed a full house every night, and, at least on the night I attended, a legitimately spellbound audience demanded a curtain call. The performance itself is a tour de force of recall as well as enunciation. The friend accompanying me, an English professor, too, but a Melville scholar, remarked that he didn't miss a single word and that the performance brought movingly back to him parts of the poem he had forgotten. It is a tour de force, too, of creative strangeness. The relation of those props to the poetic text was in some cases explicit—a table for Madame Sosostri's cards, the table upturned as a boat for the Thames daughters—but more often, and better, oblique. It's the Fringe Festival, after all, and it's *The Waste Land*: the most adventuresome bits were also the most welcome—Domig writhing on the sawdust floor or mounting a chair high upon the table, his shoe announcing "Hurry up please it's time." Watching him arrange the props between scenes, the loving precision of his movements jarring happily with the bizarreness of the arrangements, was a pleasure of its own—one very much, it bears noting, in the key of the poem's own construction.

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Compiled by David Chinitz

Marginalia. In a short article on the Oxford University Marginalia Group and its tireless hunt for gems in the stacks, Lauren Collins reports in *The New Yorker*: “The other afternoon, [April] Pierce was at the London Library, examining a weathered edition of *Logische Untersuchungen*, by the philosopher Edmund Husserl. She opened to the title page and pointed out a faint, penciled inscription: ‘T. S. Eliot, Marburg 1914.’ ‘It’s his private copy,’ she said. The volume, from the library’s special collection, contained some winning annotations: ‘What the devil does this mean?’ ‘damn’d Locke,’ ‘es sollte überhaupt Kuchen geben’ [there should always be cake]. Pierce was planning to cite a few of them in her thesis” (“Oxford Postcard,” 15 Dec. 2014).

Mass murder. “After such knowledge, what forgiveness?” T. S. Eliot asked that question, in his poem ‘Gerontion,’ almost a century ago, and it has hovered over much subsequent history.” (A. O. Scott, reviewing *The Look of Silence*, a 2015 documentary about the murder of over a million Indonesians after the 1965 military coup. *New York Times*, 7 July 2015.)

Our Monica, Ourselves? In Summer 2014, *Public Sightings* reported on an unhappy Prufrock metaphor perpetrated by Monica Lewinsky. But what had seemed an offhand reference turns out to have had substance behind it, as Lewinsky has subsequently published “My Love Song to J. Alfred Prufrock,” a 1,500-word appreciation of the poem and its cultural influence. She has been “smitten” with Eliot’s poem since discovering it in a high-school English class. The question of “why these verses have permeated the culture in so many varied, and sometimes surprising ways, 100 years on” continues to interest her, and the poem’s “cadence, its charming digressions” still take her to a “place . . . beyond meaning” (*Vanity Fair*, 24 June 2015).

Does he dare? In the first episode of the series *Bates Motel*, season 3, Norman Bates hallucinates his English teacher Blaire Watson, whom he has previously murdered. Norman is in the cafeteria and pulls a peach from his lunch bag just before Miss Watson appears. She says, “This year we’re starting with the modern poets—T. S. Eliot. I love him,” then goes on to recite the final stanza of “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.” Terrified, Norman knocks the peach off the table.

Does she dare? The allusions to “Prufrock” don’t end with the title of Rachel Joyce’s 2014 novel *The Love Song of Miss Queenie Hennessy*. In one scene, a nun tempts the title character, who is dying of cancer, to defy the danger of choking by eating a peach. Elsewhere Queenie discloses her unexpressed love for a male friend: “We would grow old ... we would grow old. You would wear the bottoms of your trousers rolled. I would keep the truth untold.”

March to Oblivion. The Carnegie Hall premier of “March to Oblivion,” an orchestral work by the Estonian composer Jonas Tarm, was canceled after an audience member who had previously heard the piece complained that it included a 45-second quotation of the Nazi anthem “Horst-Wessel-Lied.” Writing in the *New York Times*, Zachary Woolfe called the cancellation “misguided” on the grounds that the musical quotation was clearly ironic. The composer, however, “had done nothing to prepare audiences for this interpolation: his program note consisted in its entirety of a few lines from T. S. Eliot’s *The Hollow Men*.” Given the opportunity “to elaborate on his intended meaning,” the composer declined, evidently feeling that the passage from Eliot made it sufficiently clear (“Making the Case to Hear Nazi Song,” 7 Mar. 2015).

Walt Wagner. “Final Jeopardy” prompt for 20 July 2015: “Wagner’s line ‘Oed’ und leer das Meer,’ meaning ‘waste and empty the sea,’ is quoted in a poem by this American-born man.” Two contestants picked Walt Whitman; the third aced the question and won the game.



David Chinitz and Chris Buttram

The 36th Annual T. S. Eliot Society Meeting Conference Overview

By Christopher McVey
Boston University

The Society held its 2015 meeting from Friday 25 to Sunday 27 September in St. Louis. As in the past, the first day of the conference was graciously hosted by Washington University. The conference began with a Peer Seminar, chaired by Cassandra Laity (U of Tennessee, Knoxville), on “Prufrock’ at 100,” as well as a Scholars Seminar, chaired by Matthew Seybold (Elmira C). Vincent Sherry (Washington U) delivered the opening lecture, “Eliot and the Great War.” Sherry argues that most narratives of both Eliot’s life and work often subordinate the war as an important but mostly contextual background narrative. What might happen, Sherry asks, if we position the war not merely as a subsidiary context, but rather at the very fore of Eliot’s work at this time? Drawing on Eliot’s letters to his



family, Sherry shows that it was precisely the occasion of the war that shaped both Eliot’s momentary drought and his return to verse composition in 1917. Panel Session I began with a paper by Suzanne Churchill (Davidson C), who examined Eliot’s influence on leftist politics and poets in the *Partisan Review*, despite the seeming incongruity between these poets and Eliot’s own beliefs. Annarose Steinke (U of New Mexico) and John Tamilio III (Salem State U) both explored the role of the corporeal in Eliot’s work, noting the way in which the body stands liminally between the self and the world: in these readings, the body functions as a source of knowledge, a site of social performance, and yet also as a forum of internal anguish.

This year’s memorial lecture was given by Jed Esty (U of Pennsylvania), whose keynote “Capes and Continents: Eliot’s Frontier and the Rhetoric of Decline” offered a reconsideration of the landscape poems “New Hampshire,” “Virginia,” and “Cape Ann.” Although both in subject and voice these poems seem to lead towards the poetic accomplishment of *Four Quartets*, Esty proposes that we read them rather in opposition to the comic reconciliation of Eliot’s later work. Primarily, Esty considers how these poems attempt to register two interlocked but antagonistic ideas: America as a site of childhood and America as a site of uncontrollable modernity. Pivoting on moments of both movement and paralysis, “Virginia” and the other landscape poems take on a striking new valence in such a reading. For Esty, such moments mark not a freezing of time in the allegorical character of *Four Quartets*, but something more indeterminate: memories from Eliot’s childhood become not nostalgic, but rather an occasion to reckon with and negotiate fraught, existential encounters, figured through an American landscape that seems curiously inhospitable to what Esty characterizes as the “shaped time” of modernity.

Saturday began with David Chinitz warmly leading a chorus of “Happy Birthday” for Eliot. Panel Session II then offered three papers on aspects of *The Waste Land*. Christopher McVey (Boston U), using correspondence from the newly released fifth volume of letters, argued that Eliot’s change in his note to the final line of the poem might be attributed to F. R. Leavis. Kevin Rulo (Catholic U), winner of this year’s Fathman award, historically contextualized the figure of the carbuncular house agent, showing that we might read the agent as a figure of commercial exchange and thus as a satire



Jayme Stayer and Chris McVey
(*Time Present* editorial team as of January 1)

REPORTS

of modern commerce. David Huisman (Grand Valley State U) responded to F. R. Leavis's characterization of *The Waste Land* note on Ernest Shackleton's polar expedition as "interesting irrelevance," arguing that Shackleton's account probably influenced Eliot to think of the corresponding passage from Luke 24:13-35.

Panel III offered papers that explored Eliot's engagements with non-Western culture in and outside of the museum. Michael Coyle (Colgate U) looked at Eliot's notebook poem "Afternoon" (1914) as an intersection between the profane and the spiritual, arguing that it offers an opportunity to rethink the women who come and go in "Prufrock" as figures of transformation, transcending the mundane through art. Joon-Soo Bong (Seoul National U) offered a paper that considers how America became for Eliot more like Asia than Europe, a third term that reshapes how we triangulate Eliot's sense of world culture in ways both materialistic and linguistic. Nancy Hargrove (Mississippi State U) presented information about Asian and African art on display at the time of Eliot's visit to museums in both Paris and London in 1910-11, showing that Eliot was likely exposed to a wide range of sculpture and work that surely complemented his studies in nonwestern philosophy and religion. Saturday afternoon's Panel IV further augmented these engagements with three papers on Eliot and philosophy. J. C. Marler (St. Louis U) explored the influence of the "eidos" or notion of a "class concept" on Eliot's philosophy and aesthetic. J.



*Elisabeth Daeumer, Carol Yang,
and Yangsoon Kim*

W. Case (St. Louis U) approached Eliot from the more contemporary work of Alasdair MacIntyre, arguing that Eliot perhaps indirectly influenced MacIntyre's Aristotelian Thomism through R.G. Collingwood. Yangsoon Kim (Korea U) offered the last paper of Saturday's sessions, exploring Eliot's notes from his philosophical studies at Oxford to better theorize the role of humility in Eliot's writing and poetry. Saturday evening's Society Dinner was once more hosted by Tony and Melanie Fathman at their house, the hearth and home for the Society's St. Louis meetings.

Sunday morning's final session at the First Unitarian Church offered three papers that engaged with Eliot's drama. Joshua Richards (Williams Baptist C) argued that Eliot potentially repurposed choric sections of *Sweeney Agonistes* into "The Hollow Men," using F. M. Cornford's structural schema of Aristophanic elements to show surprising resonances between each. Fabio Vericat (U Complutense de Madrid), whose paper featured sound bytes of the 1937 airing of *Murder in a Cathedral*, considered the implications of Eliot's decision to cut the sermon from the radio production, further suggesting that the radio might have served as a way for Eliot to reconcile the poetic and the prosaic. Carol Yang (National Chengchi U, Taipei) explored the figure of the stranger in *The Cocktail Party*, seeing a radical hermeneutic encounter with an indeterminate other in the final act, which might also be read as an encounter with an indeterminate self. As is tradition, the conference concluded with a celebratory reading aloud of Eliot's works.



Around the table from left: John Tamilio III and his wife Cynthia, Joshua Richards, Annarose Steinke, Lynette Ballard, Jed Esty, Nancy Gish, Anita Patterson, Fabio Vericat, and (in front) Deborah Leiter-Nyabuti.

Three Contemporary Takes on Eliot

The Waste Land and Other Poems, by John Beer. Canarium Books, 2010.

Everywhere Here and in Brooklyn: A Four Quartets, by Kristin Prevallet. Belladonna, 2012.

gentlessness, by Dan Beachy-Quick. Tupelo Press, 2015.

Reviewed by Stefanie Wortman
Rhode Island College

T. S. Eliot occupies an expansive territory in the minds of contemporary American poets, though some of them seem to grudge him the space. Three recent books of poetry pay tribute to Eliot in ways that temper veneration with irony and even iconoclasm.

John Beer makes the audacious move of titling his first book *The Waste Land and Other Poems*. The cover design looks like a frayed copy of the Hogarth Press edition of Eliot's book. Beer's rewriting is both funny and grave, transposing Eliot's destroyed London onto a downtrodden Chicago and giving us a speaker who proclaims "April is the coolest month, which brings / happy policemen the pleasant dreams of spring." Among the preoccupations of Beer's "The Waste Land" is a sense of belatedness, a feeling that the work of poetry has been completed and what remains to the contemporary poet is explication. Where Eliot wrote about failed romance, Beer gives us the failed attempts of a teacher who "[lectures] empty rooms / on F. H. Bradley and the moon." Where Eliot has fragments, Beer has "footnotes...shored against my ruins," and as he moves toward the conclusion of his "Waste Land," he writes, "once the poem ended, commentary began." As commentary, Beer's poem is incisive. As poetry, his commentary offers many pleasures.

Among the pleasures contemporary poets seem to get from revisiting Eliot is the opportunity to contradict him. Rachel Loden's poem "Dear Possum," in *Dick of the Dead* (Ahsakta Press, 2009), begins "I thought death had undone about that many." Poets deeply engaged with Eliot are simultaneously driven to rebel against him.

Inevitably, the Eliot whose work seemed so strange and unruly to some of his contemporaries becomes a

"stuffy old poet" for writers of the twenty-first-century avant-garde. In the "Note on Process" appended to her *Everywhere Here and in Brooklyn: A Four Quartets*, Kristin Prevallet even includes a gratuitous confession about Eliot's *Four Quartets*: "I secretly love it even though I wouldn't admit it to most of my friends." Prevallet calls her book a "shadowing" of *Four Quartets*. Of course, a shadow takes its shape from the thing that makes it, and at times *Everywhere Here and in Brooklyn* seems to diverge little from its source. A garden in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, doesn't feel so different from a garden at Burnt Norton: "Come, said a bird, there are children here, excited, but laughter is hidden."

Where the poem feels most new is in those places where Prevallet meditates on environmental disasters, particularly the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. She describes "suffering people and animals" falling victim to

...the continuation of failed
presidents and CEOs, their damned hubris, their
false devotionless devotion.

Their once powerful rig has sprung a slow leak
And now we listen to its undeniable whizzing,
loud as a siren,

With no evacuation route.

Such catastrophes call up a deep fear that we have changed our habitat irrevocably, but in Eliot's timeless moment Prevallet finds a grim consolation. By planting the seeds of our own destruction, humans have found that the way up and the way down are the same. She ends her *Four Quartets*, "The water and the chemical used to disperse it / are one."

Paying homage to Eliot in a different mode, Dan Beachy-Quick's *gentlessness* is less a rewriting of an enduring poem than an attempt to abstract from Eliot's and other modernist poetry those qualities that make it endure. *gentlessness* is a more academic exercise than either Beer's or Prevallet's books, as it attempts to construct a history of poetry in sections like "heroisms" and "puritanisms." Eliot, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams are the most obvious sources for the final section, "modernisms." Beachy-Quick seems especially interested in portrait poems like Eliot's "Portrait of a Lady" and the questions they raise about interiority and authenticity. In "Portrait," he writes "A surface seems to know something about/ Depth depth cannot know about itself," and in "Portrait (After Arcimboldo)" he hears a "voice inside the mask but it's the mask that sings." Problems of authentic voice also plague the writer in "No Man's

Land”: “It’s not like being self-aware on the page / Is a new trick or the poem growing aware of itself / As it’s being written, discovering / Unsuspected mines from which lost children / Bring back to their hovels rubies and diamonds.”

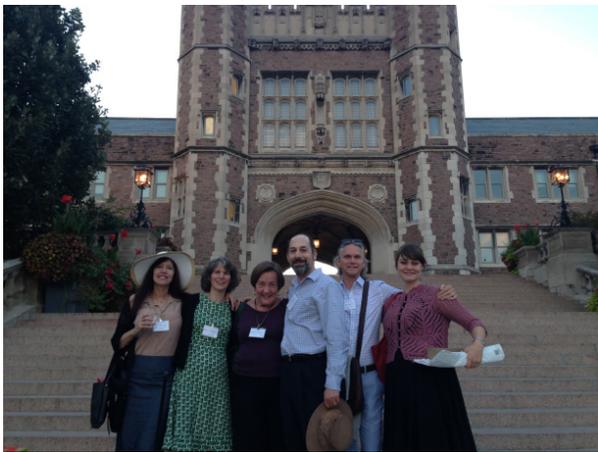
One of the curious features of Beachy-Quick’s book is that allusions to famous poems override the boundaries that his titled sections seem to impose. These unruly incursions by influential poems deliberately undermine his neatly-constructed poetic history. True to this technique, the most overt rewriting of Eliot comes at the end of “romanticisms,” the section that directly precedes “modernisms”:

Where shadows brood beneath fern fronds
unfurled
And water drips from a rock drop drip drop
A song the hermit thrush hears and hearing nears
And broods in song, drip drop drip, a child sings
Along as water drips from a rock a tear-
Shaped drip that is the wandering child’s song
She sings drip drop a song the hermit thrush
hears

And out the fond shadow the bird singing nears

As Keats’s nightingale gives way to Eliot’s hermit thrush, Beachy-Quick bridges the distance between more pastoral settings and the modernists’ disordered cityscapes.

These books show how Eliot’s poems continue to ring in the ears of a wide range of contemporary writers. With new editions of his *Collected and Uncollected Poems* published this year and the centenary of “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” we will likely see more “visions and revisions” to come.



Cassandra Laity and board members at Wash U

A Performance Installation

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Afterward, the exhilarated audience spilled onto the sidewalk and buzzed in the summer evening. Christopher Domig followed, and a more genuine and generous post-show performer you will not meet. I asked him how he and his brother had come to the idea of staging Eliot’s poem. His answer, it turns out, is signaled there in the project’s subtitle: “A Painter, an Actor, a Poem.” The impulse to collaborate came first, and *The Waste Land* provided the ground in which the collaborative action could flourish. The question they initially asked was not: How can we bring this poem to life for the stage? but rather, What kind of art object could enfold the energies of both a painter and an actor? The answer: neither painting nor play, but poem. A glance at Daniel Domig’s work indicates that this brother, at least, has been thinking of Eliot for some time. His riveting installations carry such titles as “There are no eyes here,” “Indigestible Portions,” and “Neither fear nor courage saves us.” A 2011 Vienna exhibition was titled “Till Human Voices Wake Us” (www.currentlynowhere.com). So he has thought through the potential implications of Eliot’s words for physical space, a meditation to which Christopher brings an actor’s sense of the words as performative speech.

Any attempt to perform *The Waste Land* using only one speaker must contend with the fact that the poem is so essentially about the play of multiple voices. A group of performers adopting a range of roles easily enact this play of voices. A single reader behind a lectern may also distinguish among voices. Paradoxically, even the silent reader has more freedom to “do the police in different voices” than a speaking actor, who imposes a single persona on the words as he recites the lines and does things like stand, walk, climb, sit, and sweat. The actor’s body obtrudes in the gaps between the voices and, far more insistently than any textual Tiresias, binds them into one. Even with Christopher Domig’s assumption of different accents and intonations, Eliot’s assertion that all the personages of the poem are in fact one is made relentlessly manifest in the plain fact of the actor’s body. Watching the end of the performance, I had the sensation of having accompanied a particular character on a long journey, and that is an experience I have never had with this poem. Somehow, Prufrock had assumed control of the waste land. Even the bottoms of his trousers were rolled.

Such an observation is no criticism of the Domig brothers' project but rather points to a useful question about the nature of Eliot's work. Much excellent criticism has been written about the performative nature of modernist poetry, particularly Eliot's. A staged one-man performance of *The Waste Land*, by lifting the poem off the page and turning readers into a theater audience, puts performativity to the test. If something is lost in the translation, it is balanced, I would venture, by a new appreciation for what the poem accomplishes on the page: the power of the printed word to nurture multiplicity. And it may help one to understand the flatness of Eliot's plays—recently remarked in these pages by Jayme Stayer—where despite the presence of multiple bodies and actual voices, a weird uniformity of expression is the rule, as though Eliot required the page, not the stage, to make the dry bones of language live.

Learn a bit more about the project at <https://vimeo.com/130922956> and <http://wastelandproject.com/TWLP.pdf>.

Modernist Literatures

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from a good transitional topic sentence: she keeps a clear narrative trajectory throughout. In rare cases, Davison's crafting of a story impedes accessibility. The relationships among Imagism, Symbolism, Vorticism, Futurism, et al—which students often find mystifying—are hazy, as Davison frames these movements under larger modernist preoccupations about consciousness and classicism. While this organization reveals a precise, multilayered literary history, it is not inviting to newer students of modernism who tend to assume that Pound singlehandedly invented two dozen virtually identical modernist schools in the period of a year. But on the whole, part one is accessible and pedagogically empowering. A student or instructor could peruse the subsection on Surrealism before class and digest not only a definition of the term but also the affinity among Freud, Breton, and automatic writing, which Davison throws into remarkably clear relief.

Part two moves into denser and more specialized material, with plenty of sentences that demand second and even third readings. Divided into chapters on canon-making, gender and sexuality, time and space, and mass culture, part two presents a balanced overview of critical developments grouped into each category.

This section of the guide will be invaluable to graduate students in modernist studies, not only for its content but also for its modeling of how critical conversations work. Davison puts scholars into respectful dialogue with one another, explaining how and why new arguments emerged in response to existing bodies of scholarship. (Davison does this especially well in the Gender and Sexuality chapter, taking care that readers do not conflate, say, Trudi Tate's work on war writing with positions taken in classic studies by Paul Fussell or Gilbert and Gubar.) Graduate and undergraduate students alike would also do well to study how Davison crafts critically informed close readings about modernist works (her reading of *Dubliners* in part one is also particularly outstanding). Davison's talent for defining familiar concepts in fresh but accurate language eases the path into challenging critical and theoretical concepts, from her swift definition of deconstruction to her distinction between the critical meanings of space and place. This facility adds to the trustworthy feel of her book, which is ultimately solid but not groundbreaking. Unavoidably, a lot of critical approaches are missing from the second part, whether due to concerns of scope or a decision to wait to see how critical interests like affect and the nonhuman turn withstand the test of time.

The target audience for this guide is broad. As a new assistant professor about to teach a course on modernist poetry (my adjacent rather than primary field), I am grateful for this book. I felt that it was written for and to me. I expect that graduate students about to embark on a modernist dissertation, seasoned professors who want a renewed sense of the forest for the trees, and even determined undergraduates preparing for a senior thesis on a modernist author would have the same feeling. Davison offers just the right well-known quotations from major artists and critics without ever giving the impression that her readers should already have known the material. Because of its level of detail, it is hard to imagine assigning this book as a core reading for a seminar, though it could work well as recommended reading. There's also another matter: this is the kind of book instructors hesitate assigning to their students so that they can keep some surprises of their own.

Ultimately, Davison's guide reveals that even as "modernist" is broadening as a category, it is becoming an increasingly specialized term. *Modernist Literatures* can help readers navigate that specialization, to recognize what might still be "new" in the long study of a period that sought to "make it new," but with responsible

The Cocktail Party, The Print Room, The Coronet, London

Reviewed by Daisy Cummins
University of Durham

Eliot's aspirations as a playwright were ignited both by his admiration of early-modern verse drama and also his desire to belong to the London theater scene. This ambition is palpable in *The Cocktail Party*, with its quintessentially British middle-class ensemble, drawing-room setting, romanticized verse, and of course its quiet satire. The Print Room's production at The Coronet, Notting Hill, brings Eliot's play alive by deftly balancing autobiography and allegory, humor and dramatic tension.

With water instead of cocktails and the spotlighted telephone, this production emphasizes the absent and the unsaid. The extravagant cast effortlessly fills the stage, unfazed by unnaturally large empty spaces. A note of absurdity is struck immediately through shadowed lighting, dramatic audio, neutral faces, and the cast's unnerving automated movement as they file on stage. Then a sudden switch of lighting, sound, and posture into the casual naturalism of the opening scene arrests our attention and works effectively as a recurring motif throughout the play. Director Abbey Wright uses the scene changes to highlight the fundamental and terrifying disconnectedness of the characters. Scene breaks provide variation between lengthy dialogues of introspection, even slowing down the characters' thoughts for our examination; for example, Edward revisits his memories in the chaos of scene changes as significant props pass through his hands. However, other visually striking aspects of staging are more elusive in purpose. At the close of scenes, for instance, the stage's border is highlighted in vivid orange, trapping the actors in a hostile frame, and in act three a pair of cat eyes slip in and out of focus behind Sir Henry as he is held under Lavinia's curious interrogation.

The mysterious Unidentified Guest is excellently portrayed by Hilton McRae, who sits facing the stage, speaking almost as a fellow audience member. With his quiet authority, McRae's Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly resembles J. B. Priestley's Inspector, moving easily, building momentum, pregnant with energy and understanding of personal responsibilities. As an utterly convincing Julia Shuttlethwaite, Marcia Warren gives a standout performance with incredible natural

delivery, innate comic timing, and authenticity even in the second act, when Julia's genuine sensibility is questioned. Likewise Christopher Ravenscroft's Alex exudes solidity though kind smiling eyes, which never falter and retain great sensitivity even in the delivery of act three's devastating news. Each of the "guardian" characters delicately handles the unfolding presentation of their knowledge, controlling it to prevent chaotic unraveling, and retaining their dual roles as both plot advancers and allegorical figures.

Eliot's younger characters mature over the course of the play, developing their dimensions as their characters come to understand themselves. This is particularly evident in the portrayal of Celia, whom Chloe Pirrie presents as young, flirtatious, and clumsy in the opening act. This gawky Celia blurts out ideas only to withdraw quickly or negate them, a naive young woman made comic by her lack of gravity; in the second act, however, she is transformed by the weight of her poetic revelation. It is here Pirrie's performance must be heartily commended as her Celia becomes our heroine and solidly secures the sympathy of the audience in anticipation of act three.

Peter Quilpe (played by John Wark), also comes into the complexity of his character late into the performance. Wark brings a hint of the contemporary corporate public school graduate to the production. Richard Dempsey's rigid physicality in the role of Edward initially seems excessive, but proves entirely justified. Dempsey's staunchly upright manner becomes a measure of Edward's panic and despair. In a hellish epiphany opposite Lavinia, Dempsey's choreography shines, as his eyes widen in horror while his body, face, and voice attempt to remain unmoved in the terror of the moment, creating a fantastic conflict.

The live wire between Dempsey's Edward and Pirrie's Celia is tangible, providing enough tension for their shared gazes to be delicious, without diluting the power between Edward and Helen Bradbury's formidable Lavinia. As soon as Bradbury enters the stage she owns it. Her clipped diction and towering physicality perfectly taunt Dempsey's Edward, and the two compete and tussle for dominance of the space, Bradbury's Lavinia usually prevailing. Contentedness is reached in the final act without the Chamberlaynes ever conceding their proud body language, rather focusing it toward a hinted pregnancy, with infrequent gestures to the potential bulge under Lavinia's forgiving dress.

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This production doesn't just honor Eliot's vision: The Print Room gives it new life. Wright's direction respects Eliot's themes while allowing his verse and satirized characters to speak for themselves. Even the libation scene is permitted to retain its full acknowledgment to Euripides, yet moves with the same momentum that carries the entire performance. Eliot's verse is treated with the utmost respect, allowing dramatic pauses to enter naturally rather than imposing gravity onto poetry. A thoroughly enjoyable production, with a talented cast, informed and measured direction, and an excellently designed cocktail bar underneath—it is a party one cannot afford to miss.



Fabio Vericat and Joshua Richards at the Fathmans' house

REPORTS

Report from the Seventh T. S. Eliot Summer School

By Rajni Singh
Indian Institute of Technology, Dhanbad

In July 2015, the T. S. Eliot International Summer School convened in London again, bringing together scholars, critics, connoisseurs, young researchers and students, creative writers, editors, and people from diverse professions who are passionately involved with reading and learning about Eliot. Drawn from China, India, Korea, the UK and the US, the globally diverse participants felt a sense of belonging and group solidarity during a week of stimulating lectures, discussions, readings, and excursions.

Craig Raine gave the inaugural lecture on *The Waste Land* and the living dead, arguing that the encounter with “Stetson” is “one of the most important lines in the poem, with huge implications.” Raine followed the poem's theme of previous lives lived that is so pointedly suggested by this line. On the second day, participants traveled across green landscapes to Burnt Norton, with special excitement among those who were going to see it for the first time. The moment we entered through the small white gate to the grounds of the house, the poem came alive. The house, its door, the rose garden and the dry pool gave a sense of how the past and the present intersected. Sudden rain showers enhanced the beauty of the place. Michael Levenson's lecture began on the note of desires and memories in the poem. He

emphasized how the poem begins in high abstraction, moves through the danger of perpetual presence and culminates in the poetic truth that “only through time, time is conquered.” In the poem, memory is always misleading, and desires interfere in the analysis of judgement. Levenson concluded his talk thus: “I thank Eliot for Burnt Norton and Burnt Norton for Eliot.”

The morning lectures of the week explored the varied facets of Eliot's life and art. Massimo Bacigalupo's talk on “Dante among the Moderns” emphasized Eliot's metaphysical Dante. In her lecture on Eliot, Virgil, and Rome, Nancy Gish discussed reflections of Latin Europe in *The Waste Land*. She was of the view that the geography, character, and philosophy of the poem are informed by the *Aeneid*. Nancy Hargrove presented on Eliot and popular music with vocal illustrations by Guy Hargrove, who performed such songs as “That Shakesperian Rag,” “The Cubanola Glide,” “Oh! Mrs. Porter” (trademark song of Marie Lloyd), and “At Trinity Church I Met My Doom.” We learned that after he won the Nobel Prize, Eliot sang the song “Under the Bamboo Tree” at a party, apparently one of his favorites. In “The ladies who are interested in Assyrian art: Eliot and the British Museum,” Michael Coyle discussed the poem “Afternoon” in the context of museum history, demonstrating how the ladies themselves become the exhibit. Gail McDonald's “Reading Eliot Reading” proposed that it was “Eliot the critic who prepared us to welcome Eliot the poet.” John Paul Riquelme discussed the dangerous and the dark in

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MSA Book Prize awarded to *The Complete Prose*

Ronald Schuchard and Anthony Cuda, editors of *Volume II: The Perfect Critic, 1919-1926*, accepted the Modernist Studies Association's 2015 prize for the best edition or anthology of the previous year. "While the entire edition, projected to eight volumes, constitutes a major achievement and an indispensable archive," the judges wrote, "Volume II is certain to be the one most used by scholars, most central to ongoing studies and re-evaluations of Eliot and the history of modernist criticism. Clear and easily grasped editorial principles and superb content notes speak to the dedication, diligence, and sound sense of the editorial team." Congratulations to Ron and Tony!



Volumes III and IV now online

You can now access Eliot's prose from the years 1930 to 1933 in *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot*. Johns Hopkins has launched *Volume IV: The English Lion, 1930-1933*, edited by Jason Harding and Ronald Schuchard, on Project Muse <https://muse.jhu.edu/about/reference/eliot/>

Call for Papers

The T. S. Eliot Society will sponsor two sessions at the 2016 annual conference of the **American Literature Association**, May 26-29, 2016, at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco. Please send proposals (up to 250 words), along with a brief biography or curriculum vitae, to Professor Emerita Nancy K. Gish (nancy.gish@maine.edu) Submissions must be received no later than January 15, 2016. For information on the ALA and its 2016 meeting, please see the ALA website at www.americanliteratureassociation.org

Eliot Society in Louisville

Anita Patterson has organized a panel for the Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture Since 1900 (February 18-20, 2016), entitled "Reading *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: Apprentice Years, 1905-1918*":

- "Facts and Interpretations in Eliot's Graduate Essays and Post-War Poetry" by Jewel Spears Brooker, Eckerd College
- "Humanism without Psychologism: The Logic of Eliot's Impersonal Theories" by Jeffrey Blevins, University of California, Berkeley
- "T. S. Eliot's Spatial Turns" by Yasmine Shamma, Wilkes Honors College, Florida Atlantic University

Eliot Summer School 2016

The 8th T. S. Eliot International Summer School will take place at the University of London, 9-17 July 2016. Info at www.ies.sas.ac.uk. Save the dates!

Email news to the editor at tseliotsociety@gmail.com

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Supervisor of Elections seeks nominations for two seats on the Board—those presently held by Chris Buttram and Julia Daniel. These are three-year positions, running from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2019.

Elected members are expected to attend the annual conference of the Society, at which the Board meeting is held, and to take on other tasks in service to the Society.

Nominations and self-nominations should be sent to the incoming Supervisor of Elections, Michael

Coyle (mcoyle@colgate.edu) by February 15, 2016. Candidates with five or more nominations will appear on the ballot.

Members may also make nominations for honorary membership and for distinguished service awards. These nominations should be made to the incoming President, Frances Dickey (dickeyf@missouri.edu), by April 15, 2016.

Summer School Report

continued from page 16

Eliot's poetry. He stressed that in Eliot there is always a moving backwards in time, a vision of mortality ("unreal city"), enigma and uncertainty, discomfort and fear combined with something darkly optimistic. He described *The Waste Land* as "created from spare parts, with vampire in the mix." Sir Christopher Ricks also gave a special lecture in celebration of the centenary of the publication of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." This lecture was organised by the Poetry Society of the UK in collaboration with the Summer School. In a workshop on Eliot's prose, Ronald Schuchard updated the participants about the progress of *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition*, explaining that the text and annotations constitute the intellectual and cultural history of Eliot's life. Joanna Rzepa, a former student of the school, informed the participants about her work in progress, "T. S. Eliot and the Lost Auschwitz Story."

The afternoon sessions of the week comprised six seminars: "T. S. Eliot and Wallace Stevens: Orators of Accurate Tongue" (Massimo Baciagalupo), "Modernist Poetry and Victorian Ghosts" (Michael Coyle), "Eliot for Poets" (Robert Crawford), "Between the Old World and the New: What Virgil Means to Eliot" (Nancy Gish), "From Shakespearean Tragedy to 'That Shakespearean Rag': High Culture and Low-Brow Culture in *The Waste Land*" (Nancy Hargrove), and "An Introduction to T. S. Eliot" (Wim Van Mierlo).

The seminars were focussed on teaching us to think in new ways about Eliot and his art, in group discussions with an international dimension.

The offsite excursions and activities such as a walking tour to the "Unreal City," an Eliot exhibition at the Institute (led by Carey Karmel and Mark Storey), and trips to Little Gidding, Burnt Norton and East Coker provided students with "objective correlatives" to Eliot's poetry. Readings of Eliot's poetry, including the Choruses from *The Rock*, three of the *Four Quartets* on site, and performances by Sinéad Morrissey and Jeremy Irons at the London Library brought his words to life. Through sights and sounds, conversations and conviviality, the summer school was a journey through Eliot's poetic world into human nature.



Summer School participants at Burnt Norton

NOTES

Henry Adams and Eliot's Horseshoe Crab Correction

By James Bratcher
San Antonio

Eliot gave notice in the *New English Weekly* for 25 January 1941 that in publishing *The Dry Salvages* he had let an error get by him. Instead of "hermit crab" in line 19, he had intended to name the horseshoe crab:

...the beach where it tosses

Its hints of earlier and other creation:

The starfish, the hermit crab, the whale's backbone.

Almost surely, when a boy, Eliot had observed this crab

with its horseshoe-shaped carapace while spending summers at Cape Ann on the Atlantic shore north of Boston. The significance he attached to failing to write "horseshoe crab," writing "hermit crab" instead, may indicate that he intended a calculated allusion to the appearance of this same crab in *The Education of Henry Adams* (private ed. 1907, commercial ed. 1918), a book he and many in his literary audience knew.

Adams twice mentions the horseshoe crab in *The Education*—first in chapter XV, "Darwinism." The fossil record shows that the horseshoe crab has the peculiarity of being a life-form that has not evolved over geologic time. Adams relates this primitive, unaltered holdover from geologic antiquity to his skepticism regarding Darwin's thesis, specifically towards the idea

President's Report

By Michael Coyle

At our September meeting, the Eliot Society Board discussed plans for the near and distant future. For our 2016 conference (see call for papers on page 3), we have reserved the Teatro Auditorium delle Clarisse in Rapallo, as well as a meeting room in Genoa for our last day—at a palazzo belonging to the university, thanks to Massimo Bacigalupo. We are assembling a list of hotels in Rapallo and organizing excursions for the afternoons and a boat trip to Portofino for dinner. Keep your eyes on the society website for further details. And maybe go online and see the great beauty of the Italian Riviera!

We also discussed the future of *Time Present*: should our society newsletter, now so much more than a *newsletter*, continue to be a print medium archived on the society website as pdf files, or should it go digital—and if so in what way? Thanks to the efforts of Julia Daniel, Baylor University has generously offered to underwrite the publication of the print edition beginning next summer and support its digital redesign should we choose to pursue that option. We are still considering

what new features a digital format might allow, while remaining concerned to preserve the achievements of recent years. Society members should feel invited to contact board members with their suggestions and/or concerns.

This December marks my last month as society president. It has been an eventful three years full of challenges and rich with rewards. But I step down happy to think of our own Frances Dickey carrying us forward from here. I am also happy to report that Jayme Stayer, a longtime society stalwart, has been elected Vice President, and that John Morgenstern was re-elected as society Historian—which is why you may have noticed that he rarely put his camera down at the September meeting.

Writing to his friend and editor, Ezra Pound, and parodying Yeats, Eliot wrote: “I will arise & go NOW, & go to Rappaloo / where the ink is mostly green and the pencils mostly blue.” Rapallo isn’t much at all like Innisfree, but it is a sparkling gem of a town, with a Roman bridge in sight of a lovely beach, and all of it surrounded by wooded hills that rise up from the sea. This will be a conference to remember. I hope to see everyone there!

NOTES

of human evolutionary progress from lower to higher, a movement toward perfection. Adams did not accept the notion of progress; he saw only change, although sometimes even change was not present or possible. In chapter XV he names the horseshoe crab in an attractive biographical detail that he recalled from the intervals of his boyhood he had spent at his grandfather’s (John Q. Adams’s) home at Quincy, Massachusetts, south of Boston. The detail mentions the boy Adams swimming at the Quincy shore, frolicking, and then his “taking the sudden back-somersault into Quincy Bay in search of the fascinating creature he had called a horseshoe, whose huge dome of shell and sharp spur of tail had so alarmed him as a child.” Later in the book, in chapter XXX, “Vis Inertiae,” he again refers to the horseshoe in discussing modern woman’s inability to change her unwanted subservience to male dominance because perpetuation of the race depends on child-bearing and all that attends it. Adams sympathized with the modern woman, but with nothing to be done in the face of a biologically-determined impasse, he jokes that he was “almost glad to act the part of the horseshoe

crab in Quincy Bay, and admit that all was uniform—that nothing ever changed—and that the woman would swim about in the ocean of future time, as she had swum in the past, with the gar-fish and the shark, unable to change.”

Adams’s references to the horseshoe crab proved memorable to his readers. For example, in *Coming to My Senses* (1984), George Caspar Homans wrote that Adams’s boyhood curiosity about the horseshoe had made the crab “famous.” Eliot would have been aware that his own boyhood notice of this crab paralleled and recalled Adams’s notice of the same crab. Moreover, his poem questions “superficial notions of evolution” (line 479) as Adams had questioned Darwinism if interpreted to imply progress. In this regard the two were in agreement. Eliot intended to write “horseshoe crab”; to make the connection to Adams and his crab obvious to those of his readers familiar with Adams, it was crucial that he name the crab accurately, as he had not done earlier when memory failed and he mistakenly wrote “hermit crab.”

Editor's Report and Farewell

Dear Readers, as I scramble to finish editing and laying out my last issue of *Time Present* before I become President on January 1, I reflect that although I haven't gotten any better at meeting my deadlines, I have enjoyed and learned from my stint as editor. The best aspect of this job has been my contact with the contributors and members who share my interest in Eliot, his critics, and the doings of this Society. I am looking forward to getting to know more members over the next three years and especially in Rapallo.

I want to extend an enormous thank-you to John Morgenstern, Book Review Editor for the last three years. John greatly expanded our coverage of recent Eliot criticism as well as arranging reviews of

performances, conferences, and other events (such as the sale of artworks held by the Eliot Estate, one of my favorites); any credit for raising the quality of *Time Present* goes to him and his extraordinary editing skills. John will continue on the Board as Historian, while Jayme Stayer, as our new Vice President, takes over the editorship, and Chris McVey bravely picks up the job of Book Review Editor (see their contact information below). I also wish to thank the University of Missouri, especially Dean O'Brien of the College of Arts and Sciences and David Read, Chair of English, for financial support without which *Time Present* could not continue to be published on paper. And I thank office staff and friends who have helped me get each issue out the door, including Sharon Black, Paula Fleming, Christina Bramon, and Aisha Ginwalla.

T. S. Eliot Society

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Conference Proposals and Registration

To submit papers for any conference session sponsored by the Society, please send your abstract to tselioticsociety@gmail.com.

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Reviews To inquire about reviewing a book or having a book reviewed, please contact Book Review Editor Christopher McVey at cmcvey@bu.edu.

Email List Serve To subscribe to the Society's informational list serve, which is used for occasional official communications only, please contact Tony Cuda at ajcuda@uncg.edu

This issue of Time Present was edited and published on behalf of the T. S. Eliot Society by Frances Dickey with the generous support of the University of Missouri. Book Review Editor: John Morgenstern. Printed in the USA