

# Time Present

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Registration now open for  
38th Annual Eliot Society Meeting  
[http://tseliot.sites.luc.edu/  
meeting.htm](http://tseliot.sites.luc.edu/meeting.htm).

## Eliot Teaching the Moderns at Harvard: *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot, Volume 4: English Lion, 1930-1933*, edited by Jason Harding and Ronald Schuchard

Johns Hopkins University Press, Faber and Faber, 2015.

Reviewed by Megan Quigley  
Villanova University

A true gift to scholars from Volume 4 of *The Complete Prose* is Eliot's lecture notes from his undergraduate lectures on Contemporary Literature delivered at Harvard University from February to May of 1933. Usually reticent to comment on his peers, the Eliot we meet in the notes does not shy away from frank appraisals. Eliot intends to praise James Joyce as "an explorer of the human soul" (784), to critique Thomas Hardy as a "[c]esspool of unsatisfied desires" (768), and to make his final lecture a combined ode to Wyndham Lewis and Wallace Stevens: "Lewis; and Finale of Seem" (792). The lecture notes also help us to re-evaluate the influence Eliot believed novelists had on his own poetic achievement. Along with the (editorially daring) reconstructed lectures and the invaluable context provided by the "Chronology of Lectures and Readings" of the American tour, I found the "Lecture Notes" to be the most exciting contribution to this excellent new volume.

Eliot's class notes are impromptu, incomplete, sometimes personal, and often tantalizing. For example, he injects "analyse Heart of Darkness" here without giving the analysis (770). As Ronald Bush has noted, the canon of figures whom Eliot analyzes seems to us now "almost banal," including Kipling, Hardy, Conrad, James, Yeats, Pound, Joyce, Lawrence and Lewis, which makes us realize how early the canon of literary modernism was established and Eliot's role in establishing it.<sup>1</sup> It is fairly hard to believe that he mentions so few women—even Virginia Woolf, his erstwhile publisher and correspondent, merely merits some very quick commentary and not a whole lecture. His twenty classes occurred on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, and one of the most compelling aspects of the notes is Eliot's occasional humility in terms of judging his contemporaries. For example, "The English Lion" begins the set of classes with the note: "warning about general Limitations. Ignorance and Prejudice—reasons for," foreshadowing his comments that while he prefers Joyce to Lawrence he must admit

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*The Critic in the Modern World: Public Criticism from Samuel Johnson to James Wood,*  
by James Ley

New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. vi + 240 pages.

Reviewed by Michael Opest  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

In *The Critic in the Modern World: Public Criticism from Samuel Johnson to James Wood*, James Ley examines six writers in light of their distinctive rhetorical personae and their abilities to occupy, with varying success, objective and disinterested critical ground against the prevailing opinions of their times. Ley is the founder of the Sydney Review of Books and the winner of the 2014 Pascall Prize for Australian Critic of the Year. His book succeeds not only as an example of the popular and non-specialist criticism signaled in its subtitle, but also as a history of ideas, and it will interest academics and avid readers alike.

Connecting Johnson to Wood are essay-style chapters on William Hazlitt, Matthew Arnold, T. S. Eliot, and Lionel Trilling. An initial pause is warranted: public criticism without Margaret Fuller? Virginia Woolf? James Baldwin? Because Ley's stated method is to approach his subjects as "figures . . . both as individuals and representatives of certain key ideas," there is a risk of reduction to another figure: the dead white male. Ley defends this archive on the bases of historical coverage, continuity of critical purpose, and cultural influence. There "seems to be a natural conversation" between these figures, he writes (8). In Eliotic terms, all of these critics write within a conscious tradition, each is that which his inheritors know.

Ley is an inquisitive interlocutor, following that critical conversation with care. His narrative thread is the sanctity of the individual response in the face of contextual pressures and historical determinations. The public critic "must individuate his voice, find a way to cut through, to project his ideas with authority. In his engagement with the modern agora, he embodies the problem of the enfranchised individual who must address the particularities of his immediate cultural context while remaining apart from that context" (4). In Ley's telling, Johnson's neoclassical appeals to the cool arbitrations of reason are met with Hazlitt's romantic predilections for fiery affect. Trilling's aesthetic preferences presage Wood's, while his aloof and privileged deferrals to the complexities of liberal individualism echo Arnold. By

focusing on rhetoric strategies, Ley shifts the conversation away from Arnoldian worries over the function, validity, and continuity of criticism to interrogate critical practices.

Throughout, Ley sets public criticism against "literary theory," its academic counterpart. He rehashes the old opposition by which public critics not only persist with a necessary indifference to academe, but in which public criticism is aligned with "the humanistic tradition that much recent literary theory set out to challenge" (209-10). At the risk of offering an altogether too academic rejoinder, that distinction has been widely challenged within the walls of the academy, subtly in many ways, and overtly by both the Anglophone "new aestheticism" and the "new formalism" in the U.S. But the more pressing distinction in the book is between the public criticism of literature and the public criticism of culture, and although each chapter tends to refer to these as separate practices, Ley never quite clearly defines them as such. The division is crucial for the essay on Eliot, who is held up as a "particularly dramatic example of a critic attempting to solve the basic problem of how to construct an effective public persona" (3).

We have here a familiar account of Eliot's career, split by his conversion to Anglicanism. Ley sees an ongoing series of oppositions in Eliot's criticism: he "is at bottom deadly serious but often chooses for strategic reasons to express himself in the guise of an ironist" (100). He "declared allegiance to an ideal of literary autonomy," yet "sought to locate his ideas about literature in an intellectual and cultural context that assumed the widest of historical perspectives" (105). The young Eliot drew radical aesthetics from a conservative well, while the don of *The Criterion* wanted to wring social change from apolitical posturing.

Ley lightly faults Eliot for doing little more than holding such positions in tension. Stasis is "the thread that runs through all of Eliot's critical writings." He habitually appeals not to facts, nor to superior logic, but adopts "a stance of intellectual superiority; his basic critical method is, rather, to assert the priority of his values" (108). The rhetorical tactic of the assertive pose unites the early literary criticism with later cultural commentary.

Another of Eliot's strategies is to leap from attentive close readings to broad generalizations. In Ley's view, this is both a strength and a weakness. The "dissociation of sensibility" Eliot exemplifies through Donne is "vague and general enough to defy refutation, even though this same vagueness tends, on another level, to undercut the specific argument Eliot is making. . . . [T]he success of Eliot's revisionist reading is that it offers itself at once as an interpretation of the past, an explanation of the present

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T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY 38TH ANNUAL MEETING

St. Louis, September 22-24, 2017

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

*Duncker Hall, Washington University,  
unless otherwise noted.*

8:00-11:00 **Board meeting**  
(Coffee room)

Seminars (rooms TBA)

9:00-11:00 **Peer Seminar I:  
Eliot and Fiction**, led by Megan  
Quigley, Villanova U

Eliot D'Silva, UC Berkeley  
Gabriel Hankins, Clemson U  
Zachary Hope, U of Chicago  
Deborah Leiter, U of Wisconsin-  
Platteville

Catharine Mros, Washington U  
Anna Preus, Washington U  
Joseph Sgammato, SUNY  
Westchester Community C  
Anthony Shoplik, John Carroll U  
Fabio Vericat, Harvard U  
Steven Watts, U of Missouri

9:00-11:00 **Scholars Seminar**  
Led by Benjamin Lockerd, Grand  
Valley State U

Elysia Balavage, UNC Greensboro  
Rupsa Banerjee, English and  
Foreign Languages U, India  
Hyonbin Choi, U Wisconsin-  
Madison  
Michael Bedsole, UNC  
Greensboro  
Stephen Mitchell, Faulkner U  
David Withun, Faulkner U

11:15-1:10 **Peer Seminar II:  
Eliot and the Biological**, led by Julia  
Daniel, Baylor U

LeeAnn Derdeyn, Southern  
Methodist U

Michael Polesny, Baruch C,  
CUNY  
Michael Rogalski, Chicago  
Junichi Saito, Kanagawa U  
Annarose Steinke, U of Nebraska-  
Kearny  
John Tamilio III, Salem State U  
Clint Wilson, Rice U

Exhibit

10:00-1:00 Exhibit of Eliot-related  
materials from Washington U  
Libraries Special Collections (Olin  
Library); see Eliot Society website  
for more information.

*All afternoon events held in Hurst  
Lounge, Duncker Hall*

Roundtable

11:15–12:15 ***The Waste Land***  
Led by John Whittier-Ferguson, U  
of Michigan

Natalie Amleshi, U of Pennsylvania  
Sloppy Reading: Eliot's Aesthetics  
of Mediation in *The Waste Land*

Joseph Baillargeon  
*Captains Courageous and The Waste  
Land*

Lorenzo Peyrani  
Pulse and Voice in *The Waste Land*

Roderick Overaa, U of Tampa  
Dystopian Motifs in *The Waste  
Land* and *The Hollow Men*

—Lunch on your own—

2:00 **President's Welcome**  
Frances Dickey, U of Missouri

Panels

2:05-3:35 **Session I**  
Chair: Michael Coyle, Colgate U  
Anthony Cuda, UNC Greensboro

Dangerous Moments: Eliot and  
Plath

Elisabeth Däumer, Eastern Michigan U  
“How do we use feeling?": T. S.  
Eliot, Muriel Rukeyser, and the  
Cultural Work of Emotions

Suzanne Churchill, Davidson C  
Eliot, Warsan Shire and the  
Poetics of Interpersonality

3:45-4:45 **Session II**

*The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot,  
Volumes 5 and 6*

Ronald Schuchard, Emory U,  
General Editor

Jayne Stayer, John Carroll U,  
Co-editor, *Volume 5: Tradition and  
Orthodoxy, 1934-1939*

David E. Chinitz, Loyola U, Co-  
editor, *Volume 6: The War Years,  
1940-1946*

5:00 **Presentation of  
Eliot Society Awards**

5:15-6:30 **Memorial Lecture**

**Memorial Lecturer**

**John Haffenden**

**“Literary Dowsing”:**

**Valerie Eliot and**

**the Editing of**

***The Waste Land***

6:30-7:30 **Reception**

—Dinner on your own—

T. S. ELIOT SOCIETY 38TH ANNUAL MEETING

St. Louis, September 22-24, 2017

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23**

St. Louis Woman's Club,  
4600 Lindell Blvd.

Panels

**9:10:30 Session III**

Chair: Cyrena Pondrom, U of Wisconsin

Edward Upton, Christ College, Valparaiso U

Describing a Path of Conversion: Asceticism and the Re-combination of Religious Concepts in *Knowledge and Experience*

Jewel Spears Brooker, Eckerd C  
*The Hollow Men* and the End of Philosophy

Craig Woelfel, Flagler C

John "Muddleton Moral," *Ash-Wednesday*, and the Dissociation of Belief

**10:45-12:15 Session IV**

Chair: John D. Morgenstern, Clemson U

Olga Ushakova, Tyumen State U  
Oriental, Nihilistic and Metaphysical Dimensions of the Russian Revolution in Eliot's Writing

Gabriel Hankins, Clemson U  
Eliot's Debt Work and Liberal Governance after Versailles

Matthew Seybold, Elmira C  
The Economic Consequences of T. S. Eliot

**12:30-1:45 Society Luncheon**

(included in registration)

**1:45-2:00 Special Presentation**

Eliot and Comics, by Nancy Hargrove, Mississippi State U

Panel

**2:10-3:40 Session V**

Chair: Vincent Sherry, Washington U

Ria Banerjee, Guttman Community C

Eliot and the Moot: Notes towards a Modern Christian Society

Patrick Query, West Point  
Eliot and the Anarchist

Joshua Richards, Williams Baptist C

Eliot's Spiritualized Agrarianism in the 1930s

**5:00 Public reading**

Gather at Parkway hotel and proceed to Downtown metro station for public reading of "Burnt Norton" at new Eliot installation

—Dinner on your own—

**8:00 100th Birthday Party for *Prufrock and Other Observations***

*Home of Tony and Melanie Fathman in the Central West End*

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24**

First Unitarian Church,  
5007 Waterman Blvd.

Panels

**9:00-10:00 Session VI**

Chair: Anthony Cuda, UNC Greensboro

Sarah Kennedy, Downing College, Cambridge U

The Violet Hour: Eliot, Color, and the Psychology of Vision

Jennifer Janecek, U of Iowa  
Psychoacoustics and Language Reform in *Four Quartets*

**10:15-11:45 Session VII**

Chair: Jayme Stayer, John Carroll U

Kevin Rulo, Catholic U  
"making the small great": The Satire of Fresca

Zachary Hope, U of Chicago

"Not in the scheme of generation:" Eliot's *Little Gidding* and Forms of Literature in Times of War

Nancy K. Gish, U of Southern Maine

Eliot, Dido, and the Virgil Society

Closing Events

**12:00 Fathman Prize Announcement**

**12:05-12:30 Eliot Aloud**

Led by Julia Daniel, Baylor U

**REGISTRATION**

Registration for our 2017 meeting is now open online at <http://tseliot.sites.luc.edu/meeting.htm>.

Questions about the conference should be directed to [tseliotssociety@gmail.com](mailto:tseliotssociety@gmail.com).

***Violence without God:  
The Rhetorical Despair of  
Twentieth-Century Writers,*  
by Joyce Wexler**

New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. x + 216 pages.

Reviewed by Jack Dudley  
Mount St. Mary's University

Introducing David Jones's *In Parenthesis* in 1961, T. S. Eliot, in a moment of salesmanship, flattery, or critical honesty, compared the Welsh writer with James Joyce, Ezra Pound, and himself. The comparison came with a qualification regarding, of course, the Great War: "The lives of all of us were altered by that War," writes Eliot, "but David Jones is the only one to have fought in it" (New York: NYRB, 2003, viii). This point of biography should be read in light of Eliot's next paragraph on the interpretation of Jones's work: "Understanding begins in the sensibility," Eliot writes, "[and] we must have the experience before we attempt to explore the sources of the work itself" (viii). The "experience" Eliot speaks of here is the experience of reading Jones. But it is tempting to read him as suggesting that to understand Jones, one must have had the same experience of the war, to have "fought in it," as Jones did (viii). Such a reading of Eliot's proposed exegesis of *In Parenthesis* is borne out by the long poem's end, where Jones, after one hundred and eighty-seven pages of precise poetry, denies to the reader any understanding of the experience of war: "the man who does not know this," who does not know what it was like to be "on the field," in the end "has not understood anything," Jones concludes (187). A moment, perhaps, of rhetorical despair.

Both Eliot and Jones adumbrate a more contemporary theory of trauma and representation: those who have not experienced the violence of such events cannot understand them. If this personal dimension of trauma and aesthetic description is now a significant area of scholarly and psychological study, less considered is the question of how a larger cultural shift from religion to secularism in the industrialized west has affected both the way we speak about violence and how we understand the meaning of violence, if it has any. In her compelling and accessible new study, *Violence without God: The Rhetorical Despair of Twentieth-Century Writers*, Joyce Wexler brings together an impressively wide range of writers and contexts to show how "[w]hat made writing

about twentieth-century violence so difficult was that it occurred in a secular age" (2).

In one sense, this loss came about because, as Wexler notes, the "meaning of violence could no longer be grounded in a transcendent order" (3). If at the end of time, God will redeem the violent traumas of earthly life, violence might be given a final meaning. In the absence of God, modern writers might be seen to ask, what is left to give meaning to violence? Wexler's more substantial line of analysis emerges from this initial observation. To build her larger argument, Wexler begins with Charles Taylor's idea in *A Secular Age* (2007) that in the contemporary western world, any religious position or commitment exists in a wildly pluralistic context, where it becomes "fragilized" (Taylor's term) and only one belief option among what seem to be many equally possible options (Cambridge: Belknap, 303-4, 675). Following Taylor, Wexler notes that this pluralism not only makes any belief fragile, but that it also damages the symbolic mode of literary representation; symbolic meaning, set amid radical pluralism, becomes "radically indeterminate" (8). Wexler combines trauma theory and studies of secularization into a two-fold problem that modern and contemporary writers confronted: (1) the impossibility of giving voice to traumatic experience; and (2) the failure of the symbolic to achieve stable meaning in a secular culture. Wexler argues that in order to try to "describe violent events without imposing a meaning on them," the writers in her study emphasized the real and the particular but turned to extremity, irony, or excess to "make the meaning of their narratives indeterminate" (19). Such a process allowed for some kind of an aesthetic response to violence without giving that violence any definitive meaning. Her six chapters trace this literature of indeterminate meaning across the twentieth century and into today. She begins with new readings of Joseph Conrad's Kurtz and "The horror!" in a secular period before turning to expressionism in T. S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence. Two excellent chapters on James Joyce's *Ulysses* are followed by questions of representation in Holocaust literature, particularly in Günter Grass, H. G. Adler, and W. G. Sebald before a final epilogue that traces the aesthetic strategies she has surveyed into the twenty-first century.

Each chapter is supported by extensive research and wide reading, and readers can look forward to frequent insights about individual writers, areas of critical inquiry, and even whole periods of study. The Eliot chapter, "T. S. Eliot's Expressionist Angst," is no exception (Eliot appears throughout the remainder of the book as well). In this chapter, Wexler builds on existing scholarship on Eliot's

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*The Edinburgh Companion to T. S. Eliot and the Arts*, edited by Frances Dickey and John D. Morgenstern

Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2016. xix + 303 pages.

Reviewed by Roxana Preda  
University of Edinburgh

I find it is hard to overemphasize the importance of this volume. Dickey and Morgenstern have not simply assembled a collection of interdisciplinary essays on Eliot and the arts, but set the foundation of a distinct domain of study that may be developed and refined in the future. This collection will function as a standard for the constellation of essays on Eliot and the arts, both previous and to come.

Although it is a pity that the editors abstained from providing a complete map of the field, the stakes of the volume are high, providing new research attuned to the trends of the current academic climate in a collection that responds not only to its subject, but also to its own time. I am referring here to the inclusion of a section on Eliot and the media (phonograph and radio) as compared with the usual suspects (painting, architecture, music, and drama). The essays also map Eliot's interaction with institutions, not only artists and works of art; the essays by Dickey, Coyle, Morgenstern, Hargrove, Faulk, and Cuda are particularly interesting for detailing Eliot's involvement with museums, the musical theater, and the Phoenix Society as institutions of modernity.

The collection is divided into three sections: visual arts (painting and architecture); performance arts (theater, opera, ballet, music-hall, and jazz); and media (gramophone and radio). Each section has a very helpful introduction. Reading through the essays I felt a growing solidarity with Eliot's cultural pursuits and found he was in many respects like us: going to museums, theater, opera, and ballet for pleasure; walking the street with his eyes open to people and buildings; listening to music recordings at home; having a laugh, enjoying children, even going to dances. *Hypocrite auteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!*

Part I, "Eliot and the Visual Arts," gives pride of place to Eliot's interaction with museums in Boston, Paris, and London, attempting to gauge how the works

he must have seen filtered down into his earliest poetry, possibly influencing decisions to study Italian art or take a course in Sanskrit. Painting played a crucial role in Eliot's sensibility as a young man, at a time marked by what Coyle calls "youthful museum-flâneurie": it is reflected in poems like "Mandarins" (1910); "Bacchus and Ariadne" (1911); "Afternoon" (1914); and "The Love Song of St. Sebastian" (1914). The exploration of museum contexts offered by Dickey, Coyle, and Hargrove are particularly useful and engaging; the thorough assessment of art mediators like Babbitt and Prichard for Eliot's understanding of art in Morgenstern's essay and the consistent tying of threads between Eliot's visual experience and his early notebooks strike me as strong foundational work for the discipline.

The second section, on performance arts, has great variety and interest, exploring music, dance, and theater. The volume showcases Eliot's interactions with two composers who were particularly significant for his literary work around 1922: Wagner and Stravinsky. T. Austin Graham details the differences between the way that Stravinsky saw his own work as an expression of pure form, and the Joyce-inflected reading Eliot gave to the *Sacre* in 1921, by saying that it seemed "to transform the rhythm of the steppes into the scream of the motor horn" (146). Eliot was reading Stravinsky not as a musician would, but as a poet who was just elaborating his own mythical method as a response to *Ulysses*. This is a useful distinction that can be applied to all modernist poets engaging with the other arts. Eliot was never thinking like a practitioner, but as a sensitive and informed literary man looking and listening.

With this revelation in mind, Eliot's appropriation of Wagner in *The Waste Land*, the subject of two essays by Adrian Paterson and Katherine Hobbs, was to me particularly exciting to read. Not only was I persuaded by the arguments of the two scholars, but they helped me to form my own opinion of Wagner's overwhelming importance for the elaboration of Eliot's masterpiece. As in the case of Stravinsky, Eliot gave Wagner a literary and moral reading. His use of Wagner in *The Waste Land* shows that Eliot considered Tristan, the Ring, and Parsifal to be communicating, sharing aesthetic and moral problems in a universe where a subject presented in one opera (the unceasing desire in Tristan, which Wagner represents through his formal innovation of the endless melody) is resolved in another: Parsifal puts an end to desire through askesis, by allowing Kundry, the symbol of the feminine, "to die." Wagner thus "resolved" desire and left it behind him by allowing Parsifal to enter a world of pure and fertile homosociality, a solution that

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## “T. S. Eliot and Decadence”: Kings Place, London, February 2017

By Suzannah V. Evans

The live event “T. S. Eliot and Decadence” transported its London audience back to Paris in 1910, to the cultural milieu that caught the imagination of T. S. Eliot during his year in the city. Curated by the Rimbaud and Verlaine Foundation and supported by the T. S. Eliot Foundation, the evening featured an exciting range of speakers and musical performance, as well as poetry readings in both English and French.

Channeling concert hall performances of contemporary music in Paris, the evening began with a performance of “La plus que lente” by Claude Debussy. As pianist and musicologist Roy Howat explained, Debussy was the leader of French music in 1910, and found inspiration in much of the literature of the time. Just as Eliot had been “engrossed in working out the implications” (“On a Recent Piece of Criticism,” *Purpose* 1938) of the French poetry he read, so Debussy immersed himself in the poetry of Paul Verlaine and Jules Laforgue, setting several of Verlaine’s poems to music. Despite Debussy’s not doing the same for Laforgue, Howat claimed that the composer put “all he knew and loved of Laforgue into the music.” Debussy “steeped himself in Laforgue’s persona—he almost wanted to wear it,” Howat argued, and in the resulting music there is a sense of the intertwining personalities of both French poets.

Given that Eliot’s initial encounter with French poetry was so forceful—in 1920 he claimed that reading Jules Laforgue for the first time struck him as a “revelation” (*Prose* 2 216)—it is appropriate that each of the evening’s speakers began by describing their own first experience of reading Eliot. Margaret Reynolds, the academic and broadcaster, described how she first read Eliot as a young student at university, encouraged by her chain-smoking tutor. Intending to specialize in nineteenth-century literature, Reynolds was obliged to read Yeats and Eliot first, noting that “what began as a duty became a pleasure.” Eliot’s reading of nineteenth-century French poetry was also fueled by pleasure, and Reynolds spoke of Eliot’s attraction to Arthur Symons’s study *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, which he first read at Harvard in 1908. Here he discovered Laforgue, the poet who would come to mean more to him than “any one poet in any language” (“To Criticize the Critic” 1961). An interest in other French writers followed.

Eliot’s intense interest in French poetry prompted his decision to spend a year in Paris in 1910. His mother, Reynolds remarked, was not keen on this idea, but Paris

offered cultural riches that were too exciting to forego. Paris put Eliot in touch with individuals such as Jean Verdenal, an “intellectual equal” who would further feed Eliot’s appetite for French literature, and whom Reynolds sees in the Phlebas and hyacinth girl figures in *The Waste Land*. Reynolds also examined the appeal that writing in French had for Eliot, noting that doing so reminded him of Paris and the place where he had found his “authentic poetic voice,” as well as offering new possibilities for rhythm.

These possibilities of rhythm were explored by the actor Simon Callow in his excellent readings of Eliot in French and English. Like Reynolds, Callow first read Eliot at university, and through Eliot discovered Laforgue. Of Laforgue’s poetry, he enthused that he was “astonished by it—by the originality and modernity of it,” and could clearly see the connection between Eliot and Laforgue. Laforgue remains a poet who is “more talked about than read,” Callow observed, and so he entertained the audience with an American translation of Laforgue entitled “October’s Little Miseries” (“Petites misères d’octobre”); the last lines in particular provoked delighted laughter from listeners.

Following a musical interlude, the academic Matthew Creasy spoke about the impact of the French Decadent movement on Eliot. This is not an easy topic to discuss, Creasy explained, as the term “Decadence” itself has different meanings for French and English speakers. Scholars on both sides, however, tend to take the period from the 1880s as their focus, and Creasy laid down two defining characteristics of the movement. Firstly, it relates to social or historical collapse, offering a strong point of connection with Eliot’s own writing. Creasy quoted parts of “What the Thunder Said” from *The Waste Land*, noting that the poem was written immediately after the First World War and in the midst of Eliot’s own marital and personal difficulties, just as writers such as Verlaine had turned to the fall of the Roman Empire for evidence of collapse in antiquity. The second defining characteristic of Decadence is in its attention to rhythm and form, and the disruption of classical meter. French poetry uses the twelve-syllable Alexandrine with a medial caesura, and Creasy gave examples of lines in Verlaine’s poetry that break the classical alexandrine, enacting collapse in a metrical sense rather than merely referring to the concept. This sense of technical experimentation and the breaking away from poetic convention was key to the Decadent movement, and had clear implications for Eliot.

The audience was then treated to further readings by Simon Callow, before a short question and answer session with all of the speakers. The stage, with its grand piano, soft lighting, and fervent discussion, seemed almost transformed into a French salon, and as the last music by Satie was played, you could be forgiven for thinking that this excellent event really had transported you to Paris.

## *The Complete Prose, Vol. 4*

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he was a friend of one and not of the other (758). About Middleton Murry, with whom he sparred over Romanticism, Eliot begins: “Warning against Middleton Murry” (784). Expecting more specifics, we receive this gem instead: “John Middleton Murry has been a friend of mine: I hope however that I may live long enough for him to be unable to write a book about me” (784). Eliot’s reticence about making definitive opinions about his contemporaries was echoed in his students’ memories of the course: one, named C. L. Sulzberger, later recalled (according to the editors’ useful note): “Timid and withdrawn as Eliot was in class, he had a talent for banging the piano”; and he continues, “I liked him despite the fact that he gave me a poor mark on my term paper” (758).

Eliot’s overall aim for his students is that they should learn to “see all literature as timeless” and resist passive consumption in place of valuing literature in “relation to some permanent scale of values” (793). His own methodology in the lectures is historical and comparative, often pairing two writers (for example, Shaw and Chesterton, Joyce and Lawrence) so that he can balance their strengths and weaknesses. “We can learn a great deal from a writer whose account of reality we finally reject” (768), he urges, and, in the spirit of “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” he insists that his own course would have to change every year as new works are written. For critics of Eliot’s own poetry, there is much to learn from the lectures, and the editors’ notes here are extremely informative, providing background on both the major and minor figures that Eliot mentions and also providing hints for thematic connections to his published writings. (I wish they had chosen to include the set final exam for Eliot’s course, but they do provide the reference for readers to track it down themselves.) Personally, I have found it very eye-opening to see the way that Eliot charts the influence of contemporary novelists on both his technique (“My problem in Bleistein”) and subject matter: “Prose more developed than verse during this period,” he notes, “Modern versifiers (Pound and self) more nourished

on prose than verse” (772-73). These lecture notes, I believe, should prompt us to reconsider Eliot’s poetry in relation to narrative prose.

Eliot delivered the undergraduate course during his year in America, a time of great personal sadness (in February he had his lawyers draft the permanent separation papers from his first wife, Vivienne). During that year he also delivered an astounding number of lectures, including the Harvard Norton Lectures, which became *The Use of Poetry* and *The Use of Criticism*; the Turnbull lectures at Johns Hopkins University, which were a revised version of *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*; and also the three Page-Barbour lectures at the University of Virginia, which were published in 1934 as *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy*. While these last lectures, which contain the notorious lines that “reasons of race and religion combine to make any number of free-thinking Jews undesirable” (ASG 20), will appear in the following volume of the prose, all of these lectures

...in the spirit of “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” he insists that his own course would have to change every year as new works are written.

are contemporaneous with the undergraduate class, and they help to provide context for his mindset during the undergraduate teaching. As the editors write in the introduction, “It is not surprising that Eliot’s least-balanced literary criticism dates from the time of his decision to initiate a permanent legal separation from his wife” (xii). What the Harvard 26 English notes show is not only, according to the editors, “a fascinating document offering an unmatched insight into Eliot’s opinions of contemporary authors”; the notes also “situated the judgments of *After Strange Gods* within a more temperate and predominantly literary understanding of that tradition” (xxii). The Harvard lecture notes, focusing on literature and aimed at undergraduates, primarily elucidate Eliot’s literary assessments of his peers, avoiding *After Strange Gods*’ overt anti-Semitism, and yet they simultaneously seem to build up to some of the more vehement cultural and rigid sectarian declarations he would soon expound in Virginia. More work remains to be done on these connections when the next edited volume appears, and it seems somewhat regrettable, although understandable in terms of space and publication history, that the American lectures could not all appear in one volume.

## REVIEWS

Finally, the volume includes five “Reconstructed Lectures,” which the editors have collected and collated from a variety of sources, including press reports and transcriptions by F. O. Matthiessen and Henry Ware Eliot, who had access to Eliot’s typescripts. The “Reconstructed Lectures” make for unusual documents. For example, “English Poets as Letter Writers,” a lecture that Eliot delivered at Yale in February of 1933, begins in the first person: “I am really the last person who ought to be talking to you about letter writers” (846) and switches to the third person, “‘The best contemporary letters are as good in their way as those of any other time,’ Mr Eliot said (YDN)” (847). However, the editors’ careful introduction to this section, spelling out their rationale and their sources, makes the documents clear. Although scholars in the future must be careful

when citing these documents to highlight that they are reconstructed, they are another exciting resource for which we are indebted to both Harding and Schuchard.

*Editor’s note:* We have invited reviewers of The Complete Prose volumes to concentrate on a little-known text, to respond to a well-known text as it has been newly annotated, or to otherwise find a suitably narrow entry point for discussing such a large volume.

1. Ronald Bush, “As if you were hearing it from Mr. Fletcher or Mr. Tourneur in 1633: T. S. Eliot’s 1933 Harvard Lecture Notes for English 26 (‘Introduction to Contemporary Literature’),” *ANQ* 11.3 (Summer 1998), 18. See also Bush, “Intensity by Association: T. S. Eliot’s Passionate Allusions,” *Modernism/modernity* 20.4 (November 2013): 709-27.

## ELIOT NEWS & SOCIETY NOTES

### Eliot News

**Installation in St. Louis:** Thanks to your generosity, the Eliot Society collectively raised \$5000 to fund the installation of an inscription from “Burnt Norton” at the base of a public artwork in St. Louis. “Wheels,” commissioned by the St. Louis metro and designed by Canadian artists Claudia Cuesta and Bill Baker, will be placed at the entrance to the new Downtown metro stop this summer, with Eliot’s lines engraved in granite around the base of the sculpture. A visit to the site is planned for our 2017 conference.

**SAMLA:** The Eliot Society will be represented at the South Atlantic MLA by a panel organized and chaired by Craig Woelfel, Flagler College:

*Prufrock and Other Observations: A Centenary*

Bradford Barnhart, Emory University: “‘My Madness Singing’: The Specter of Syphilis in Prufrock’s Song”

Jenny C Crisp, Dalton State College: “‘As He Sang the World Began to Fall Apart’: The Gothic Madman of Prufrock and Other Observations”

Tracienne Ravita, Perimeter College of GA State: “Pound’s ‘Portrait d’une Femme’ and Eliot’s ‘Portrait of a Lady’: Two Views of Society Women”

The most recent issue of the *Journal of the T.S. Eliot Society* (published by the Eliot Society of the UK) appeared in May 2017. Edited by Dr. Scott Freer, it contains essays by Tony Sharpe, Jeremy Diaper, and Matthew Geary with book reviews by John Caperton, Chris Joyce, and Scott Freer. Copies will also be on sale at the T. S. Eliot Festival at Little Gidding on 9th July.

**Eliot’s Letters:** The Rare Manuscripts division at Princeton University published a blog post in May 2017 detailing the history of Emily Hale’s gift of 1,131 letters in Eliot’s hand dating from 1930 to 1956. The letters will be available to researchers as of January 2, 2020; the library plans to digitize the collection for consultation within the rare manuscripts reading room ([http://bit.ly/Emily\\_Hale\\_Letters](http://bit.ly/Emily_Hale_Letters)).

### Society Notes

Congratulations to **Nancy Hargrove**, who was awarded the Robert E. Wolverton College Legacy Award for her contributions to liberal arts education at Mississippi State, and to **Ian Probst** for his book *The River of Time: Time-Space, Reality, and History in Avant-Garde, Modernist, and Contemporary Poetry*, which should be available by the end of the summer on Amazon (Academic Studies Press).

## *The Critic in the Modern World*

*continued from p. 2*

and a manifesto for the future”— and in this last, Ley flaunts some thoroughly Eliotic concision (125). At least the rhetorical assertion of a dissociation of sensibility was a valuable creation myth for Eliot’s poetry.

Although Ley is comforted by the positive creative agenda produced by the negations of Eliot’s iconoclastic literary criticism, such balance is lost in the later cultural commentary. Ley emphasizes the absolutism of Eliot’s post-1927 prose, which codified a reactionary conservatism that is “so radical, in fact, that it is politically inconsequential” (127). Ley concludes, “Eliot’s stated views are illiberal to their core; they are at their most consistent and comprehensive when they are negating socially liberal principles” (117). Thus far, Ley’s argument requires that Eliot have some sense of liberal individuality—such is the source of the critic’s autonomous and individuated rhetorical pose—but here he contends that Eliot’s career comes to rest upon a denial of individualism, an unequivocal need “to give oneself over to an institution or tradition or concept that is larger than oneself, to have one’s will subsumed” (117).

A few quibbles: first, while Ley does acknowledge that the conversion gave “institutional form to a pre-existing tendency,” Eliot had been exploring the intellectual conflict between resisting and submitting to forces larger than himself from his earliest poetry onward. Some digression into the poems might have elucidated that quarrel as the richly multifaceted preoccupation that it was (117). Second, the chapter is ultimately unclear about the relationship between Eliot’s submission to religious authority and the autonomy of his critical authority. How can a criticism of submission be both sincere and an artificial posture? In the end, it seems that Eliot’s cultural criticism fails not because it is “interested,” but because it is inflexible. Even so, Ley argues that Eliot’s absolutism encouraged his conservatism, while claiming in the same breath that “Eliot habitually thinks in relative terms about his own historical moment” (120).

The paradox of a relativistic absolutist might have been resolved with more attention to the book’s central concern with classically liberal autonomy. Ley summarizes the issue in the chapter on Trilling: “The modern conception of individuality is riven, caught in an apparent contradiction: the individual is necessarily a part of his society and his character is shaped by its cultural influence, but our sense of individuality depends on being able to claim a degree of independence from

culture” (148). While he rightly notes that Trilling finds this tension “constitutive of modern literature,” Ley lets it stand (148). With regard to art and to the individual will, the disinterestedness that Ley evokes refers to freedom from determining causes. Yet Immanuel Kant’s formulation includes a crucial nuance that is missing here: “freedom is only an idea of reason, the objective reality of which is in itself doubtful” (Groundwork 4:455 [64-65]). The autonomy of the will, like that of the poem, is a matter of propositional logic. In practice, it is more than a little theatrical—rhetorical, even. Playing as-if, autonomy is a pose. *The Critic in the Modern World* does not acknowledge such propositionality, the essentially ludic scaffold that allowed Eliot and company to construct their unique critical voices. This is an important elision, not least because of Ley’s emphasis on the critic in the “modern agora” (4). In this public marketplace, the performance of authority is analogous to effective branding, and yet the book refrains from asking whether market imperatives might inflect critical imperatives. As Stephen Dedalus publicly pitches his pugnaciously articulated, shockingly idiosyncratic, and intellectually suspect reading of *Hamlet*, he presumes that provocation moves product. So, is any of Trilling’s success as a leftist anti-Stalinist attributable to contextual novelty and utility; that is, to his timing the mid-century market? In Wood’s trademarked term “hysterical realism,” what is the ratio between critical acumen and an investment in future citations? This need not be a cynical objection to Ley’s reading. The job of markets is to make goods cheaper, not necessarily better. Because the book separates “public” from “academic” criticism on precisely this point, and because “public criticism has different imperatives and priorities to those of literary theory,” the priorities of the modern agora might have demanded more scrutiny for the way that they shape the rhetorics of criticism (209).

Taking Ley’s terms, that is asking for a little less public criticism and a little more literary theory, which is not quite fair in light of his goals. The strengths of the book are many, from Ley’s intellectual range to his attention to language—his own and his subjects’. He savors *mots justes* like a food critic might deconstruct a *jus*. The book pushed this reader to pick up *The Spirit of the Age* and to more than skim the marginalia in his dusty copy of Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy*. As a display of scholarship capturing three hundred years’ worth of responses to rapidly changing and radically different cultural milieus, *The Critic in the Modern World* is enviable; in its sensitive and minute analysis of exemplary prose, it is nearly inimitable; and for practicing the public criticism that it studies, it is wholly admirable.

## Violence without God

continued from p. 5

debts to Symbolism and Expressionism to show how the poems later published as *Inventions of the March Hare* (1996) “can also be read as part of the avant-garde campaign for secular meaning” (48). The gains of her readings are many, not least in helping us see qualities associated with post-war Eliot in the earlier poems and in Expressionism. Wexler convincingly argues that “Eliot absorbed Expressionist techniques from European writers” (47), but she also shows a shared reaction to the loss of culturally binding beliefs. Her comparisons of Eliot’s poetic exploration of a seemingly dead modern world in “Goldfish” or “Prufrock’s Pervigilium” with the Expressionist poet Jakob van Hoddis’s “Weltende” (*End of the World*) help suggest that larger sense of a specific kind of cultural angst. “Instead of regarding the March Hare poems as sui generis hints of Eliot’s postwar canon,” she writes, “we can see how they reflect a widespread cultural crisis. Although many examples of Expressionism seem to be the one-note cri de coeur of a solitary being, the movement was a generation’s response to the collapse of the nineteenth-century’s consensus of belief” (64). For Wexler, Eliot, like other writers and artists of the period, looked inward, not from an overvaluation of personal

emotion, but from the belief that “subjectivity produced impersonal knowledge” (69). Eliot, she concludes, “did not turn to art as an escape from social disruption but as a way to reveal it” (71).

Wexler concludes her study with a powerfully argued and movingly written epilogue that reads Eliotic echoes in Galway Kinnell’s 9/11 poem, “When the Towers Fell,” observing that these similarities “indicate that Kinnell found a formal mode of writing about 9/11 in *The Waste Land*” (183). For Wexler, if Eliot’s was an ironic fragmentation of voices, Kinnell’s is a sincere, unified narrative. If Eliot wrote amid “a secular culture of competing beliefs, Kinnell speaks for a new community,” elegizing in the brief unity of post-9/11 New York (186). That September sense of union has now passed, according to Wexler, and we have entered into a new and different disunity. Instead of the “secular culture of competing beliefs” inhabited by the early Eliot, Wexler sees today a new “hardening” of our positions, where each can seem locked in their own personal experiences of trauma (186-7). Hauntingly echoing Hemingway, she writes, “In our time, communities are based on a bond among victims of the same acts of violence” (187). If we end with this new kind of rhetorical despair, we have at least seen how the writers of a most violent century responded to the dark realities of this world with honesty, even if those realities were ultimately without meaning.

## CENTENNIAL FOCUS

### Eliot in 1917: Priapus in the Shrubbery

By Kit Kumiko Toda

Ecole normale supérieure de Lyon

As mentioned in the last installment of “Centennial Focus,” the year 1917 marked a significant turning-point for Eliot in his career prospects, his marriage and his poetry. The first improved as Eliot began a job at Lloyds; his marriage, however, which had been deeply problematic from the beginning, was put under even greater strain—a circumstance which had a considerable effect on his poetic practice.

The famous philosopher Bertrand Russell had been something of a mentor to Eliot. Having first met in spring 1914 when Eliot was still a student at Harvard, Russell later took the impecunious and newly married couple under his wing in London. He supported them financially and even took Vivienne on holiday during one of her bouts of depression. Such patronage was far from altruistic,

and it came with a heavy price: “Bertie” and Vivienne grew increasingly intimate. Whether Eliot was in denial, or genuinely unaware of this development, his letters to Russell in the previous year had overflowed with gratitude: “Viven says you have been an angel to her ... I believe we shall owe her life to you,” he gushes (*L1* 139).

In 1917, the Eliots decided that, given the risks of being in London during the war, they must move to the relative safety of the countryside. They would find a country cottage, and Eliot would commute. Russell proposed that things would be “less dreary” if they shared the same house, and he arranged lodgings in Senhurst Farm, Surrey, a place owned by his family’s former gardeners.

If Vivienne and Russell’s relationship had not been consummated before this time, it certainly was that October at the farm. Russell wrote to his ex-lover Constance Malleson (stage name Colette O’Neill) dubiously claiming that it was Vivienne who had wanted something more, that he had intended to stay on “merely friendly terms,” though with the rather revealing bohemian parenthesis of “except perhaps on very rare occasions.” He then discusses

his night with Vivienne in devastatingly cruel terms as “utter hell” with “a quality of loathsomeness” that gave him “nightmares.” He adds, however, that “the one and only thing that made the night loathsome was that it was not with you”—the letter was, in fact, angling for a reunion with Colette. This obvious motive for giving such a damning report of the night, coupled with Russell’s habitual unscrupulousness in his romantic entanglements mean that it is difficult to credit such an extravagant description. Russell broke up with Vivienne soon afterwards, although they apparently continued to see each other for another year.

Years later, Eliot was to write to Ottoline Morrell that “Bertie, because at first I had admired him so much, is one

of my lost illusions. He has done Evil...” (L6 562). It seems that Eliot’s poetic sensibility was more prescient; Russell as “Mr. Apollinax” (written ca. 1915) is depicted as a sinister “Priapus in the shrubbery.” Russell’s behavior undermined both of the Eliots’ delicate mental health and was a strong contributing factor to the gradual deterioration of a difficult marriage—a marriage which caused great misery as well as, according to Eliot himself, the state of mind that prompted *The Waste Land*. It is not always clear exactly when Eliot wrote each poem in *Poems* (1920). However, it is not unreasonable to see this wretched episode as a catalyst for the vivid streak of misogyny running through its depictions of repulsive sexuality—a subject which will be explored further in the next installment.

## REVIEWS

*Edinburgh Companion*

continued from p. 6

Eliot later applied to his own life. The two essays have made me realize that at the time of *The Waste Land*, Eliot was persuaded by Wagner’s diagnosis of the weakness of modern culture (the ubiquity of desire, the impossibility of overcoming longing, the forgetting and dumbing down as an effect of passionless, watered-down sexuality) but distrusted both the simplicity of Wagner’s solutions and the coherence of his moral universe. Eliot expressed this distrust by his fragmentary method, the double absence of a redeeming hero and a strong feminine symbol, and a refusal to “resolve” his poem by a definite conclusion. This line of thought of course leads to speculating that the four-part circular form of the Ring—which Eliot ironizes in *The Waste Land* by saying “the nymphs are departed”—may have received his full respect later, in the form of the *Quartets*. But that speculation is stuff for another essay.

Part III treads new ground in the understanding of how Eliot related specifically to the arts through media. Eliot lived through a time of technological revolution which made new modes of expression and reproduction possible: radio, cinema, telephone, and phonograph all had an impact on his activities as poet and cultural arbiter. Although radio and Eliot’s broadcasts have been handled before by Coyle (1999), Avery (2006), Coyle and Rae (2009), and Matthews (2014), this volume’s view of the role of media in the specific context of Eliot and the arts is new and exciting. As Sarkar argues, the phonograph as the “talking machine” may have been the inspiration behind Eliot’s technique of assembling disembodied voices, real and imagined, contemporary and historical in *The Waste Land* (263). And Edward Allen, building

on previous work on Eliot as a broadcaster, explores the poet’s attempts at using radio as an interactive medium, at reaching out to a variety of people in all walks of life as performer of himself and his work, “interweaving his listeners, young and old” (282).

As a candid reader, I found myself often gasping in astonishment at unfamiliar ideas, refined analyses of poems, and bold speculation. This is a volume where scholars talk to each other rather than to innocent students. While reading the *Companion*, I often found myself sitting with *The Poems of T. S. Eliot* at my right and the iPad at my left. Sometimes, passages of textual analysis in the essays only became clearer after I had read the entire poem under discussion, proceeded to read Christopher Ricks’s annotations, and then searched the internet for relevant paintings, buildings, or artists. In a volume such as this, one needs good illustrative material; in addition to the images provided, a few more reproductions would not have done any harm: Manet’s *Woman with Parrot* (1866), or the interior of St Magnus Martyr are obvious candidates. This was particularly the case with the essays in the first section, “Eliot and the Visual Arts,” where images have the same referential value as a quotation or a footnote. The print medium easily allows for these kinds of reproductions. Quite a different situation when one reads about performance and media: a topic like “Eliot and Dance,” brilliantly discussed by Susan Jones, makes it at present impossible for a reader to check on the scholar, or even to form an opinion of Eliot’s impressions of dancers, such as his claim that Leonid Massine was an impersonal artist. The print medium does not allow it, and to me, it was frustrating. If ever Edinburgh University Press brings out an electronic version of this volume, possibilities of collecting supporting references in additional media are worth exploring.

## PUBLIC SIGHTINGS

Compiled by David Chinitz

**Alternative history.** In a story about a baptismal gown that has been used by 75 members of the same family, Molly Guthrey writes: “It was Nov. 23, 1915—101 years ago—when Jack’s great, great grandparents, Bridget ‘Bea’ Kivel and John Hubert Haas, were married in a Catholic church in Belle Plaine, Minn. In 1915 ... women did not yet have the right to vote; World War I was underway. A quart of milk cost about nine cents.... Woodrow Wilson was president. T. S. Eliot’s book *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock and Other Poems* was a bestseller.” In reality as we know it, only 500 copies of this “bestseller” (titled *Prufrock and Other Observations* and published in 1917) were printed (“Mendota Heights Baby is 75th to Wear Family Baptism Gown,” *TwinCities.com*, 24 Nov. 2016).

**Wild Beasts.** “Do I dare disturb the universe?” asks Wild Beasts singer Hayden Thorpe, quoting the far less self-assured title character of T. S. Eliot’s ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’ in their song ‘He the Colossus.’ But don’t be fooled: despite this track’s comparative moment of reflection . . . the male narrators on *Boy King* have the world by the scruff—and not the other way around—on so many of the 21st-century odes to an unadulterated masculine libido that comprise this album” (Ryan Dieringer, *popmatters.com*, 8 Aug 2016).

**Vagina monologues.** Dodie Bellamy’s 2013 poetry collection *Cunt Norton* is a series of cut-ups from the *Norton Anthology of Poetry* into which original phrases have been, um, inserted. The poems have such titles as “Cunt Chaucer,” “Cunt Dickinson,” and “Cunt Ginsberg,” depending on which poet Bellamy is cutting (or, in her terms, “cunting”) up. The title poem begins “At the still point of the turning world, slowly like a wave at Ocean City, at the still point where I dance and wiggle it around and it shivers, do not call it fixity where past and future really move.” The book is a sequel to Bellamy’s *Cunt-Ups* (2001), considered an

experimental classic. Her other publications include *Pink Steam* (2005), *Academonia* (2006), and *Barf Manifesto* (2008).

**Cultural capital.** Lamenting in a *New York Times* op-ed what he describes as the decline of conservative intellectualism, David Brooks writes of his own role models, such as William Buckley and Russell Kirk: “Many grew up poor, which cured them of the anti-elitist pose that many of today’s conservative figures adopt, especially if they come from Princeton (Ted Cruz), Cornell (Ann Coulter) or Dartmouth (Laura Ingraham and Dinesh D’Souza). The older writers knew that being cultured and urbane wasn’t a sign of elitism. Culture was the tool they used for social mobility. T. S. Eliot was cheap and sophisticated argument was free” (“The Conservative Intellectual Crisis,” 28 Oct. 2016).

**“Stale”?! In Sam Shepard’s semiautobiographical first novel, *The One Inside* (2017), the narrator is speaking of a film script: “The monologues are gratuitously convoluted but interesting to speak—variations, I suppose, on a mannered academic T. S. Eliot voice. An Anglophile poet I was never enamored with—essential ideas redolent of stale gin and suicide” (134).**

**Too apt.** An article for the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting profiles Dr. Tarif Bakdash, a Syrian-born neurologist helping patients in his homeland via digital communications from the US. His parents, who fled their homes in 2012 to join him, wish to return to Syria. His mother, Nawal, “has no illusions about the country she would find on her return. Just thinking about Syria reminds her of her college years when she majored in English literature and developed a fondness for the poet T. S. Eliot. ‘I studied *The Waste Land*,’ she says. ‘Now my country is the wasteland’” (Mark Johnson, “An Unending Mission for Syria’s Refugees,” 24 July 2016).

## ELECTION OUTCOME

*Three candidates received nominations this winter for three positions on the Eliot Society board. As a result, John Whittier-Ferguson and Vince Sherry have been reelected to the board through June 30, 2020.*

*The Society is grateful for their continued service.*

Dr. Elisabeth Däumer and Dominic Meo  
Eastern Michigan University

Note: Bibliography is divided into lists of books, book chapters, journal publications, dissertations, and reviews. If you are aware of any 2016 citations that do not appear here, please contact Elisabeth Däumer at edaumer@emich.edu. Omissions will be rectified in the 2017 listing.

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