

Time Present

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The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Volume 6: 1932-1933, edited by Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden

London: Faber & Faber, 2016. 896 pages.

Reviewed by Timothy Materer
University of Missouri

The letters in Volume 6 contain some of the most personally revealing letters since Volume 1. The letters from January to September 1932 consist mostly of business letters with extensive footnotes. But the letters from Eliot's seven months in the United States as Norton Professor at Harvard University (September 1932 through June 1933) are full of vivid impressions of people and places as well as Eliot's agonizing about his decision to separate permanently from his wife Vivien.

As Haffenden explained in Volume 5, Valerie Eliot took "infinite pains to be the helpmeet of a future biographer: gathering the raw material whilst she may" (Volume 5, xxxiii). An editor's usual procedure is to give enough information to elucidate the letters and their context. Haffenden's notes go further to document the life and works of Eliot's correspondents, which often takes one far from the chronology of the letter. Thus, the reader receives detailed information about the educational background of correspondents (double firsts at Cambridge, Phi Beta Kappa, etc.) together with books written and awards won throughout their entire careers. Some notes jump to information twenty or thirty years beyond the dates of the letters. Usually the notes can easily be skimmed; sometimes they are distracting. For example, a passing reference to D. H. Lawrence in 1933 leads to long quotations from Eliot's correspondence with Helen Gardner in 1960 about Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*—a novel Eliot considered "really evil" (Volume 6, 583). This example of Eliot's moralizing critical judgments might have waited until a later volume.

However, if one considers this book a reference work as well as a collection of letters, there is much to appreciate in the notes. Haffenden supports his claim that Eliot (not Ezra Pound?) was the "greatest talent spotter of the age" (2) with letters and commentary on W. H. Auden, Louis MacNeice, Ronald Bottram, and Stephen Spender. A letter by Spender is even included in the edition. Letters to Ezra Pound and James Joyce show Eliot giving moral and (as a publisher) material support to his friends, and a touching letter commiserates about the loss

of Joyce's father and mentions Eliot's own grief at the loss of his father. There is important information about the presentation of *Sweeney Agonistes* (with lines Eliot added to the dialogue) by the student "Chickens" (578, 566-67) at Vassar College, and about his commission to write the choruses for *The Rock*. (Eliot thought of 1933 as "the year when I broke into Show Business" [712]). A note of two dense pages annexed to a four-line letter offers insight into the issue of Eliot's anti-Semitic references and documents Eliot's awareness of the issue and his confused response to it. The brief letter is to his old Harvard friend George Boas in 1932 about staying with him in Baltimore while giving the lectures that became *After Strange Gods*. The note states that when Boas read the phrase about "free thinking Jews," Boas decided to "relieve" Eliot of his friendship (286).

Since we do not have Eliot's response to Boas' rejection, Haffenden cites Eliot's correspondence with Leslie Fiedler in 1948-49. Although this material is known to scholars, the *Letters* make it available to more general readers. To Fiedler's criticism of Eliot's references to Jews in his poetry, Eliot replies that his Jewish friend Leonard Woolf published the

offending poems without objections, Dickens and Shakespeare wrote similarly of Jews, and Irish critics have not been offended by his Sweeney poems. Lame

excuses, but Eliot has a stronger point when he tells Fiedler that a specific passage in a poem is not evidence of a "general antipathy" to a race (286). Eliot begins to realize that a change in sensibility is taking place, but apparently without fully understanding its moral implications: "I have not met, in England, the kind of sensitiveness that you exhibit, nor among my older Jewish friends and acquaintances in America. I think that it is certainly something peculiar to a generation much younger than mine" (286). Haffenden also cites Eliot's statement in 1959 that, if people use such passages "to prove that I'm anti-Semitic, there are plenty of other evidences that I'm not" (287). Such evidence appears in Volume 6 in Eliot's letter to Israel Mattuck about commissioning a history of the Jews (163) and his support of the Jewish poet Eduard Roditi (755, 806-07).

One of the first letters from Cambridge shows Eliot's unromantic response to the New England landscape: "you [would] not believe that man could have inhabited a territory for a good three hundred years and made so shallow an impression upon it ...

you feel that every house and sign of human life might be swept away and leave exactly the same inhuman natural beauty" (459). After his visit to Emily Hale, he concludes, "California is a nightmare" (545). (An appendix includes two letters of Eliot to Emily Hale dated 1930.) Of his life at Harvard and Eliot house, he complains, "the first sense of alienation is painful," and he feels "there may be no one with whom I can wholly communicate" (459). Yet he loves the birds of New England (excepting the starling, "a sordid and squalid immigrant" [488]), the city of Boston, and the ease he feels when he's with his own relatives. In New York, he particularly enjoys the company of Edmund ("Bunny") Wilson and Marianne Moore, considering the latter a "captivating creature" with an "Eye like an Auk and a brain like a Gimblet" (656). He often visits his brother Henry and has the satisfaction of giving him money, reciprocating Henry's help in 1922, to weather the Depression. Thanks to the approximately eighty talks he gave, his attempt to earn money was modestly successful. ("I have four thousand dollars in the bank," he brags to Virginia Woolf, 554). Back in England, he tells his brother that

during his visit to America he was "the happiest I can ever remember in my life" (600). Perhaps a sign of the happiness is that he uses the eccentric style of his letters to Ezra Pound for a number of other friends.

For example, he gives a vivid narrative of his sea voyage to Sally Cobden-Sanderson, including this enigmatic incident:

There was a young lady Said would I walk round the Deck with her as it was Dark & Slippery and she was afraid of Falling over Board. So I said Yes you Keep on the inside that is a Rail along it. So after twenty minutes she said I am going in to Listen to the music You don't give me any feeling of Support she said I don't mean Moral Support she Said. (489)

The letters cover the period when Eliot decides to leave his wife Vivien. The strain of living with her increased as the time came for him to depart for America. On the way to board his ship, he discovered a suitcase with material for potential lectures was missing. Vivien had locked them in the bathroom. A friend managed to retrieve them, racing to Eliot's boat train by taxi to return them (464). His letters from abroad show Eliot developing the resolve not to return to Vivien. He tells

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More than fifty letters document Vivien's experience of her marriage.

T. S. Eliot and Christian Tradition, edited by Benjamin G. Lockerd

Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2014. vii + 328 pages.

Reviewed by Julia E. Daniel
Baylor University

In his crisp introduction, Benjamin Lockerd begins with the dramatic moment when Eliot fell to his knees before the *Pietà* in St. Peter's (to the astonishment of the poet's family). Many narratives of Eliot's conversion take this genuflection, and his subsequent baptism into the Anglican church, as a breaking point in Eliot's career as poet and critic. But Lockerd, along with the several talented scholars included in this valuable collection, evokes Eliot's iconic gesture to argue for continuity rather than rupture. *T. S. Eliot and Christian Tradition* demonstrates Eliot's long and evolving engagement with the Christian culture and thinkers of his day by wedding deft contextualization and studies of influence with nuanced readings of Eliot's critical prose and verse. A great virtue of the text is its broad value in elucidating Eliot's oeuvre, from old standards such as the objective correlative to understudied textual moments or lines of influence. For example, those interested in Eliot's use of the vexing term "classical" will find much of use here, as will those interested in his political and cultural commentaries, his verse dramas, his Parisian year, or his role as mentor (or cordial antagonist) to his contemporaries.

The collection is divided into five sections: Eliot and Anglo-Catholicism, French Catholic Influences, Christian Tradition, Culture and Religion, and Contemporaries. In general, the authors do not assume their readers possess intimate knowledge of the fine textures of Anglo-Catholicism as lived by Eliot, and so do admirable work in fleshing out that theology and culture for readers. This is especially true of Lockerd's introduction and William Blissett's chapter "T. S. Eliot and Catholicity" in section one. Anderson Araujo's later chapter also contains an immensely useful history of both "Anglo-Catholicism" and "Theocracy" as terms of discussion within Eliot's milieu.

The section on French Catholic influences is particularly rich. John Morgenstern's chapter on

the French Catholic Revival convincingly illustrates how "Paris was central to Eliot's adoption of a more explicitly Christian idiom," (60) a thesis shared by the chapters that follow. Morgenstern's treatment of Philippe's *Bubu de Montparnasse*, long recognized as an influence in Eliot's early seedy street-scenes, recovers its character as a Christian redemption narrative. Chapters by William Marx and Shun'ichi Takayanagi add clarity to Eliot's application and critique of Maurras' sense of classicism, as well as his treatment of Catholicism as an organism for fostering cultural order. Takayanagi and James Matthew Wilson include Jacques Maritain as a major interlocutor, with Wilson contributing an excellent chapter that considers *The Criterion's* adoption of the French theologian's neo-Thomism as "the unofficial position" of the journal.

Section three, "Christian Tradition," is rightly one of the most eclectic in the book. It begins with William Charron's compelling study of how Aristotle's tripartite vision of mind, filtered through Averros and Dante, informs Eliot's conception of the mind of Europe. Just as Charron reads Aristotle through later commentators and writers, Dominic Manganiello demonstrates Eliot's use of Dante's "Way of Love" as received through both *La Vita Nuova* and the novels of Charles Williams. While Eliot is most often associated with the purgative *via negativa*, Manganiello traces a positive, en fleshed way to sanctification in Eliot's dramatic works. Lee Oser then considers the looming absence of John Henry Newman from Eliot's works, arguing that Eliot's silence was ultimately a tactical one that allowed him to avoid an uncomfortable discussion of the choice between Rome and Canterbury. The section ends by taking us to church with Eliot and the influential architect and historian W. R. Lethaby, as Hazel Atkins establishes parallels between Lethaby and Eliot's theories of how primitive ritual informs art—in this instance, the design of sacred spaces.

In section four, "Culture and Religion," the authors patiently untangle complexities in Eliot's cultural criticism and theology that push against the broad categories that threaten to creep into our conversations about Eliot's politics and religion. Christopher McVey begins by triangulating Maurras, Dawson, and Maritain, three major figures throughout the text, in his stellar chapter on backgrounds to *The Idea of a Christian Society*. Araujo's chapter performs the attentive critical balancing act seen throughout the section, as he demonstrates how Eliot's "conception

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British Writers and the Approach of World War II,
by Steve Ellis

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. x + 249 pages.

Reviewed by Marina MacKay
University of Oxford

In the sixth volume of *A Dance to the Music of Time* (1951-75), Anthony Powell contrasts the outbreak of the Great War with the anxious mood of the late 1930s. Although in 1914 “war had come for most people without warning—like being pushed suddenly on a winter’s day into a swirling whirlpool of ice and water by an acquaintance, unpredictable perhaps but not actively homicidal—war was now materializing in slow motion” (86-87). Whereas the declaration of the Great War was a reckless prank, shocking in its suddenness, the approach of the Second World War was soberly seen from some distance away. This important difference is implied rather than declared in *British Writers and the Approach of World War II*, which argues that the “slow motion” outbreak of war gave writers one last chance to outline their programs for salvation.

The first chapter of this eclectic and illuminating book addresses *The Idea of a Christian Society* as a work of the Munich Crisis, or as the “Thoughts After September, 1938” of its advertised pre-publication subtitle. Ellis situates Eliot’s essay within a range of Christian solutions offered in the late 1930s to the problem of a culture perceived to lack any robust scheme of spiritual values with which to contest Nazi ideology. Particular attention is paid to Eliot’s distaste for the contemporary revivalism that found extravagant international expression in Frank Buchman’s Moral Rearmament movement: not only populist and mass-hysterical in tone, he thought, but as godless in substance as the totalitarian national pseudo-religions it was rearming against, rendering Christianity the mere servant of temporal ends ranging from middle-class morality to liberal democracy and the national interest. From there, the chapter considers Eliot’s

proposed return-to-the-land alternative, which echoes the utopian agrarianism of John Middleton Murry, now a prolific Christian apologist. Ellis’s discussion of land-based politics touches on some familiar ground, so to speak, when it turns to Eliot’s attitude towards fascism: Ellis argues that Eliot did not apprehend what was distinctive and uniquely dangerous about the specifically German version of “blood and soil” mythology (52). More unexpectedly, the chapter also offers a fascinating reconstruction of the less-known historical phenomenon of “soil erosion” as the global warming of its time. Significant soil, indeed.

This reading of reasonably well-known work alongside more ephemeral cultural productions is a signature move in this, as in most “year books.” Thus, Ellis’s next chapter identifies a forgotten subgenre of domestic fiction that he calls the “Munich crisis novel” (66), and although the novels discussed here are mostly the work of now-obscure names—Ruth Adam, George A. Birmingham, Mary Borden, Philip Gibbs, W. Townend, and Kathleen Wallace—a number of them cast an intriguing light on Virginia Woolf’s retrospective treatment of war apprehension in *Between the Acts* (1941), a frequent reference point in this chapter. But

a widespread sense among writers that this...was an opportunity to outline their plans for the radical overhaul of a nation drifting into another catastrophic war

opening with Eliot also establishes one of Ellis’s main themes throughout this book: the cultural authority that writers enjoyed around the Second World War. With that

in mind, the third chapter rightly insists upon the stature and visibility of H. G. Wells as a social thinker at this time, disseminating with extraordinary energy in many thousands of words his program for the collectivization of life on earth. The writer’s public role is explicitly the topic of the fourth chapter, on how Orwell and E. M. Forster’s non-partisan and anti-dogmatic way of being political was to stand up for liberal values of particularity, complexity, and individual autonomy at a moment when they saw these values threatened not simply by the prospect of totalitarian conquest but also by a domestic culture mobilizing to thwart it. The book’s fifth and final chapter returns to Woolf and discusses the tensions between intellectual freedom and collective life in her last works.

Leo Mellor earlier identified a distinctive literary micro-period that he termed “the prolonged 1939”

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Compiled by David Chinitz

Futility. “One of the British literary groupings for whom I always feel a profound sympathy is the ‘Georgian’ poets and essayists of the later 1920s and early 1930s. Woolf, Joyce and *The Waste Land* had come and blown them away; the smart money was on *vers libre* and rapt interior monologues in the style of Molly Bloom; but they went on writing their tinkling little poems about country weekends and moonlight falling on apples, and trying to convince themselves that T. S. Eliot would eventually be exposed as a charlatan.” (D. J. Taylor, “There Is a Point [of Sorts] to the Futile Gesture,” *The Independent*, 13 June 2015.)

Opening lecture. The first words of the 2012 film *A Late Quartet* are spoken by cellist Peter Mitchell (Christopher Walken) in a music class he is teaching. He recites the opening five lines of *Burnt Norton*, to which he appends four lines from Part V. He explains: “That’s T. S. Eliot—his take on Beethoven’s late quartets. Today we think about what Eliot might have meant.” A brief but pregnant analysis of Quartet No. 14 in C# minor, Op. 131, follows.

Keeping the kitchen. Reviewer A. O. Scott describes *Sausage Party* as “a potty-mouthed movie about food” that also raises metaphysical questions. The heroes of this animated comedy are food products who discover that the humans who purchase them are not, as they have always believed, kindly gods who will bring them into a blissful afterlife, but consumers who are going to eat them. “The truth is horrible,” Scott explains. “Think for a moment about how we must look to the food we eat. After such knowledge, what forgiveness?” (“*Sausage Party* Is an Animated Sex Comedy About Food ... and God,” *New York Times*, 11 Aug 2016.)

Bel Esprit. The indie rock band Bel Esprit is named after the fund Pound set up to bail Eliot out of his job at Lloyds Bank. Asked by an interviewer why the band took that name, a band member explained: “Given that it was a fund to pursue art it seemed a fitting name for four broke students trying to make music.” (“NEN Catches Up With Bel Esprit,” *neverenoughnotes.com*, 28 Mar. 2016.)

Bel Esprit, continued. Elsewhere, Paul Collins offers Bel Esprit as an early example of crowdsourcing, describing Pound’s scheme in an article as essentially a Kickstarter campaign. “Eliot was poised to be the top poet of his generation,” Collins writes. “But first he had to be rescued from his day job.” (“Ezra Pound’s Kickstarter Plan for T. S. Eliot,” *mentalfloss.com*, 8 Dec. 2013.)

More daring. In the crime television series *The Blacklist*, season 3, episode 7, airing 12 Nov. 2015, Raymond (“Red”) Reddington plucks a piece of the sliced fruit from the top of a Bellini cocktail and asks himself, “Do I dare to eat a peach?” Popping it in his mouth, he concludes, “I may as well live dangerously.” He has, of course, been living dangerously for years, though perhaps not quite as dangerously as *that*.

Eliot’s reputation saved. The creators of the off-Broadway show *Katdashians! Break the Musical!* agreed to drop six songs from *Cats* after Andrew Lloyd Webber threatened to sue for copyright infringement. As its title suggests, *Katdashians!* is a parody-mashup of the Kardashian family and the musical *Cats*. Webber explained to reporters that he had acted out of concern not for his own contribution to *Cats* but for T. S. Eliot’s. His contract with Valerie Eliot stated that Eliot’s work could not be used “in a parody or in a way that could bring his poems in disrepute.... So even if I loved [*Katdashians!*], I am legally obligated to protect the work.” (*pagesix.com*, 30 June 2016.)



David Chinitz

Eliot in 1916: “En Yorkshire, Conférencier”

Kevin Rulo
Catholic University

Yet another new place, another new face for Tom. On the afternoon of October 3, he found himself in Ilkley, Yorkshire, a spa town near the moors, well more than two hundred miles north of London. There, he steadied behind a podium, glaring out onto a group of over fifty adults, mostly women. These were his students, and it was the first day of the Oxford Extension Delegacy’s *Course of Six Lectures on Modern French Literature* given by T. Stearns Eliot, M.A. (Harvard), credentials that Tom thought were sure to “look very imposing” (*Letters 1* 164). That day must have been a trying

...he endeavored to memorize
his lecture only to find that
it came out to nearly twice its
allotted time of one hour.

one for him, with the long slog up from the city no doubt requiring some special relief from his teaching at Highgate (Crawford, *Young Eliot* 256). Along with the hardships of travel came some of the more usual difficulties of a lecturer’s inaugural efforts. Course prep got away from him as he endeavored to memorize his lecture only to find that it came out to nearly twice its allotted time of one hour. And T. Stearns Eliot, M.A. made some of the more common pedagogical flubs, like assigning too much reading and paying too little attention to the cost of purchase for his textbook list (just the required books would run to nearly £5) (Crawford 257). It also appears his lecturing style may have left something to be desired. Among the student feedback can be found the observation that “he seemed a nice young man but he would fiddle with his watchchain” (qtd. in Crawford 257). The wide breadth of the course material was in all likelihood just as challenging as the idiosyncrasies of the instructor. On this first day, the topic was “The Origins: What is Romanticism?” Master Eliot read the contemporary intellec-

tual scene in France as a “reaction” to Romanticism, whose ultimate source was Rousseau (Schuchard, *Eliot’s Dark Angel* 27). Much of what Eliot tells his listeners that night would sound familiar to later readers. That Rousseau’s Romanticism was the “[e]xaltation of the *personal* and *individual*” with its “emphasis on *feeling*” and “depreciation of *form*” (qtd. in Schuchard 27) is a not unimportant point for his aesthetic theories that were shortly to follow. And so while Eliot’s time in Ilkley—and later at Southall, Middlesex, a somewhat

“he seemed a nice young man
but he would fiddle with his
watchchain”

more satisfying teaching experience for him—could be construed as yet another geographical and professional excursion, it was one that nonetheless helped him to find his way back to a more solid sense of himself as a man of letters and as a poet. In September, just before beginning the lectures, he wrote to his brother Henry that he felt “J.A.P. is a swan song” (*Letters 1* 165). But by April of the following year, he reports that he is writing poetry again, with one important and perhaps telling difference (*Letters 1* 194). The poems were in French.



Brook Street, Ilkley, 1910s

T. S. Eliot Quotations Quiz

By David Chinitz

On mensxp.com, Nishi Jain offers “Twelve Eliot Quotes That Prove No One Understood Modern Life Better.” Of these twelve quotations, *how many are actually by T. S. Eliot?* Bonus points will be awarded for (1) knowing where in his oeuvre each quote comes from, and (2) correcting any misquotations (not counting lineation, punctuation, and capitalization). Additional bonus for identifying which of the quotes appears in two different texts by Eliot.

1. “In a world of fugitives, the person taking the opposite direction will appear to run away.”
2. “We don’t actually fear death, we fear that no one will notice our absence, that we will disappear without a trace.”
3. “Humour is also a way of saying something serious.”

4. “We read many books, because we cannot know enough people.”
5. “Television is a medium of entertainment which permits millions of people to listen to the same joke at the same time, and yet remain lonesome.”
6. “Half the harm that is done in this world is due to people who want to feel important.”
7. “You are the music while the music lasts.”
8. “Where is the knowledge we have lost with information?”
9. “People to whom nothing has ever happened cannot understand the unimportance of events.”
10. “Human kind cannot bear very much reality.”
11. “Success is relative: it is what we can make of the mess we have made of things.”
12. “All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance.”

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REVIEW

The Letters of T. S. Eliot

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Geoffrey Faber in November 1932 that employing Vivien’s current companion permanently would free him for engagements on his own and might even be a “complete substitute for me” (506). In February 1933 he tells a friend that a “sharp sudden break” (552) with Vivien would be best. At the age of forty-four Eliot feels that “my years of activity can be counted, and I have no time now to waste.... I cannot face the prospect of dragging on the same futile life” (553). In May he tells Frank Morley that his preference is to return to London and then disappear into the countryside. In June he goes to Surrey where he spends the next three months in “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” (two rooms) near Morley’s “Pike’s Farm.” But the sharp break was not to be because Vivien could not absorb the fact of Eliot’s decision, and by the end of 1933 she had refused to sign a separation agreement.

Haffenden states that Valerie Eliot was “adamant that Vivien’s point of view should be given air” (xix). More than fifty letters document Vivien’s experience of her marriage. Many are simply notes to friends that allow Haffenden to footnote their puzzled and disturbed reactions when meeting Vivien. Some express over-dramatized but genuine agony. In March 1933, she writes to Morrell about her “most terrible state of health.... And my hair is *grey* & my nails are *thick* with dirt & my hands are red & rough. My teeth are all broken away. It is *frightful*. Shocking.” (570-71). After Eliot’s return, the letters are painful repetitions of her bewildered requests to have him return to her. His disappearance from London (as Virginia Woolf remarked, “mystery flatters him” [637]) incites her fantasies that he is in great danger. The final letter in the volume is from Vivien expressing her “constant fear & anxiety for Tom’s safety”: “All I want is my own husband, & to be able to look after him and take care of him again” (778).

T. S. Eliot and Christian Tradition

continued from page 3

of hierarchy found ideal (though not uncritical) instantiation” in *Anglo-Catholicism* (198). Similarly, Paul Robichaud situates Eliot’s Christian social thought against the backdrop of intensifying nationalism across Europe between the wars, as Eliot balances the need for a shared religious character with the equally vital importance of local cultures. Lockerd’s chapter on the understudied collaboration between Eliot and British historian Christopher Dawson also draws fine, necessary lines between culture and religion to show how Eliot and Dawson argue for “the necessary integration (but not identification) of civil and spiritual authorities” (218).

The fifth section on Eliot’s contemporaries presents the critic-poet as student, friend, colleague, and mentor to some of the major Christian thinkers and artists of his day: George Santayana, Paul Elmer More, C. S. Lewis, and David Jones. James Seaton and Charles Huttar reveal affinities in relationships we tend to think of as cool (or even prickly), as Seaton explores Santayana’s influence on Eliot’s religious thinking and Huttar convincingly sketches an appreciative rapport between Lewis and Eliot. David Huisman’s chapter on Christian essayist Paul Elmer More expands on the topic of conversion found throughout the book, as he casts More as the Virgil to Eliot’s Dante. The portrait drawn is a tender one, as is that found in Thomas Dilworth’s piece on the Catholic poet David Jones, a chapter made uniquely compelling by Dilworth’s personal recollections of conversations with Jones.

Perhaps the highest praise one can pay a collection is that it inspires and enables even more work on the subject, and this is true of *T. S. Eliot and Christian Tradition*. Blissett encourages us further to research Eliot’s life as a churchman, and Oser tantalizingly invites more study of Eliot’s relationship with the Fabers. Other Christian luminaries, like Joseph Pieper or Evelyn Underhill, find brief mention in several chapters and would merit attention of their own. There is more work to be done, and we have Lockerd and his contributors to thank for bringing new attention and vigor to the study of Eliot and Christianity.

British Writers

continued from page 4

(Mellor 31), running from the Munich Crisis to the beginning of the Blitz two years later, and Ellis covers a similar period, although he considers Mellor’s focus on bomb anxiety too restrictive (Ellis 15). Instead, what Ellis considers characteristic of the period running from “the phoney peace” (2) through the end of the phoney war is a widespread sense among writers that this moment of suspense was an opportunity to outline their plans for the radical overhaul of a nation drifting into another catastrophic war. Ellis shows this renovating impulse at work among writers of all shades of (mainstream) political opinion, from religiously-inflected perspectives, often conservative—Eliot becomes the theological purist in this company—to various secular forms of liberalism and socialism. Right across this spectrum, “the essential enemy is seen as lying within, in the corruption of our own institutions” (4).

Perhaps this introspective turn that rendered Britain’s spiritual shortcomings the overridingly urgent and absorbing problem of the late 1930s indicates a striking level of imperial self-regard in the face of global crisis; alternatively, perhaps it speaks to the chastened self-searching of a nation whose status as a world power would survive the war only in a somewhat honorary fashion. Either way, by the end of the long 1939 such speculations on the national culture had real-world consequences when reasons needed to be found for Britain to fight—or, indeed, not to fight—a war from which it had so much to lose. By now well advanced on his journey from left-wing journalist to Catholic satirist, Malcolm Muggeridge summarized the dilemma most succinctly in his mordant valediction to the 1930s, the publication of which in April 1940 coincided with the final days of the phony war: “If life is not worth continuing, it is not worth defending” (327).

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Call for Papers

American Literature Association Conference

The T. S. Eliot Society will sponsor two sessions at the 2017 annual conference of the American Literature Association, May 25-28, 2017, at the Westin Copley in Boston. 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, 2017. For information on the ALA and its 2017 meeting, please see the ALA website at www.americanliterature.org.

Pound Conference

27th Ezra Pound International Conference: “Ezra Pound, Philadelphia, and Modern American Poetry: William Carlos Williams, Hilda Doolittle, and Marianne Moore.” The 27th Ezra Pound International Conference will be held from Monday, 19 June through Friday, 23 June 2017 at the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Books, and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania. In addition to regular sessions on the conference theme and other topics, plenary sessions with distinguished speakers, and poetry readings, the conference will feature special events, including recordings of the modernist poets from Penn Sound, musical performances, and a lecture on the performance of *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, in which Pound performed in 1903. Planned excursions include a visit to the Philadelphia Museum of Art to see and hear about

what is considered the best collection of high modernist art in the world, as well as a trip to Pound sites around Philadelphia, including his childhood home in nearby Wyncote. A pre-conference walking tour of Pound’s Penn and an optional post-conference overnight excursion to see Bryn Mawr College, H.D.’s Bethlehem, and William Carlos Williams’s Rutherford, New Jersey, will also be offered. More details about the conference can be found on the EPIC 2017 website: <http://guides.library.upenn.edu/EPIC2017>.

Another Nobel

On the heels of the announcement of the Nobel Prize for Literature, it is perhaps apropos to remind our members that this year’s honoree, Bob Dylan, was well aware of the 1948 winner, T. S. Eliot:

Praise be to Nero’s Neptune, the Titanic sails at
dawn
Everybody’s shouting, “Which side are you on?!”
And Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot fighting in the
captain’s tower
While calypso singers laugh at them and
fishermen hold flowers
Between the windows of the sea where lovely
mermaids flow
And nobody has to think too much about
Desolation Row.

—Bob Dylan, “Desolation Row,” (1965)

SOCIETY NOTES

Steven C. Tracy, Professor of Afro-American Studies at UMass Amherst, was recently named Distinguished University Professor of the University of Massachusetts system. Congratulations to him for this well deserved honor.

Junichi Saito, Professor of English at Kanagawa University of Japan, reports that the T. S. Eliot

Association of Japan held its annual conference on Nov. 12 and 13. Saito chaired a symposium on Eliot and European Culture, during which he also gave a presentation on Eliot and France. The three other presenters discussed Eliot as his work relates to Dante, Steiner, Derrida, J. M. Coetzee, deconstruction and post-colonialism.

Guy Hargrove (1932-2016) A Society Tribute

Ronald Schuchard

What a privilege it has been for the T. S. Eliot Society of St. Louis to have had Guy Hargrove, the late tenor and husband of Nancy, as our songster for bringing into our auditory imaginations the many popular songs that Eliot loved, sang, and referred to in his poems and plays. Some veteran members of the Society will never forget his first appearance at the Eliot Centennial Celebration in 1988, when he thrilled the audience with “The Saint Louis Blues” (1914) and deeply moved everyone with “Memory” (“Midnight, not a sound from the pavement. / Has the moon lost her memory?”) from *Cats* (1981), which had just opened on Broadway the year before. Over the next decades, at our annual meetings, he brought his hilarious wit and boundless repertoire to the famous Saturday night songfests around Tony



Fathman’s rollicking piano, making every new member believe that they had joined the most enjoyable single-author society in America. Guy and Nancy soon teamed up for lecture-recital programs performed for the Society in St. Louis, an Eliot session at SAMLA, and the T. S. Eliot International Summer School. Titled “TSE and Popular Music: Music Hall Songs, Bawdy Ballads, Ragtime, and All that Jazz,” Guy lifted off the sheet and back into life “That Shakespearian Rag,” “The Cubanola Glide,” “Under the Bamboo Tree,” “O the Moon shone Bright on Mrs. Porter,” and “The One-Eyed Riley.” Encore! Always. For the Society’s 2011 meeting in Paris, the program was titled “French Songs in the Eliot Era,” with songs made famous by Mistinguett, whom Eliot saw, and Edith Piaf, together with Poulenc’s song about soldiers in WWI, “Bleuet,” evoking for Society members Eliot’s great sorrow over the deaths of his French friends Jean Verdenal and Alain-Fournier. Our sorrow over Guy’s passing is thus lightened by the musical delight that he shared for our understanding and appreciation of Eliot’s own musical life.

ANSWERS TO T. S. ELIOT QUOTATIONS QUIZ

From page 7

1. Eliot, *The Family Reunion*
2. Origin uncertain
3. Eliot, 1951 paragraph on James Thurber
4. Eliot, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*
5. Eliot, 1963 remark to Leonard Lyons, quoted in his column *The Lyons Den*
6. Eliot, *The Cocktail Party*
7. Eliot, *The Dry Salvages*
8. Eliot, *Choruses from The Rock*
9. Eliot, *The Family Reunion*
10. Eliot, *Burnt Norton* and *Murder in the Cathedral*
11. Eliot, *The Family Reunion*
12. Eliot, *Choruses from The Rock*

- Give yourself 10 points if you said that either 11 or 12 of the quotes came from Eliot.
- Give yourself 1 bonus point for each correctly identified source.
- Give yourself bonus points (one apiece) if you knew that #3 should have begun “It is a form of humour which is also”; that #6 should have begun “Half of the harm”; or that #8 should have ended “lost in information?”
- Give yourself an additional bonus point if you remembered that the line “Human kind cannot bear very much reality” (#10) appears in both *Burnt Norton* and *Murder in the Cathedral*.
- Give yourself two additional bonus points if you know where #2 comes from. (And please tell us!)

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Michael Coyle and Giuliana Ferreccio

Abstracts from the 37th Annual T. S. Eliot Society Meeting,
Rapallo, Italy, June 2016

Laurence Binyon (1869-1943):
A Survivor

Laurence Binyon's *terza rima* translation of the *Divina Commedia*, made after he retired from the British Museum, was admired by both Pound and Eliot: Pound offered Binyon advice on the *Purgatorio*, and Binyon asked Eliot for help with the close of the *Paradiso*.

As a boy at St Paul's, Binyon received Matthew Arnold's advice on composition. At Oxford he won the Newdigate Poetry Prize. All his life he steadily produced volumes of verse and verse drama. His early work now seems too romantically elevated, but its verse is disciplined and its rhythm often subtle. He did not recoil from the modernists, but listened and went on. His diction slowly became more modern. Cyril Connolly thought Binyon's 1942 poem "The Burning of the Leaves" the best poem *Horizon* published in the Second World War.

A curator and champion of modern British and then of oriental art at the British Museum, Binyon opened English eyes to Japanese art. A member of Yeats's circle since the Nineties, he befriended Pound soon after he arrived in 1908. Pound appreciated Binyon's learning and his insights into Japanese aesthetics—five years before Pound received Fenollosa's papers. At Pisa Pound recalled how writers and artists used to meet in "a BM era," and quoted Binyon's "Slowness is beauty."

Binyon lives now in his poem "For the Fallen," composed in August 1914. In the British Commonwealth, four of its lines are recited on Remembrance Day: "They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old / Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn; / At the going down of the sun and in the morning / We will remember them." Of the War Poets commemorated on a tablet in Westminster Abbey, Laurence Binyon is the eldest, and the only civilian.

Michael J. Alexander
U of St. Andrews

Eliot, Creative Revolution, and
the Modalities of Socialism;
or, On Some Other Uses of
Bergson

Eliot was opposed to communism, and his disdain for the Fabianism of Shaw and Wells, figures who dominated the culture he sought to enter, is usually pretty clear. Yet Eliot did not adopt the strategy of Wyndham Lewis by dedicating much time to satirical or intellectual attack on the forces he opposed. Certainly many of the positions he adopted can be construed as bulwarks against the impending socialist millennium. Yet the fact that Eliot's resistance to socialism and communism only infrequently took the form of direct attack can lead us, first, to underestimate the scale and scope of those forces—in Eliot's own estimation—as the dominant of the times, and can also lead us away from the study of these negatively shaping influences.

In this paper, I look at one specific modality of socialist thought in the work of Eden and Cedar Paul. I test the hypothesis that the Pauls' unusual mixture—of socialism, progressive education, psychoanalysis, a version of Bergsonian evolution, and the example of the Soviet Commissar for Education, A. V. Lunacharsky—gives a flavor of the climate which Eliot found so antipathetic and helps to explain some of his seemingly more transient remarks about socialism. Eliot of course opposed the notion of human progress, and it is therefore interesting and clarifying to look at some of the forms which progressive ideas took at the time, and how apparently discrete discourses could bleed into each other.

The Pauls were well known as translators, formidable and prolific. Their intellectual project was not very well thought through and was partly realized—then abandoned as the twenties moved on—through their translations. To return to these figures in the context of our analysis of Eliot is interesting and revealing.

David Ayers
U of Kent

Eliot's Inference

This paper originates between two readings of Eliot that have, at different moments, seemed so obvious as to be assumed. The first is that shared by many (perhaps most) of his contemporaries and earliest readers, which recognized the operation of a satirical mode (derived equally from classical and neo-classical examples) in his early volumes, culminating in *The Waste Land*. The second is more recent, concerned with the social content of that (now often unrecognized) satire, intent on holding the poet to account for his apparent prejudices. The paper returns to the formal problem of satire as such in order to track a deeper reorientation in Eliot's thought and method, from an analytic problem of *reference* inherited from his early philosophical training to an emergent mode of logical *inference* that (I suggest) initiates the shift of his major works.

I thus begin from an obvious point, if a neglected one: that satire presupposes a certainty of assignable historical reference largely alien to those semiotic and critical models most familiar from either Romantic aesthetics or structuralist linguistics—what Frege would have termed *Bedeutung*; Russell, denotation. For Eliot, I suggest, this paradoxical inevitability of poetic reference implies a further difficulty. In a social space defined by (either) the dialectic of reification or a dissociated sensibility, the referential function of poetic language will necessarily exceed the range of its recognition or intelligibility, implying that all satire tends toward a Menippean mode, defined by types and socially determinate cognitive attitudes rather than discrete individual objects. In effect, categorical abstractions come to stand in for, ultimately to displace, objects in some more proper epistemological sense.

Concentrating on two of the central (and more controversial) moments in *Ara Vos Prec*—the wildly allusive epigraph to “Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar” and the catalogue of types that dominates “Gerontion”—I argue that Eliot's exaggerated turn to social typology marks this displacement by recovering the logical problem of inference, testing an inductive mode designed to expand the technical range of reference available to satirical representation. But that expansion simultaneously entails both a radically broken mode of allegory and an impossible metaphysics of the sort to which “Whispers of Immortality” subsequently alludes, predicated (I argue) on the necessity of inferring that of which no experience can be had.

C. D. Blanton
UC Berkeley

An Impersonal Inheritance: Pound's Profit from *The Waste Land*

Many commentaries on *The Waste Land* manuscripts praise Pound's intuitive sympathy for the internal consistency of Eliot's poem. Though some of Pound's alterations seem drastic, such as his reduction of “Death by Water” from 92 lines to 10, he leaves the focus of Eliot's vision largely unclouded: “shaking out ashes from amid the glowing coals,” as Hugh Kenner has it. But, in one crucial respect, Pound's alterations do substantially modify the character of Eliot's poem: they suppress the autobiographical hints, the vulnerable, Prufrockian sensibility, that infuses several original passages. Eliot's signal achievement—an impersonal sensibility adequate both to the daunting weight of history and to the disorienting energies of modernity—is thus more starkly revealed. As I shall argue, Pound's “maieutic task” (Eliot's phrase), also alerted him to deficiencies in the early *Cantos*, which are limited by the emotionally involved persona inherent to the dramatic monologue form. Accordingly, in the months following Pound's scrutiny of *The Waste Land*, he refined a more expansive, flexible technique, in which historical details, elliptically invoked, can yet be charged by acute imagery and tactile lyricism.

Pound's influence was integral to the “continual extinction of personality” in *The Waste Land*. The original “Pub Scene” moves from shared experience, “we had dinner in good form,” to reported speech, “I've kept a clean house for twenty years, she says,” to the resigned, first-person sentiments: “So I got out to see the sunrise, and walked home.” Eliot crossed out this section himself, in line with Pound's suggestions, just as he deleted other instances of personal and narrative detail, including two of the most confessional fragments of the original manuscript, “The Death of a Saint Narcissus” and “Elegy.” Removing passages of continuous narrative from the poem also meant obliterating the singular perspective upon which the impression of ordered linearity often rests. Tellingly, Pound censured four lines of the original “Fire Sermon” with a one-word objection: “Personal.”

Few critics have acknowledged the importance of Pound's editing of *The Waste Land* to his own poetic development. Ronald Bush argues that “It would not have been like Pound to imitate *The Waste Land* ...

he would have been sensitive about being called Eliot's follower." But though Pound makes little attempt to replicate the surface textures of *The Waste Land*, Eliot's uncanny ability to charge historical details with an emotional urgency inspires Pound radically to alter his own poetic focus. In a pivotal passage of Canto VIII (which eventually became Canto II), Pound is able simultaneously to inhabit the perspective of the mythical Acœtes and to reimagine the pilot's perceptions in an immediate, living language: "Ship stock fast in sea-swirl, / Ivy upon the oars." And in Eliot's Tiresias, Pound encountered a vatic, impersonal voice, which seems to invest the insights of the mortal poet with a timeless authority—an effect that directly prefigures Poundian avatars. It is no accident that Pound, after editing *The Waste Land*, re-ordered *The Cantos* to begin with the Tiresias myth. Eliot's mastery of an impersonal mode had shown Pound how his own "poem containing history" might finally be realised.

Jack Baker
Durham U

The "Green World" in Eliot's Poetry

Following a line of research begun with the paper I delivered at the XXVIth Ezra Pound International Conference "Ezra Pound and the Green World" (Brunnenburg, Merano/Italy, July 2015) in which I dealt with the ash-tree in Pound's poetry, I am now interested in exploring Eliot's "green world" throughout his entire body of poetry, from "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" to *Four Quartets*.

The poet from St. Louis seems less interested in the green world than his fellow countryman from Hailey; nonetheless, plants, shrubs, flowers and vegetation in general appear frequently enough in his verses. Eliot's treatment of the vegetable kingdom ranges from the literal to the symbolic, from the allegorical to the mythical. Furthermore the reader can clearly detect both a precise development and change in the presence, recurrence, and meaning of the vegetable species along the various phases of Eliot's poetry. "Dead" and "sunless dry geraniums," "twisted branch[es]," "dull roots," "dried tubers," "dead" and "dusty trees," "cactus" and "prickly pear" characterize his poetry up to *The Waste Land* and "The Hollow Men" (with some exceptions, of course). Then the panorama changes "smelling of vegetation": "junipers" and "yew trees," "scent of pine,"

"apple tree[s]," together with flowers such as the "rose" appear in "Ariel Poems" and *Ash-Wednesday*. In *Four Quartets* the greenery is more varied and points to the apotheosis of the "Rose" in the last line of "Little Gidding."

But there are some highly meaningful recurrences that must be taken into account: first of all "lilacs" and "hyacinths," exotic trees and fruits, local species, literary allusions and mythological evocations.

Drawing from various critical sources and approaches / perspectives — literary, botanical / scientific, symbolical, psychological, anthropological, mythological, theological, mystical—the paper explores Eliot's rich and meaningful green world.

Stefano Maria Casella
IULM Milan

Responsibility in Eliot's Wartime Prose

For many British intellectuals, the Second World War encouraged reflection on the subject of responsibility, both in international relations and, even more strikingly, in social relations. Eliot's contribution to the conversation included a number of essays, lectures, and broadcasts focusing especially on the social responsibilities of writers (and sometimes on those of Christians). Drawing on the forthcoming vol. 6 of the *Complete Prose*, which covers the years 1940 to 1946, I'd like to discuss three pieces concerned directly with literature and responsibility.

In two lectures titled "The Social Function of Poetry" (1943 and 1945), Eliot argues that the writer's primary responsibility is to his or her language, and that, through its nurturing of the language, poetry "actually makes a difference ... to the lives of all the members of a society, to all the members of the community, to the whole people, whether they read and enjoy poetry or not." Picking up where "The Social Function of Poetry" leaves off, the lesser-known "The Responsibility of the Man of Letters in the Cultural Restoration of Europe" (1944) expands Eliot's purview beyond poets to "men of letters" of all kinds. Inexorably, Eliot's discussion of literary responsibility edges ever closer to political responsibility—a development that Eliot himself recognizes and attempts to theorize. Finally, I discuss the unpublished radio broadcast

titled “The Responsibility of the European Man of Letters” (1944), in which Eliot not only brilliantly compresses his earlier arguments but extends them through the claim that writers “should always be in a certain sense in opposition” to the “tendencies” and “values” of their own time—all in a script that took less than two minutes to read. My paper will analyze these texts and show how Eliot’s ideas about responsibility reach outward from them to connect with, and in some cases even to generate, his better-known works of the WWII era.

David Chinitz
Loyola U Chicago

“The Insistent Out-of-Tune”: Women’s Voices in Early Poems of Pound and Eliot

In her study, *Dramatic Monologue*, Glennis Byron notes a significant distinction between how nineteenth century and modernist poets use the dramatic monologue. Whereas earlier poets such as Felicia Hemans, Robert Browning and Alfred, Lord Tennyson generally pose their characters’ voices in a natural or social setting, the modernists influenced by these poets—in particular, T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound—tend to abandon “any particular context for the speaker” in their poems in favor of “an undefined and elusive space” (114). Pound’s early monologues, even more than Eliot’s, argues Byron, are “primarily focused on capturing mood,” leaving a reader with “little sense of anything external to the speaking subject [and] little sense of any interaction with others” (115). In fact, “The Modernists,” Byron concludes, “appropriate the dramatic monologue primarily for the purposes of experimenting with poetic voice” to the extent that the “conventions associated with the dramatic monologue begin to lose their functional value,” instead giving way to creating “multiple fragmented voices which become a composite voice, a voice which is, ultimately, the voice of the poet” (116). In what may seem an odd complement to Byron’s account of how Pound and Eliot swerve from Browning’s influence especially, Wayne Koestenbaum has argued, from a psychoanalytic perspective, for how Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, after Pound’s collaboration, engages the voice of what Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud diagnosed as “hysteria” in women patients’ speech—in particular, in the case of Anna O. (114). Finding in Freud’s work with “the talking cure”

a paradigm for Pound’s work with *The Waste Land*’s “hysterical discourse” (115), Koestenbaum contends that in the same way Freud serves as “a midwife” able to interpret Anna O.’s “hysterical discontinuities of speech,” Pound and Eliot collaborate on the latter’s long poem ultimately to “convert the female text into an object within a homosocial economy” (136).

What links Byron’s and Koestenbaum’s approaches to the “fragmented voices” of both Pound’s and Eliot’s poetry is their appropriating voices, stylistically, as *other*, most notably, as *female*. So what I explore then is how both Pound and Eliot depict women in their early poems, especially how they portray women’s voices—as “hysterical” or otherwise—whether in monologues (Pound) or dialogues (Eliot). In his early poems, Pound, in fact, rarely quotes or portrays women speaking at all, with the important exception of “A Girl.” “The Jewel-Stairs’ Grievance,” and “The River-Merchant’s Wife: A Letter.” Although none of Eliot’s early poems are exclusively spoken by a woman, women’s voices (anticipating *The Waste Land*) are certainly prominent—notably, in “The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock,” “Portrait of a Lady,” and “Conversation Galante,” among others. By contrasting how the two poets’ early poems use women’s voices, as well as considering how each portrays women in context, I want to argue for the (somewhat ironically) predominant, though varied influence of women’s voices in shaping each poet’s own modernist voice.

John Gery
U of New Orleans

“A Patient Etherised upon a Table”? Eliot’s Dissection of Dickens

Amongst modernist writers and thinkers, there are those who, like Wittgenstein and Adorno, imbibed Dickens from childhood, and those who grew up in the shadow of the slump in the novelist’s reputation at the turn of the century. T. S. Eliot is one of the former, partly because of a collective family memory of Dickens’s description of his grandfather in *American Notes* as “a gentleman of great worth and excellence.” From childhood, he shared with his mother a passion for Dickens. At the end of the First World War, when it was possible to send parcels across the Atlantic again, she sent him a set of Dickens’s work with which he had

been familiar since the 1890s. “The care and beauty of the packing almost made me cry,” he writes to her.

Two years later he would take with him to Lausanne a poem with a provisional title from *Our Mutual Friend*, “He do the police in different voices.” From this I think it can be deduced that Eliot already associated Dickens with modernism, as others were soon to do. In Paris in 1910 for instance, at the instigation of Alain-Fournier perhaps, he had read Charles-Louis Philippe’s *Bubu de Montparnasse*, writing later that “to me Bubu stood for Paris as some of Dickens’ novels stand for London.” During the war he was obviously thinking of Dickens again, writing in March 1917 that “life here simply consists in waiting for the war to stop—if one thought of that too much it would have the same effect as Chancery on Richard Carstone in *Bleak House*. What is the use of plans? one thinks often.”

Thus, Middleton Murry is I think wrong in his 1922 essay (written in the wake of Santayana on Dickens) when he depicts Eliot’s recognition of Dickens’s return to favor in the modernist era as rather begrudging. It is as important a strand in Eliot’s writing about the city as is the work of Baudelaire, and equally modern. I show this through a review of relevant factual evidence and readings of individual poems.

Michael Hollington
U of Kent

Eliot’s First “Dante”

In April 1920, Eliot published a short review in the *Athenaeum* titled “Dante as a Spiritual Leader.” Later that year, when he was assembling the contents of his first prose volume, *The Sacred Wood* (1920), he made lengthy and drastic revisions to the review, expanding it from an occasional reflection on a second-rate American scholar to a wide-ranging and cosmopolitan meditation on the relationship between poetry and philosophy. After *The Sacred Wood*, “Dante” (1920) was not reprinted, and it was thereafter eclipsed by the much more ambitious and widely republished 1929 essay of the same name. My talk returns to examine the fascinating revisions that Eliot made to “Dante as a Spiritual Leader” and to explain what they reveal about the rapid changes in his reading and thinking between the beginning and end of 1920. In short, I believe that revising this essay forced Eliot to define the idea of “order” in ways that illuminate his contemporaneous work (in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” and “Modern Tendencies in Poetry,” for instance) and that also are essential to

his later writing, particularly the Clark and Turnbull lectures on metaphysical poetry. For the revision, Eliot revisits the work of Santayana, Valéry, and William James, and only thereafter can he articulate an “order” that is characterized not by hierarchy and sequence but by contradiction and interpenetration.

Anthony Cuda
UNC, Greensboro

From “Conceptual Obscurity” to the Musical *Cats*: T. S. Eliot on the Spanish Stage

T. S. Eliot has been widely remembered as a poet—and specifically as the poet of *The Waste Land*. Yet, when he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1948, at the peak of his career, his creative energies were concentrated in drama. After the Canterbury production of *Murder in the Cathedral* in 1935, the subsequent plays premiered at the Edinburgh Festival with moderate success. Eliot’s drama has been perceived as restricted in its intellectual, religious and social concerns, and has been scarcely staged.

In Spain, Eliot’s *The Cocktail Party* was produced in 1952, in Madrid, at the Teatro María Guerrero, a public theatre that, despite the difficult post-war conditions, strived to produce some of the most interesting international contemporary plays. Reviews coincide in confirming that the play was coolly received: Spanish audiences are unaccustomed to “thematic” or heavily “textual” drama; furthermore, the way Eliot deals with adultery is alien to the Spanish dramatic tradition and its obsession with honor.

The Family Reunion was produced in 1956 in a smaller private theatre, Pequeño Teatro Dido, also in Madrid. The translators, Elizabeth Gate and Carmen Conde, attempted to adapt the patterns of Eliot’s dramatic verse into Spanish. The play appealed to a minority of theatergoers, but again, a reviewer complained that it was “conceptually obscure.” In 2012, in Barcelona, *Murder of the Cathedral* was staged to celebrate the restoration of the main façade of the city’s cathedral. This was a semi-amateur production, in Catalan and with musical accompaniment.

Other performances inspired by Eliot’s poetry include: *La pell eixorca* (Festival de Perelada, Girona, 2013), which explores the affinity connecting *The*

Waste Land and Salvador Espriu's *La pell de brau*; Deborah Warner's *The Waste Land*, with Fiona Shaw (Teatro Español, Madrid, 2010); and of course, the musical *Cats* (Teatro Coliseum, Madrid, 2003-2005). I analyze all these stagings and performances in order to characterize the reception of Eliot's drama in Spain.

Dídac Llorens-Cubedo
U Nacional de Educación a Distancia

Writing Paradise and “Fruit of Action”: Ideal Cities in the *Four Quartets* and *The Cantos*

Although modernist poets criticized and opposed Romantic aesthetics, they are the legatees of the Romantic ethos. Both Eliot's and Pound's works illustrate the Romantic notion of the poet as a “cultural hero” who takes upon himself the task of regenerating contemporary civilization in order to “Make it new!” In doing this, both poets redefine their age in relationship with the cultural authorities of the past and engage in a dialogue with the dead rather than with the living. They censure the prevalent Western liberal discourse and develop critical perspectives that look for spiritual insights in Eastern traditions. Both Eliot's *Four Quartets* and Pound's *Cantos* envision an ideal world as an alternative to the cultural defectiveness of the present. This paper closely examines Eliot's notion of “the fruit of action” in *Four Quartets* (*Dry Salvages* III: 134), in conjunction with Pound's attempt to build a “Paradiso terrestre,” specifically, his quest for the ideal city. Eliot's reference to Krishna's notion of “right action” in the *Gita* is the model he holds up to a modern civilization that relinquishes its ethical values. His famous question at England's capitulation in 1938 at Munich—that is, whether “our society” was nothing

more than “a congeries of banks, insurance companies and industries” which could be reduced only to “a belief in compound interest and the maintenance of dividends”—expresses his doubts about the validity of a civilization whose values are rooted exclusively in materialistic gains and is capable of an unconditional moral demise. Written before and during the war, Eliot's last poems, *Four Quartets*, are tied up with his profound sense of individual and “communal responsibility ... for the sins of the society to which he belongs” (*Christianity and Culture* 57), but in the *Quartets* he further offers the course of “the fruit of action” as a way out of spiritual emptiness. Eliot's preoccupations with a redeeming vision are closely linked to Pound's “writing paradise,” that is, shoring fragments with which to bring into effect an ideal world.

Seen in this light, both *The Cantos* and the *Quartets* can be read as epic ventures meant to rescue their age. Both undermine a reading of history in terms of progress and temporal development, and both seek to measure actuality against the excellence of an ideal. In different ways, they search for “luminous details,” or fragments shored against the ruins of Western civilization, in a joint defense of the permanent values of culture. The aim of this paper is to provide a comparative approach to their visions of totality while establishing the distinctive nature of each poet's idealized projections. It analyzes the vision at the heart of their imaginary presuppositions, the complex relationship of the real and the transcendent. It argues that while for Eliot the challenges of history can be solved through an action inscribed in the realm of meta-history and ethics, the more documentary mode of Pound grounded in a non-theological perspective resorts to epiphanic moments of beauty, passion and goodness to bring about a similar yet distinct intersection of timelessness and time.

Viorica Patea
U of Salamanca



Fabio Vericat, Dídac Llorens-Cubedo, and Viorica Patea

“Talking of Michelangelo”: Prufrock in the Louvre

Recent studies have explored how Eliot's “Mandarins” (1910) and “Afternoon” (1914) reflect the aesthetic and social dimensions of museum going. These poems register the liminality of museum galleries, where the private experience of

contemplation and wonder takes place within a public sphere and where museum visitors put themselves on display alongside works of art. “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (1910–11) partakes in images shared by these museum poems: the porcelain teacups and the patterned gowns that move through the Asian exhibit in “Mandarins” reappear in the rooms of “Prufrock”; the “perfume from a dress” in “Prufrock” faintly trails the ladies who traverse the hall of the British Museum in “Afternoon.” More substantively, the act of looking and being looked at is Prufrock’s central preoccupation as he analyzes the women discussing Michelangelo and envisions himself hanging on the wall like a painting subject to analysis (“sprawling on a pin, / When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall”). Eliot largely drafted “Prufrock” during his student year in Paris, where he was introduced to Matthew Prichard, a former curator of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Eliot later wrote that he was “in many ways deeply indebted” to Prichard and that “his sensibility to art is greater than that of anyone I have ever met.” In this paper, I reconstruct Prichard’s influential views on museum display during his tenure as curator as well as his subsequent critique of the modern museum for reducing works of art to mere objects of observation and contemplation. I then situate key scenes from “Prufrock” in the Louvre’s Salle Michel-Ange, which contained the only works attributed to the Old Master in all of Paris, a seventeenth-century marble sculpture of St. John the Baptist’s head upon a platter, and an ornamental facade featuring sirens. Re-contextualizing “Prufrock” in light of Prichard’s views not only allows us to reconsider the setting of Eliot’s poem but also to follow a missing step in his evolving understanding of the museum as a cultural institution.

John Morgenstern
Clemson U

“Frisch weht der Wind”: Eliot, Pound, and Wagner

In 1916 Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* had a surprising new visibility in England. A touring production of the opera was of the kind to change minds: with dramatic sets by the painter Adrian Allinson, conducted by Thomas Beecham, and performed in English by his company, it belied the wartime suspicion of all things German that caused artists like Ford Madox Hueffer and Gustav von Holst to change their names. Poet and critic Arthur Symons was spurred to see his play *Tristan and Iseult* into print. With his wife Dorothy,

Ezra Pound attended the 19 June performance at the Aldwych Theatre in London, and subsequently wrote his astonishing Noh play *Tristan*, based on a western pilgrimage by the sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, who had died at the front the previous year. At the same time, T. S. Eliot was in town reviewing Nietzsche, and with Pound, attending premieres of Yeats’s Noh plays. Under such a constellation of influences Eliot completed a change of heart about *Tristan und Isolde*, a music-drama earlier dismissed in his unpublished poem “Opera.” This would allow the drama, unexpectedly, to take a central role in *The Waste Land*. Although Wagner is sometimes seen simply as part of a rejected Romantic inheritance, ironically called upon, this paper argues that Pound’s Wagner joined Symons’s Wagner and many other Wagners seen, heard, or read about to fix the drama in the poem’s imagination and collective unconscious, and indeed helped to shape the poem’s making. While quoting the opera, *The Waste Land* conspicuously cannot perform it: in this space between what is heard, overheard, read, written and printed, the poem starts to find a voice. If the scope and style of their artistic projects appear wildly at odds, by observing them through this wartime cultural lens, we can observe how much Wagner, Pound and T. S. Eliot shared preoccupations, and ambitions, not least an interest in exerting control over audiences, and the voice. As well as visible and audible, then, *Tristan und Isolde* becomes newly legible.

Adrian Paterson
National U of Ireland, Galway

“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” and Other Comics

Comics and poetry may seem like an unlikely pairing, but there is in fact a fairly long history of cross-disciplinary exchange between the two art forms. Perhaps as a result of the growing mainstream cultural legitimation of comics in the last half decade or so, there has been a veritable explosion in the creation of “poetry comics.” These include the adaptations into comics of pre-existing poems, as seen for instance in *The Graphic Canon: The Word’s Great Literature in Comics and Visuals* (Seven Stories Press, 2012) and *Above the Dreamless Dead: World War I in Poetry and Comics* (First Second Books, 2014), as well as wholly new combinations of imagery and poetic texts, such as can be found in the work of Bianca Stone and Paul Tunis.

My presentation retraces the history of poetry comics, from their beginning in the experimentations of the poets of the New York School in the 1960s to their present-day popularity. Through an examination of these works, as well as of the declarations of their creators, I will consider the motivations behind this hybrid art practice and posit the existence of certain underlying affinities and structural similarities between comics and poetry. Turning more specifically to the practice of adapting classic poetry into comics, I then discuss the value of such an approach through an examination of my own 24-page comics adaptation of T. S. Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” as well as a number of works by other contemporary poetry comics creators. I will also consider a few of the possible pitfalls of this practice and address some of the criticisms that have been levelled against the very idea of undertaking such amalgams of classic poetry and comics in the first place.

Julian Peters
Verdun, Quebec

“Let us go”: T. S. Eliot and Migration

Who are those hooded hordes swarming
Over endless plains

Early in *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide*, David Chinitz provides some reflections on the “migratory robin” which Eliot in a 1953 lecture used as a metaphor for his own migration from the United States to England. European high modernism in general is characterized by the migrations of many of its foremost writers—Eliot, Auden, Beckett, Joyce, and Pound among them—from one country to another. Eliot’s work in poetry and prose is infused



Ronald Schuchard, Patrick Query, and Jayme Stayer

with meditations on the movement of persons and ideas between cultures, meditations which are especially raw in his early work, wherein, to invoke just one well-known example, “the jew [...] Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp” was “Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London.” This essay considers the theme of international migration in Eliot’s writing, with particular reference to his pre-conversion poetry, his prose collected in the first two volumes of the new *Complete Prose*, and the contemporaneous letters. At the 2014 T. S. Eliot Society meeting, I presented a paper on Eliot and the theme of peace as part of a larger inquiry into the possibilities and pitfalls of activist readings of Eliot’s work. Similarly, I take up in this essay the theme of migration particularly for its contemporary import, as Europe (Italy in particular) is engaged in a new and urgent reckoning with the claims of refugees upon not only European territory but upon the idea of Europe itself. Border and globalization studies have provided sophisticated frameworks for considering the implications of the movements of peoples across national boundaries and likewise provide some of the key terms for my own reflections.

Patrick Query
USMA, West Point

Blasting Away at the “Bullshit” Myth: Pound, Eliot, and Lewis in 1915

It is a critical *acquis* that Eliot attempted to publish “The Triumph of Bullshit” and “Ballade pour la grosse Lulu” in Lewis’s *Blast*. The standard interpretation of the evidence is that Eliot wanted them published, Lewis demurred for humorous, personal reasons, Eliot was annoyed, and Pound tried his best to change Lewis’s mind. I argue that contrary to every published critic who has written on Eliot’s early poetry (including Pound and Lewis scholars), this is simply not the case. I look carefully at the standard evidence and introduce new evidence to show that it was Pound who wanted them published, Lewis who was worried about very real censorship issues, and Eliot who never indicated that the poems were for anything other than Lewis’s personal amusement. These minor details of historical accuracy then open up onto larger questions of how we interpret the scandalous poems with respect to their intended audiences and the moral judgments we make regarding these poems.

Jayme Stayer
John Carroll U

Reading *The Waste Land* as a Novel

T. S. Eliot once argued that prose “nourished” his own work more than poetry did, and his essay “*Ulysses, Order, and Myth*” (1923) remains perhaps the most renowned critical essay on Joyce’s modernist novel. And yet Eliot’s fascination with prose fiction and its impact on his own verse and plays remain largely unexamined. This paper probes what it would mean to read *The Waste Land* through the lens of narratology and to contextualize Eliot’s famous praise for Joyce’s “mythical method” amongst his other comments on the psychology, form, and moral purpose of the modern novel. I argue that Eliot scholarship has silently erased, as Eliot removed Conrad’s epigraph and Dickens’s title to *The Waste Land*, the importance of novelists on Eliot’s own literary development. Now that the Eliot canon is exploding as scholars gain access for the first time to many of his uncollected essays, we can see the depth of Eliot’s knowledge of prose fiction. In particular, in this paper I argue that Eliot’s lecture notes for teaching “English 26: English Literature from 1890 to the Present Day” at Harvard in 1933 shed light on the way we can read “several planes” at work in the narrative form of *The Waste Land*. What does it mean to suggest evil, and how might Eliot’s poem have fed off the difference between evil and bad, between suggestion and narration? Eliot argues that Henry James’s skill was “not to relate, but to make the reader supply, cooperate” (“Lecture Notes for English 26” [1933]). The *dialogic heteroglossia*, section breaks, and (arguably) framed narrative of *The Waste Land* show us several of the ways that Eliot learned how to “suggest” from James’s style. In addition, for Eliot, the younger literary genre of the novel often seemed an awkward form: neither part of the high literary canon of Shakespeare, Donne, and Dryden, nor tied to the popular culture of Marie Lloyd and Groucho Marx. This hybrid genre, lacking metrical patterns or traditional forms, international and yet often very local in detail, seemed, nonetheless, closer to life than poetry. Prose, he wrote, was able “to take something more from life” than poetry traditionally did, and “the real failure of the mass of contemporary verse is its failure to draw anything new from life into art” (“Prose and Verse” [1921]). Prose

fiction, therefore, in its closer connection to the social and moral life of the times, to regional detail and local dialect, played a vital role in Eliot’s verse and provides a crucial lens for re-examining *The Waste Land*.

Megan Quigley
Villanova U

The Passionate Rhymes of St. Sebastian

With Milton’s “troublesome and modern bondage” in his ears, T. S. Eliot suggested in “Reflections on *Vers Libre*” (1917) that “it is possible that excessive devotion to rhyme has thickened the modern ear”; he added that “liberation from rhyme might be as well a liberation of rhyme ... it could be applied with greater effect where it is most needed.” And his rhymes are sharp, targeted, applied with attention and precision, in the 1910 poems from “Preludes” to “Prufrock.” One overlooked work, however, “The Love Song of St. Sebastian” (1914), remains a critical anomaly for scholars of Eliot’s earlier works. An ambiguously-voiced poem about martyrdom for love, it’s been set gingerly aside as a “weird sado-masochistic affair” (Alan Jenkins), and “not successful” in trying “to work up feelings or imagery” (Peter Ackroyd). Even as he sent it from Italy, Eliot asked Conrad Aiken: “Do you think that the Love Song of St Sebastian ... is morbid, or forced?”



Megan Quigley

This paper uses one poem as its center of gravity and suggests that “The Love Song of St. Sebastian” is a valuable (and beautiful) experiment in verse erotics. Crafted by Eliot as a form of poetic “bondage,” as sensually religious “devotion to rhyme,” I suggest that the poem deals with martyrdom, violence and raw desire precisely by overcharging its line-endings, and showing the kitschy, performative aspects of rhymes and love-declarations both. I locate its background in Debussy/D’Annunzio’s ballet-opera *Le Martyre de saint Sébastien* (1911), and, along with contemporary poems such as “The Burnt Dancer” (also 1914), relate it to Eliot’s interest in dance, grace & bodily sensuality; I then draw on writers from Proust to Barthes in sketching a new close account of “The Love Song of

St. Sebastian,” which will expand outwards to relate this poem’s passions and pains to Eliot’s subsequent uses of rhyme, his sense of how rhyme and erotics are related, and above all, their varied re-incarnations in each reader’s own body and voice.

Cal Revely-Calder
Trinity College, Cambridge

Eliot and Hot Music: Revisiting Context, Practice, and Performance in “Prufrock” and *The Waste Land*

In 1921, Clive Bell connected Igor Stravinsky with what Bell called “nigger music,” and then placed T. S. Eliot in the school of “jazz poets” currently writing. As late as 1958, on the NBC television program *The Subject is Jazz: Jazz and Other Arts*, Gilbert Seldes named Eliot the pre-eminent jazz poet—this on a show that featured Langston Hughes reading his poetry to musical accompaniment by Billy Taylor and others. Because of the changing perceptions and even greater mainstreaming of “hot music” (ragtime, blues, and jazz) than in the 1920s, as well as shifting perceptions of Eliot’s oeuvre and African-American literature, Eliot no longer achieves such a high status among jazz poets. However, looking back at Eliot’s ancestors, his young life in the ragtime town of St. Louis, the prominence of hot music in white America as displayed in the pop, white jazz, and classical music of the time, and his obvious references to African-American culture in his work, Eliot’s indebtedness to hot music is clear, and deeper than suspected. Looking closely at “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” and *The Waste Land*, we find poems that are long laments; personal and communal; rooted in tradition; polyvocal; employing vernacular language, metaphors and situations to various degrees; employing syncopation and repetition in the rhythms; presenting combinations of lamentation and hilarity; offering a philosophy of endurance in the face of hardship and destruction, leading to artistic and human transcendence. These are all characteristics of African-American hot music as well. And although we might find these characteristics in other genres of art and not necessarily connected to hot music, combined with Eliot’s historical and social connections to the music and the permeation of American society (and Paris as well) by African-American hot music, a good case can be made for the impact of the music on his

work. The presentation includes recordings from the era by Blind Lemon Jefferson, Ma Rainey, and others, plus live performances on the harmonica.

Steven C. Tracy
U Massachusetts, Amherst

“Oed’ und leer das Meer”: The Sea of Music, Eliot and Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy*

In *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), Nietzsche draws on Schopenhauer’s musical aesthetics to read *Tristan* and *Isolde* as embodying absolute music. For Nietzsche, Wagner’s opera becomes the palpable expression of Schopenhauer’s doctrine that music expresses “the innermost essence of the world,” the universal will itself. Eliot’s references to *Tristan and Isolde* in *The Waste Land* allude to the significance accorded to this opera in *Birth of Tragedy*. Yet the fact that Nietzsche’s discussion importantly develops Schopenhauer’s aesthetics remains unexamined. Backed by Wagner’s enthusiasm for Schopenhauer, Nietzsche gains from the philosopher the insight that the substance of music drama is the “orchestral melody.” Nietzsche’s reading of Act III of *Tristan* discusses this relation between absolute melody and dramatic content, quoting the very line of the opera invoked by Eliot—the “wide and desolate sea.” Nietzsche suggests that for a man to hear the third act as a symphonic movement unaided by word or imagery would be to “put his ear to the heart-chamber of the cosmic will” and so to “collapse at once.” Nietzsche’s contrasting of the Dionysiac universality or sublimity of music with the Apolline individuality or beauty of scenic or verbal elements is developed through Schopenhauer’s aesthetics. Music is understood by its Schopenhauerian status as “universals before the fact” and connected with the image of the sea. In *Four Quartets*, Eliot importantly develops this contrast between the aural and the visual. Like Nietzsche and Schopenhauer before him, Eliot suggests music to be an ante-world, preceding representation. In the *Quartets* and in *The Waste Land*, Eliot centrally draws on Wagner’s image of the sea of absolute music to express a longing for oblivion, a union with the universal will or absolute that is ultimately a death to the world.

Aakanksha Virkar-Yates
U of Brighton

Abstracts from the Midwest Modern Language Association,
St. Louis, November 2016

“The inevitableness is the
important thing”: T. S. Eliot
and the Prose Poem

T. S. Eliot's *Prufrock and Other Poems* has drawn critical attention ever since its publication, but relatively few scholars have treated “Hysteria,” the only prose poem that Eliot ever published. Eliot attempted to define and evaluate the genre of prose poetry in several essays over his long career as a literary critic, coming to the reluctant and, to him, unsatisfactory conclusion that a work can only be considered a prose poem if the author intended it to be so and the choice felt inevitable. Since Eliot's time, multiple scholars and poets have similarly struggled to define this hybrid, paradoxical genre, with varying success. Definitions of prose poetry generally fall into one of four categories: (1) those focusing on the formal elements of the pieces; (2) those arguing that the content of the pieces determines the form; (3) those invoking ideas of freedom and empowerment of the proletariat as justification for the form; and (4) those relying on a combination of authorial intention and reader-response theories. Eliot's own writings on the prose poem fall into this final category, which, I argue, is the only theory that avoids the inevitable traps of exception and oversimplification. I explore why Eliot chose to write “Hysteria” in prose, in spite of his general aversion to the form, and show that the poet's own theory of the genre is the only way to explain his choice—the poem, the experience that it describes, could not have been written in anything but prose. Eliot's ability to convince readers of the necessity of the prose poem thus defines the form more effectively than any enumeration of its formal qualities or analysis of its content. Understanding the underlying structure and logic of the prose poem, and Eliot's ambivalent relationship to it, enables us to assess the value of this ambiguous genre and understand an anomaly in the career of one of the twentieth century's most prominent poets.

Kylie Regan
Purdue University

The Liebeslied of J. Alfred
Prufrock: On T. S. Eliot,
Lieder, and the Trouble of Song

When Eliot first began composing “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” in early 1910, the love song had long been a troubled genre. If not outright subverted by the times, the love song depended increasingly on structural subversion and new degrees of virtuosity for survival and definition in a Modern aesthetic. In “Prufrock,” Eliot performs within the genre of song form, integrating and defying conventions of the sonnet and other forms, but the intricacy of the poem's music also exhibits techniques used by Romantic composers, a connection that might illuminate the formal challenges Eliot faced in using song forms as a source of counterpoint. This paper examines Eliot's reimagining of the love song in the context of the Romantic art song, and particularly the dissonance he exposes in rhyme and repetition, which we typically associate with consonance.

Like Schumann's *Dichterliebe* and Heine's *Intermezzo*, Prufrock's improvisatory “fumbling” with feeling becomes formally virtuosic—a means of embracing the dissonance of modern speech with the consonance of Western musicality. Like the settings of the *Dichterliebe*, Prufrock's music is so persistent that it draws attention to the logic of song, frustrating and subverting how we read its labor. I argue that in his playful use of devices like couplets, repetition, and the increasing densities of rhyme throughout “Prufrock,” Eliot alters the genre's requisite sense of musical labor by showing how it need not solely emanate from the singer, who we want to perceive at the song's center. By subverting the structural logic of song, as did Schumann and Heine, Eliot imagines the singer as another instrument in the city's orchestra. Where Eliot finds the “love song” and its promise of personal expression too neat for modern poetic form, the self-conscious and arguably impersonal use of harmony offers a way that poetry may yet perform a sort of “love music.”

Jay D. Smith
University of Missouri

Call for Nominations

The Eliot Society seeks nominations for two seats on its Board of Directors—those presently held by John Whittier-Ferguson and Vincent Sherry. These are three-year positions, running from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2020.

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 Supervisor of Elections, Michael Coyle (mcoyle@colgate.edu) by February 3, 2017. 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 President, Frances Dickey (dickeyf@missouri.edu), by April 14, 2017.

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