

Time Present

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The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Volume 7: 1934-1935, edited by Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden

London, Faber and Faber, 2016. li + 948 pages.

Reviewed by Timothy Materer
University of Missouri

By 1934-35 T. S. Eliot has secured his reputation as one of England's leading poets with *Ash-Wednesday* (1930) and as a critic with *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933). He is the editor of *The Criterion* and a publisher at Faber and Faber. His influence is such that Dylan Thomas refers to him in a 1934 letter as "Pope Eliot" (372n2). Eliot uses this influence to support the writers and works he believes in, including W. B. Yeats ("loony as ever," 59n3), James Joyce's *Work in Progress*, Marianne Moore's *Selected Poems* (with a preface by Eliot that delights her), and Pound's cranky essays in *The Criterion* and any canto that Pound writes, even though he deplores Pound's obscure references to American history. (He suggests at one point that Pound write a comprehensible "Mother's day Canto" [214]). He helps younger poets such as W. H. Auden, Louis MacNeice, Stephen Spender and Robert Bottrall; and he organizes a literary fund to subsidize the young, disorderly poet George Barker, who repays Eliot's generosity with scandalous but amusing stories about his patron (see the Glossary entry [882-83]). His career as a playwright develops when he writes the choruses for the pageant *The Rock* and the surprisingly successful *Murder in the Cathedral*.

Yet a shadow hangs over his life, and at times Eliot feels he has "Nothing but a brilliant future behind me" (263). When Eliot separated from his wife Vivien on his return from America in 1933, she could not accept the break and fantasized that people were keeping him away or had even kidnapped him. To recover his books and personal articles from Vivien's residence, Eliot finally had to resort to expensive maneuvers that involved lawyers and bailiffs. Vivien felt horribly violated by the official intervention, and sadly mourned that she missed as much as Tom did the Eliot family pictures that he had recovered. Since Vivien had placed some articles in two different banks, the recovery was protracted and not entirely successful. After she saw Eliot lecture in November 1935, she writes to her lawyers that she "met him in public" and her bank that she has "now been *openly* claimed by him" (841, 841n1). Eliot expresses his own panicky feelings when he tells a friend why he is living in a secluded vicarage: "I have not yet got over the feeling of being *hunted*: in my sleep I am pursued like Orestes" (609-10). Many letters in this volume suggest the experiences that will inform *The Family Reunion*.

We learned in Volume 6 of the *Letters* that Eliot thought of 1933 as "the year when I broke into Show Business" (712). In Volume 7 he is

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*T. S. Eliot, Poetry, and Earth:
The Name of the Lotos Rose,*
by Etienne Terblanche

Lexington Books, 2016. viii+ 230 pages.

Reviewed by Julia E. Daniel
Baylor University

In this wide-ranging study, Etienne Terblanche places Eliot's poetic praxis into conversation with ecocriticism, illuminating Eliot's life-long fascination with and humility before the natural world and its sundry creatures. Terblanche does so through a nuanced reconsideration of Eliot's Buddhist influences alongside attentive readings of Eliot's formal gestures, from rhyme to the use of blank space. What Terblanche presents, then, is a poetics consistently rooted in embodiment and the physical world, and he deftly demonstrates how Eliotic speakers who shirk off the demands of their bodies or the rhythms of the seasons collapse into a withered solipsism. More broadly, his argument frames Eliot's use of oppositional forces, whether aridity and moisture, movement and stillness, or skepticism and affirmation, as an environmental practice that renders "Earth" an ongoing, material unveiling that exceeds any such dualistic thinking. This ultimately leads Terblanche to claim Eliot's environmental vision as a solution to current debates in ecocriticism about the role of new materialism. However, the reader need not be well-versed in these debates to appreciate Terblanche's argument. Indeed, the zest and lucidity of his readings considered apart from these theoretical skirmishes underline the usefulness of approaching Eliot through a green gate.

The book is divided into seven chapters, beginning with a study of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" that serves as a model for the chapters to follow. In casting Prufrock's dilemma as an ecological crisis in which the speaker both longs for and frantically resists engagement with the physical world, Terblanche demonstrates previously unexplored ecological concerns in familiar passages. For example, Prufrock's hesitation before the peach becomes not only an emblem of his personal indecisiveness but a withheld gesture of human-nature contact as he "approaches here the feeling that all participatory taking from the Cosmos is dangerous" (39). Eliot's environmentalism is not hands-off, in other words. The human agent must embrace, bite into, digest (and, in the case of Phlebas, be digested by) the world of matter, which sustains the body that Prufrock frets will



Julia Daniel, Tony Cuda, and Nancy Hargrove

be reduced to anatomical bits, even as he imaginatively commits the same dissections. Terblanche then reads the ragged claws as, on the one hand, an oceanic longing to be immersed in a deeply physical experience, and, on the other, yet another gesture of disembodiment, as the claws go scuttling with no holistic body to give them logic. These images ultimately present "the loss of connection with nature's real presence ... tangible and painful" (43).

Chapters two through five then proceed in developing pairs of opposites as Terblanche follows the loss of this connection, and its eventual redemption, through Eliot's oeuvre. Chapters two and three study "Dislocation" and "Location" respectively, with the former focusing on desert imagery and aridity in *The Waste Land* and the latter turning to mandalic structures as a mode of emplacement at the poem's famously thorny conclusion. Chapters four and five then slide into the aqueous, as chapter four considers "Immersion" as a mode of environmental engagement (including wet bodies as varied as mermaids, the raspy hippopotamus, and Phlebas in the whirlpool) and chapter five, "Dissolving," approaches symbolic and grammatical dissolving acts in *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets* as figures for profound participation in the non-being that upholds the being of the cosmos. As this language suggests, Terblanche here draws heavily on the Buddhist traditions with which Eliot was conversant, largely to great effect. In his reading of *The Waste Land's* conclusion, for example, Terblanche reads recurring triads, from the mysterious third walking figure to the three "Da"s, alongside a Taoist tradition of Threeness, which enacts a level of unity that exceeds perceived dualisms. He also compellingly connects the lines of *Four Quartets*, where we "arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time," with the

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Modernism in a Global Context, by Peter Kalliney

New York: Bloomsbury, 2016. vi + 190 pages.

Reviewed by Christopher McVey
Boston University

Peter Kalliney's *Modernism in a Global Context* surveys what many have now come to characterize as the "global turn" in new modernist studies, especially the field's engagement with topics such as transnationalism, cosmopolitanism, and channels of global textual circulation. As a recent installment in Bloomsbury's New Modernisms series, Kalliney's study oscillates between functioning as a handbook, convenient for graduate students preparing for qualifying exams, and as a work of textual criticism that explores various theoretical frameworks through a series of illustrative case studies, including authors such as T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Jean Rhys, Wole Soyinka, and Salman Rushdie. A series of operative key terms, designating "the most promising research areas in international modernist studies," provides the book's structure (23). The first chapter, "An Aesthetics of Motion," offers an overview of major theorists in global and transnational literary studies, including Pascale Casanova, David Damrosch, Paul Gilroy, Franco Moretti, and Gayatri Spivak. As this first chapter progresses, Kalliney highlights key contradictions among the various textual and theoretical approaches he reviews, though he avoids the temptation to argue for the merits of any single approach over the others. In this regard, *Modernism in a Global Context* is a descriptive rather than prescriptive project, with one important caveat. Kalliney intentionally rejects a literary history defined by national origin or geographic location in order "to see modernism as an inherently global movement...[a] truly global perspective should alter our perceptions of the cultural center, whatever that might be, as well as the cultural margins, wherever those may be" (24). The qualifications in this final statement are at least a little intentionally ironic, and they speak to a seeming paradox that Kalliney often explores: a truly global account of modernism illustrates how reductive center-periphery binaries can be, though one must always consider the asymmetrical power relations that they imply.

The four chapters that follow, "Imperialism," "Cosmopolitanism," "Cultural Institutions," and "Media," share a similar structure in which Kalliney provides comprehensive bibliographic reviews of major voices and concepts in the field in the last three decades

before engaging in brief close readings of selected authors. Scholars familiar with the general progression of literary studies and textual methods will not find much that is new here. Readers may even be surprised at the extent to which Kalliney reviews and responds to scholarship that feels quite dated, such as Raymond Williams's "Metropolitan Perceptions and the Emergence of Modernism" (1985) or Fredric Jameson's "Modernism and Imperialism" (1990), appropriately taken up in the "Imperialism" chapter. But Kalliney offers a meta-literary-history, as *Modernism in a Global Context* is not a manifesto, but a story about the history of global modernism's emergence and an overview of its various theorizations. The second chapter on "Cosmopolitanism" is a wonderful example of this history, as Kalliney demonstrates how the term traditionally marked a bid for Joycean aesthetic autonomy that flies beyond the nets of nation, language, and religion, but more recently has come to be understood as a form of grounded attachment and political engagement, though the varied critics he identifies here—Bruce Robbins, Kwame Appiah, James Clifford, Susan Stanford Friedman, Jessica Berman, and Gayle Rogers, among others—often disagree about the terms and efficacy of that engagement. The chapter is interesting for the way that it registers this reorientation through considering the literary works of Nancy Cunard, Nella Larsen, Djuna Barnes, and Eileen Chang—all women, challenging the typically male-centric history of modernist internationalism.

Kalliney often references T. S. Eliot as he recalls the terrain of modernist literary history, and he takes up Eliot's *The Waste Land* most directly in the last major chapter of the book, "Media." This reviewer wondered with anticipation: will the Eliot who emerges in this chapter remain the convenient straw-man to represent a myopic Eurocentric modernism, or might the frameworks offered by global modernist studies allow us to encounter Eliot and his work in more nuanced ways? "Media" is the most original and insightful of the chapters, and begins with a discrete line of inquiry, inquiring "how modernism's imaginative geography was both enlarged and constrained by new transcription devices and transmission networks" (123). How did new media, Kalliney asks, make modernism more global? It is in this vein that Kalliney re-reads *The Waste Land* in terms of its polyphonic, disembodied voices. Quoting Kamau Brathwaite's observation that Eliot had given Caribbean literature "the notion of the speaking voice, the conversational tone" (141), Kalliney does not here seem to be bothered that he may be replicating a unidirectional narrative of Western modernist influence, a literary history that many of the critics referenced earlier

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Above: Society President Frances Dickey presents Memorial Lecturer John Haffenden with the Society's Honorary Membership award.



Above: Sarah Kennedy and Craig Woelfel.
Below: A panel discussion with the editors of The Complete Prose, Vols. 5 and 6: Ronald Schuchard, Jayme Stayer, and David Chinitz.

And Both Hands Wash the Face

You were all over everything.
I just wanted to read the *Four Quartets*.
But there was your handwriting,
All over everything.

Talking about Coleridge,
Talking about sage Herakleitos.
You even spelled it like that,
With a "k." He looked at a river once,

Famously. And in it he saw our affliction:
Nothing but time.
Because one hand washes the other,
I take down the book

And there is your hand
And here is your body
Draped over mine
In the mirror of a Carbondale motel room

In nineteen ninety-nine.

—Ryan Fox

(First printed in *The New Yorker*, 8 May 2017; reprinted with permission of the author)



Report on 2017 T. S. Eliot International Summer Institute

By Aruni Mahapatra
Emory University

Unlike many of my peers at the T. S. Eliot Summer Institute, I am not a scholar specializing on Eliot. Nonetheless, in my first year of graduate school at Emory University, I had written about the first Indian language translation of *The Waste Land*. As an international student from India, I had been delighted to find in Emory's library a volume of Odia poems titled *Poda Bhui O Anyanya Kabita (The Waste Land and Other Poems)*. The volume, published in 1956, came with an English preface by Eliot, in which he wrote about the reception and interpretation of his poems by readers who could not understand English. When I was an undergraduate in India, I had been mesmerized by "Tradition and the Individual Talent," but my later research as a graduate student helped me appreciate how in Odisha—a small state in Eastern India, thousands of miles away from London—poets and scholars tried to find a place in Eliot's tradition. In the summer of 2017, I was scheduled to be traveling in India, partly for research on my dissertation, which is on the reception of English education in colonial India. When I saw the notice for the Eliot summer school, I applied and was awarded a generous bursary to attend the school, which would also be my first trip to Europe. As I sat in the Departure Lounge of Delhi's Indira Gandhi airport, my excitement was tinged with apprehension. I was an Indian student of English literature going to London, a city that had been the heart of imperial and literary power, but I was not an expert on Eliot, the poet and critic I had long admired.

My fears were completely misplaced. Today, I count my time at the Institute among the most intellectually stimulating and emotionally fulfilling I have ever spent at any institute. I came to London as a summer school veteran of sorts, having attended two iterations of the Theory-Praxis course run by Prof. Prafulla Kar, and one of the Institute for World Literature at Harvard University. Unlike those four-week courses, the Eliot Institute was shorter, clocking in at one week, but it was also marked by its focus on one writer, and it was this immersion in the cultural world of Eliot that I found most valuable, at least as much as the seminar and lectures I attended. The Institute gave me a chance to hear the world's foremost Eliot scholars talk about

reading and interpreting Eliot's words, and to visit the places that inspired those words.

The institute began on Saturday evening with a lecture by Alan Jenkins, editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*. Mr. Jenkins began with a famous line from *The Waste Land*, "the awful daring of a moment's surrender," weaving a rich tapestry with quotations drawn from Eliot's letters, criticism and poetry. The most telling quotation was Eliot's 1935 letter to Stephen Spender in which Eliot argued that it was wrong to criticize an author to whom one had not surrendered oneself. Even as Eliot described reading as a process of giving oneself up and recovering oneself, he also maintained that "the recovered self was never the same" as the surrendered self (letter of 9 May 1935, qtd. *Poems* 1 701). These words formed an appropriate beginning to the Institute in which we would surrender ourselves, recover, and then, say something about Thomas Stearns Eliot.

The following six days were spent attending lectures and seminars, most memorable among which were Ron Schuchard on "The Man Who Suffers in *The Waste Land*"; Sir Christopher Ricks on Eliot and Bob Dylan; and Robert Crawford on autobiography and Eliot's poems. Two former students of the Eliot Summer Institute, Aviva Dautch and Oline Eaton, designed an exercise in which students were asked to read entries from the *Complete Prose*, and to make brief presentations on how the project shed new light on commonly held assumptions. I found a 1930 BBC radio lecture Eliot wrote, titled "Rhyme and Reason: The Poetry of John Donne." In direct contrast to his 1921 review of Grierson's anthology, the later Eliot called Donne a great but failed poet, attributing this failure to "a lack of belief."

We found ample cause to reflect on "belief" when on the sixth day we visited Burnt Norton. Robert Crawford read *Burnt Norton*, and Robert von Hallberg gave the annual *Burnt Norton* lecture. In a deeply moving speech, Professor Hallberg described what he called Eliot's "late style," defined as a more "prosaic" form of poetry, which allowed Eliot to reflect on matters of belief, matters which had become too urgent to be explored in the earlier style of, say, the *Prufrock* poems.

By the time it ended, the Institute had made me feel less of an outsider in the heart of London, a city where the outsider Eliot had also found a cultural home of sorts. Even though I came from a place outside England, where "prayer" had been equally "valid," I returned with a renewed appreciation for the reasons that made one poet pronounce, in one poem, that "History is now and England."

Compiled by David Chinitz

Hall of Fame. According to an article by Arthur S. Lopes on the more unusual holdings of Harvard's library, the Houghton's collection includes locks of hair once belonging to Robert Louis Stevenson, William Wordsworth, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Thomas Carlyle. Other items deemed worthy of mention are "the key to Napoleon's bedroom in the South Atlantic island of St. Helena, where he was exiled until his death in 1821"; "George Washington's mantel clock"; "Charles Dickens's walking stick, ivory letter opener, and brass seal; T. S. Eliot's panama straw hat, which Eliot purchased at the Coop; [and] John Ruskin's magnifying glass, which, according to a manuscript text in its box, was 'always in his pocket.'" ("Let's Get Physical," *Harvard Crimson* 22 Nov. 2016)

Prufrock 'n' Roll. Jambands.com (motto: "Always in the Loop") reports: "Heresy, the New York-based progressive rock band that came together in the '70s and released two albums in the '80s, has returned with a new album and archival material featuring a guest spot by guitarist Steve Vai. The new record, *Prufrock*, a setting of T. S. Eliot's poem *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* to music, is now available." The album's 23 tracks have titles like "Yellow Fog," "Ragged Claws," and "Chambers of the Sea." (17 Dec. 2016)

A clatter and a chatter. Lesley M. M. Blume writes about the photographer Irving Penn: "Later that year [1950], while continuing the Small Trades series in London, he photographed a fishmonger and then ducked out of the studio to marry Lisa Fonssagrives, the Swedish model and frequent Penn subject, at the St. Marylebone Register Office. It was a joyous but hasty affair: Penn had to get back to the studio to photograph T. S. Eliot." ("Photographic Memories," *Wall Street Journal Magazine* Apr. 2017)

The historical sense. Conservative columnist George F. Will on what he calls President Trump's deficiency in "even elementary knowledge about the nation's history": "He lacks what T. S. Eliot called a sense 'not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence.' His fathomless lack of interest in America's path to the present and his limitless gullibility leave him susceptible to being blown about by gusts of factoids that cling like lint to a disorderly mind." ("Trump Has a Dangerous Disability," *The Washington Post*, 3 May 2017)

Strike! When Jeremy Irons's reading and discussion of *Four Quartets* at the University of London was sonically overpowered by picketing security guards, he took up a megaphone and pleaded with them to "be reasonable. . . . We understand where you're coming from, and I wish you every success," he told them. "But please stop shouting. . . . I'd be grateful if you could let us talk about Eliot." Social media gave his speech mixed reviews. (multiple news outlets, 18 May 2017)

Terror. A leading article in the *Times*, headlined "Terror on London Bridge," begins: "'Unreal City,' wrote T. S. Eliot in *The Waste Land*. 'A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many, I had not thought death had undone so many.' Late on Saturday night, Eliot's words came dreadfully true when a white van mowed down pedestrians before three men, armed with long blades, jumped out and began slashing people at random. Death has undone seven people at the current count, though with 48 others injured, some of them severely, that count may rise." (5 June 2017)

Sic. "As T. S. Eliot said in *Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, this April is proving to be a 'cruel month.'" (M. Somasekhar, "AP [Andhra Pradesh] and Telangana Sizzle as Mercury Soars," *The Hindu Business Line*, 20 Apr 2017)



Time Present



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Letters of T.S. Eliot, Vol. 7

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learning the playwriting craft and finding his voice as a dramatist. Eliot tells Bishop George Bell that he cannot help feeling that “the guidance of Providence was present” (228) when Bell asked him to write the choruses for *The Rock*. But when Bell asks him to write a new pageant, he replies that he is not interested in that “off-shoot of drama” (700). He tells his brother “you don’t get any practice out of writing plays which are not produced; and if I can learn in that way, I might get an opportunity to do something eventually for the regular stage” (580). Haffenden’s annotations show how fortunate Eliot was to work with theater people such as E. Martin Browne, Robert Speaight, Rupert Doone, and Ashley Dukes of the Mercury Theatre, which produced both Eliot’s *Sweeney Agonistes* and *Murder in the Cathedral*.

The annotations continue to be an invaluable feature of the *Letters*, although I am puzzled by their occasional inconsistency. For example, in the letter from Henry Eliot included in the volume, Rebecca West is not identified as the writer who critiques Eliot for representing the “Great White Literary Spirit” (749). In letters to Pound, Ezra Pound’s “Paris letter” is not annotated (the title of his essays in *The Dial*, 1921-22), and Eliot’s humorous remark to Pound about “flannel money” (713) must seem mysterious unless one knows Eliot is here referring to a term for fake, shrinking money. However, Haffenden’s statement in Volume 5 that Valerie Eliot took “infinite pains to be the helpmeet of a future biographer: gathering the raw material whilst she may” (xxxiii) clarifies his editorial principles. The extensive annotations on people and events in Eliot’s life, as well as inclusions of other letter writers such as Vivien and Henry Eliot, should be valued more than other, routine footnotes. In this age of Google and Bing, perhaps all editors should now evaluate their need to track marginal references and instead concentrate on sources available uniquely to the editor (in this case, Eliot family and Faber records) or those the editor can best identify (excerpts from contemporary letters and memoirs). Finally, Eliot readers will want to look at the large number of annotated letters not published in Volumes 3-7 at TSEliot.com.

In these two years Eliot thrives at the center of London’s cultural life amid friendships and controversies. He develops close relationships with Auden and especially Spender. Auden’s play *The Dance of Death* influences Eliot’s *Murder in the Cathedral*, and

the exchanges about poetic development between Eliot and Spender (the edition includes a letter written by Spender) are a highlight of the volume. Yet Auden and Spender criticize Eliot’s remarks on freethinking Jews in *After Strange Gods* for seeming to sympathize with Nazi ideology. Eliot politely and too easily dismisses the criticism, telling Spender that one should not “be entirely muzzled by the fear of being misunderstood” (155). Eliot’s friends, among them Ottoline Morrell and Virginia Woolf, question the sincerity of his moralistic and religious orientation. A diary entry records Morrell’s opinion that Eliot is a “Churchman rather than a Christian” (81n3). Eliot tells someone who is divorcing his wife: “I should find it quite impossible to take any part in the world unless I held to some extent two standards: one for churchmen and one for others” (223).



Ron Schuchard and Jewel Spears Brooker

Pound is not the only one to criticize Eliot’s overly subtle qualifications and to complain that Eliot “bludgeons[s] me with terminology” (175n1). Eliot’s brother makes a similar complaint in a long letter (748-63) that Haffenden wisely adds to this volume. Henry Eliot’s letter begins with a reference to the controversy over A. S. Milne’s *Peace with Honor* in the January 1935 issues of *Time and Tide*. Henry dislikes the abstract way Eliot uses words such as *peace* and *war* in his critique of Milne. He agrees with Rebecca West’s charge in the January 12 *Time and Tide* that Eliot represents the “Great White Literary Spirit” (749). Henry believes that early in his career Eliot took on the role of the “arbitres elegantiae of the literary press” (749) and played to a pseudo-sophisticated London and especially Bloomsbury audience. He sees this role-playing in Eliot’s ironic claims that he fails to understand his opponent’s position and his “constant worry over terminology” (750). He finds the same confusion in the disparity of Eliot’s “discrepancy between your professed allegiance to the classical traditions and your obvious departures from them” (760). Henry seems particularly irritated by the personal or familial implications of Eliot’s positions. He is shocked by the disrespect Eliot shows when upbraiding the Unitarian clergyman in the address Eliot gave to the Boston Association of Unitarian Ministers, originally entitled “Two Masters” and published as “The Modern Dilemma” (1933). To understand Henry’s feelings one needs to read the text in the critical edition of *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot* (Vol. 4), which contains Henry’s own transcription of its original closing paragraph. Henry believes Eliot’s talk was a “fanatically intolerant and shocking tirade” in a “city saturated with associations of your ancestors, immediate and distant” (754).

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REVIEWS

Letters, *continued from p. 7*

As Lyndall Gordon has recorded, Eliot thought *After Strange Gods* a result of his disturbed state in 1933. But in this volume Eliot defends the book as necessary to his development as a critic because “pure literary criticism has ceased to interest me” (245). However, he recognizes the danger of “reading for the purpose of proving one’s point” (617). Eliot feels he should have read the complete works of Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence before generalizing about

them in *After Strange Gods*. Eliot has not worked out how to balance “surrender” (618) to an author with pursuing a moral thesis. As he tells A. L. Rowse, he is also troubled by his reputation as an “intellectual” when he is really a “pure *émotif*,” and by his standing as an obscure poet when “no one with anything to say *wants* to be obscure” (230). He realizes that to be simple “One has to shed a great deal, or work out a lot of poison” (230). These letters and the rich context of the notes take us inside the personal struggle that accompany the achievements of 1934-35.

ELIOT NEWS & SOCIETY NOTES

Eliot News

The 90th anniversary of Eliot’s baptism and confirmation in 1927 was commemorated at Australia’s leading Anglo-Catholic parish church, Christ Church St Laurence, Sydney, on Sunday 24 September, 2017 where Solemn Evensong and Benediction (in traditional language and ceremonial with which the poet would have been familiar) was followed by an address to a large audience by **Barry Spurr** on the character of the poet’s faith and its influence on his poetry.

Calls for Papers:

T. S. Eliot Studies Annual Special Forum: Eliot and the Biological: Clemson University Press is pleased to invite essay submissions of approximately 7,000 words to volume 3 of *The T. S. Eliot Studies Annual* (2019 publication). We welcome work on our special topic, “Eliot and the Biological,” particularly essays that engage with ecocriticism, animal studies, and theorizations of the body. Please send an abstract of no more than 300 words and a brief CV to Julia Daniel, guest editor, at julia.eliz.daniel@gmail.com, before January 30th. Accepted essays will be due before August 1, 2018.

American Literature Association, May 24-27, 2018; Hyatt Regency San Francisco: The T. S. Eliot Society will sponsor two sessions at the 2018 annual conference of the ALA in San Francisco. Please send proposals (up to 250 words), along with a brief biography or curriculum vitae, to Professor Emerita Nancy K. Gish (nancy.gish@maine.edu). Submissions must be received no later than January 10, 2018. For information on the ALA and its 2018 meeting, please see the ALA website at www.americanliteratureassociation.org.

Society Notes

Lauren Arrington, currently Burns Visiting Scholar at Boston College, announces the publication of *International Yeats Studies* (<http://bit.ly/InternationalYeatsStudies>), an open-access, peer-reviewed semiannual published by Clemson University Press in partnership with the International Yeats Society. Conceived on the 150th anniversary of W. B. Yeats’s birth, *International Yeats Studies* addresses Yeats’s place in world literature and sets new directions for Yeats Studies. Submissions invited via the journal’s online submission portal. Arrington will serve as the associate director of the W. B. Yeats International Summer School in 2018 and 2019.

Mike Rogalski’s play, *Alpha Zulu*, which incorporates allusions to *Ash-Wednesday* and *The Hollow Men*, was produced in August at Chicago’s Artistic Home Ensemble as part of the theater’s annual Cut To The Chase festival of one-acts.

Ian Probstein has published a book, *The River of Time: Time-Space, Language and History in Avant-Garde, Modernist, and Contemporary Poetry*, just out from Academic Studies Press. And **Tom Brous** has published *Why Read Four Quartets?* with Wipf and Stock.

This past summer, **Allyn Burrows** performed a piece titled *T. S. Eliot and His Love of Shakespeare* in collaboration with the internationally renowned violinist Michi Wiancko at Shakespeare & Company.

Suzannah V. Evans is beginning her doctoral studies on T. S. Eliot and Jules Laforgue, supervised by Jason Harding and Sam Bootle at Durham University. This research is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as part of their Northern Bridge Doctoral Training Partnership between Durham, Newcastle, and Queen’s University Belfast.

T. S. Eliot, Poetry, and Earth

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Buddhist philosopher Naagaarjuna, whose work Eliot studied while at Harvard, and a mode of philosophical skepticism that nonetheless affirms physical experience, returning us to the ground beneath our feet (137). At turns where these discussions begin to slip into koan-like abstraction, Terblanche always foregrounds the vein of Buddhist wisdom rooted in “everyday concrete existence, the physical limits of one’s being, and their meaning,” particularly how spiritual desiccation leads to real behaviors that scorch the earth (138).

The last two chapters take up contemporary theoretical debates in literary and environmental criticism, and chapter six, “Bad Orientalism: Eliot, Edward Said, and the *Moha*,” builds on the prior chapters’ Buddhist studies to compellingly argue for the value of Eliot’s orientalist investments, combatting Said’s critique of Eliot in the process. The final chapter and the conclusion beyond it then consider how the preceding work might serve as an antidote for toxic strains of materialism that plague ecocriticism while presenting Eliot’s vision of the material world as resonant with some of the more vibrant versions thereof. Eliot, Terblanche posits, presents a material world akin to the agential matter of Karen Baraad or Jane Bennet, a cosmos of playful and luminous becomings, and remedies a materialism that will not admit of holism, experiential positivity, or a gaia-centric activism, contra the works of ecocritics like Dana Phillips. This strain Terblanche

aligns with the post-structuralist, Derridian textual bind that excludes the possibility of a physical reality pushing back against our sign systems, a self-referential illness he diagnoses in the speakers of “Prufrock” and “Gerontion.” Terblanche arguably misses the more miresome difficulty with that brand of new materialism—it is not flirting with Derrida as much as it views the cosmos beyond language as lacking any eco-logic; it is an undifferentiated protean pool of matter-energy, one that possess no inherent order in its very physicality, and therefore it becomes impossible to argue for holism or health or much of anything at all from an environmental perspective. It is a problem not of semiosis but of quarks. It is here that Eliot’s Christian vision arguably intervenes, as the Logos speaks a sensible creation into being and enters into it. However, Terblanche tends to align Eliot’s Christianity with the body/spirit dualism he critiques as ecologically unsound, and so he overlooks how Eliot’s Anglicanism also informs his environmental ethic. This assumption about Christianity’s attitude to the physical world also results in some soft moments of an otherwise engaging reading of the hippopotamus. In framing the True Church in the poem as the model of dis-embodiment, Terblanche misses Eliot’s critique of its all-too-embodied vices (from munching on the delicacies of colonialism to raking in earnings from the collection plate). None of this, however, seriously detracts from Terblanche’s overall success in presenting Eliot as a major environmental poet whose works presciently caution against the real, ecological consequences of any mentality that severs human animals from the creation in which we are entangled. This reader hopes it marks the beginning of a renewed critical interest in Eliot’s environmental vision.



Michael Bedsole, Anthony Shoplik, Natalie Amlishi, Hyonbin Choi, Elysia Balavage

Modernism in a Global Context

continued from p. 3

in his study have often critiqued, though he is obviously sensitive to its implications. Unfortunately, it is difficult to tell where Kalliney lands in this vexed topic because his reading of Eliot is brief and merely suggestive. However, Kalliney does offer some worthwhile ideas for new directions in Eliot studies, as he concludes the chapter by positing that writers like Eliot, whose texts register the profound changes made possible by new media, “do not so much stretch linguistic and cultural boundaries as transform the idea of the human altogether” (156). Indeed, the promise of “Media” as a node of critical inquiry seems provocative because it disrupts the kind of spatial and scalar rhetorics—that of the center and periphery, for instance—that have come to dominate what it means to study literature in a global context.

Peter Kalliney’s *Modernism in a Global Context* offers no strong predictions for the future of modernist studies, but concludes with the reasonable assertion that the study of modernism “has thrived in [a] state of productive tension” among its various historical iterations and critical paradigms (163). Yet, one might ask, when do such tensions cease to be entirely productive? More than two decades ago, in a 2003 issue of *Modernism/modernity*, Rita Felski offered a perceptive critique of the

state of cultural studies: for Felski, a field once defined by a theorized and coherent methodology, with a distinct project and intellectual tradition, had been “stretched to subsume a grab bag of differing and often incompatible textual methods.” Cultural studies “may seem like a useful umbrella term,” Felski notes, “but if too many people try to cram under the umbrella, everyone will end up getting very wet.” Could the same now be said of modernist studies as a whole? Peter Kalliney’s *Modernism in a Global Context* suggests a renaissance of new work in modernism, but one wonders whether the field’s attempt to make itself new will end up fracturing as a result of its good faith gesture to be more inclusive. Kalliney’s numerous case studies drawn from postwar exemplars beg the question: has modernism as a key term come to mean something so general—any texts produced in the twentieth century or after?—that it has come to mean not much of anything at all? Are we developing a more global literary history of modernism, or has modernist studies replicated the very colonial enterprises of conquest and assimilation it has claimed to critique? However one answers these questions, *Modernism in a Global Context* reminds us that modernism has always existed within and in response to a fundamentally new kind of global consciousness emergent in the twentieth century. The politics of periodization are complex, but Kalliney demonstrates that modernist texts remain most exciting for the way they operate as contact zones, interstitial spaces between worlds.

ABSTRACTS

Abstracts from the 38th Annual T. S. Eliot Society Meeting, St. Louis, Missouri, Sept. 2017

SLOPPY READING: ELIOT’S AESTHETICS OF MEDIATION IN *THE WASTE LAND*

This paper traces the imaginative centrality of mediation in Eliot’s *The Waste Land*. Critics have addressed Eliot’s relationship to popular culture—his ambivalent engagement with film, jazz, and other mass-cultural forms. This work has revealed the extent to which Eliot’s work frustrates the supposed great divide between autonomous art and popular culture, but one legacy of this critical intervention has been the persistence of the “high/low” distinction in structuring understanding of “media” in Eliot’s work. In this paper, I read *The Waste Land* alongside Eliot’s critical prose in order to draw a distinction between commodification and mediation in his thought. I trace the imaginative centrality of this more pervasive form

of mediation via two allusions ultimately excised from Eliot’s poem: the Dickens-derived working title “He Do the Police in Different Voices” and the original title of the poem’s second section, “In the Cage.” *The Waste Land*’s working title, describing the character Sloppy’s performance of the newspaper, signals the vocal collage of Eliot’s poem while holding in tension two agents that might unify those voices: artist and newspaper. What Eliot registers in Dickens as an unproblematic overlap between the aesthetic capacities of news and novel has grown into a titular representational crisis. These concerns are developed in “A Game of Chess,” whose original title invokes Henry James’ story of a telegraphist who lives vicariously through the high-society lovers whose affairs she literally mediates. Both authors fascinate Eliot for giving literary form to the increasingly global reach of mediated communication

circuits that exceed the relatively coherent publics through which older forms of literature achieve symbolic coherence. But both authors also represent exhausted modes of literary form for Eliot. Dickens's urban realism scaled to the social violence of the 19th-century city and James's social description scaled to individual point of view are both inadequate to describe the "unreal city," the fully mediated polis on which the working title coyly puns. Eliot's poem seeks to describe and address a social world transformed by forms of mediation that are themselves transforming the form, scope and power of the literary.

Natalie Amlashi
U of Pennsylvania

ELIOT AND THE MOOT SOCIETY: NOTES TOWARDS A
MODERN CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

Eliot's religious conversion occupies an important role in criticism on the poet's work, and yet one important aspect of his religious commitment remains underexplored: his association with J. P. Oldham's Moot Society. Also known as Oldham's Moot, this group of Christian intellectuals was convened after the Church of England's International Conference at Oxford (1937), where Eliot's first full-length play, *Murder in the Cathedral*, was also performed. Meeting over the next decade or so (Eliot claims to have lost interest in society proceedings around 1946), the main purpose of Oldham's Moot was to extend the work of the Conference and find new ways to integrate Christian thought in an increasingly secular modern world. Much of Eliot's later essayistic writing shows a debt to Oldham's Moot, where he actively participated alongside other well-known public and literary figures like Karl Mannheim, John Middleton Murry, and Michael Polanyi.

Oldham's Moot has been studied for its influence on the sociology of education, particularly in Britain where Mannheim and other members were to play an important role in postwar development of the university system. This paper studies Eliot's contributions to associated debates, particularly in his tempered opposition to Mannheim's idea of comprehensively planned societies in the post-1945 era. It ends by considering the influence on Eliot's dramatic and poetic works of debates beginning within Oldham's Moot.

Ria Banerjee
Guttman Community C

THE HOLLOW MEN AND THE END OF PHILOSOPHY

This paper is a reading of Eliot's analysis of the connection between modern philosophy and contemporary life in the critical years 1924-1926. My argument is that *The Hollow Men*, which he refers to as the "lowest point" he ever reached in his intellectual and spiritual journey, dramatizes the inadequacy of the philosophical options that he had entertained over the previous decade—idealism, realism, and relativism, and that in reaching this nadir, he experienced a turning point that profoundly affected his subsequent poetry. After years of attempting to reconcile binaries, he does an about-face on dualism by describing the informing principle of the poem as its acceptance in a different form—the ontological dualism of the human and the divine. In a reading of major allusions, I argue that the collocation of Conrad's Kurtz, Shakespeare's Brutus, and the historical Guy Fawkes, exposes the epistemological and ontological weakness of idealism, and further, I suggest that the "Shadow" represents (among other things) the poet's acceptance of ineradicable ambivalence. My reading draws on Eliot's references in correspondence to *The Hollow Men* as a work of religious despair and on a 1924 lecture in which he describes its underlying significance.

Jewel Spears Brooker
Eckerd C

T. S. ELIOT, WARSAN SHIRE AND THE POETICS OF
INTERPERSONALITY

My paper explores T. S. Eliot's influence on Somali-British poet Warsan Shire, who vaunted to international acclaim when Beyoncé incorporated her poems into the R&B visual album *Lemonade* (2016). Beyoncé's recitation of Shire's poetry in this multimedia context highlights its multivocality. Like Eliot, Shire takes a heteroglossic approach to lyric poetry: she "do the police in different voices," including immigrants, refugees, mothers, grandfathers, cousins, husbands, and lovers. In *Teaching My Mother to Give Birth* (2011), Shire gathers stories from family, friends, and community members and transforms them into poems.

In taking on other people's voices and stories, Shire seems to fulfill Eliot's theory of impersonality, extinguishing herself in order to become a medium for her characters. But while Eliot insists that the "progress of an artist is ... a continual extinction of personality," I argue that Shire's artistic process

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produces not an art of impersonality, but a poetics of interpersonality that emphasizes intimate, familial, and intergenerational relationships. For example, Shire's "In Love and In War" presumably records the voice of a native Somalian:

To my daughter I will say,
"when the men come, set yourself on fire."

As the scribe recording this voice, Shire assumes the role of the daughter who hears the advice, but as poet, she also occupies the position of speaker, passing on the lesson to readers. The two-line poem invokes an entire geo-historical context of multigenerational war, embedding the poetic voice in a familial lineage that connects past, present, and future. In contrast, the voices in Eliot's *The Waste Land* inhabit a war-ravaged landscape in which family ties and the capacity to pass along wisdom have been wrecked:

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images

Eliot's "Son of man" takes the place of Shire's "my daughter," and the inability to pass along wisdom and stories ("You cannot say") supplants the desire



Annarose Steinke, 2017 Fathman Award Winner

to communicate ("I will say"). Whereas for Eliot "the emotion of art is impersonal," for Shire, it is interpersonal.

By bringing Eliot and Shire together, my paper engages several larger questions concerning modernist and contemporary poetics: how does considering work by a contemporary black poet shed light on structures of lineage that are intra- or inter-racial? How might lines between white poets and black poets be charted across the century as forms of thematic and formal response? And how does thinking about race—implicitly or explicitly—foreground, challenge, or throw into relief poetic tenets of tradition, impersonality, heteroglossia, sound, lyric voice/subject, persona, or place?

Suzanne W. Churchill
Davidson C

DAINGEROUS MOMENTS: ELIOT AND PLATH

This paper shows that Sylvia Plath read and studied Eliot's work extensively, and that it profoundly shaped her thinking about verse and its potential for psychological discovery and insight. Her views on Eliot were formed in class with Elizabeth Drew at Smith College, where she learned to regard *The Waste Land*, *Four Quartets*, and other poems as dramatizations of Jungian self-integration and psychological transformation. Her class notes from Smith—as well as Drew's teaching notes—reveal a strikingly unconventional education in Eliot's work for her time. Plath taught Eliot's poems in her own classes, when she returned to Smith as a lecturer, and the poems that she wrote contemporaneously bear the mark of her idiosyncratic reading of him. Plath's work offers an electrifying corrective to the grounded, uninspiring versions of Eliot that were being disseminated in universities at the time, and it also teaches us how we might think differently about detecting his influence in contemporary poetry.

The presentation draws on extensive archival research at Smith College and Indiana University, and it is accompanied by a slideshow displaying images of Plath's student notes; annotations in her personal copies of Eliot's *Poems* and Frazier's *Golden Bough*; handwritten class notes from her teacher, Elizabeth Drew; teaching notes from the classes that Plath herself taught at Smith; and manuscript drafts of Plath's poems.

Anthony Cuda
UNC Greensboro

“HOW DO WE USE FEELING”? T. S. ELIOT, MURIEL
RUKEYSER, AND THE CULTURAL WORK OF EMOTIONS

In this presentation, I read Eliot’s poetry and poetics through the perspective of Muriel Rukeyser’s mid-century manifesto *The Life of Poetry* (1949), in which she articulates a poetics of affect, emotional truth, social engagement, and cultural health. By pairing these poets, both of whom assumed in their lifetime the position of “public poet” (only intermittently in Rukeyser’s case), I examine the way each poet addresses the social function of poetry through its ability to move readers, to make them aware of emotions, to offer innovative ways of communicating, extending, and transforming emotion, and, in doing so, to expand, and deepen, a society’s emotional repertoire, while strengthening communal ties. For both poets, moreover, emotion or feeling was intertwined with thought. Ideally, as Eliot observed, both “mutually reinforce each other”; poetry, in Rukeyser’s words, is “an approach to the truth of feeling” and “prepares us for thought.”

Unlike a later generation of women poets, intent on breaking with the dictates of impersonality advocated in Eliot’s early criticism and institutionalized by the New Critics, Rukeyser always thought of Eliot as a poet of feeling: “Eliot has been treated as an intellectual poet,” she points out. “I don’t think his ideas are at the center of the ideas of our time. But in feeling, yes.” Drawing on the works of psychologist Karen Horney, phylobiologist Trigant Burrows, and aesthetician R. G. Collingwood (among others), Rukeyser constructs an explicit poetics of emotions and turns to Eliot as a poet who composed poetry that consistently captures powerful emotions of the time—“regret,” “rejection,” “repellence,” “dread”—in a “new arrangement,” but takes him to task for not going far enough, for not offering his audience faith in the future and the unknown. (Eliot, she wrote in an early poem, “led us to the precipice / subtly and perfectly; there striking an attitude / rigid and ageing on the penultimate step”).

The echoes of Eliot’s *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets* in Rukeyser’s 1962 five-part poem *Waterlily Fire*, however, tell a slightly different, more complex, story, less of disappointment with Eliot’s shortcomings than of the continuing emotional resonance of his poetry’s imagery, music, and kinesthetic dimension, of a haunting that compels Rukeyser to respond to Eliot, and, in doing so, to complete, or at least augment, the emotional work that Eliot began.

Elisabeth Däumer
Eastern Michigan U

T. S. ELIOT, DIDO, AND THE VIRGIL SOCIETY

T. S. Eliot was the first president of the Virgil Society of London, founded in 1943. The Society’s stated purpose is to “unite all those who cherish the central educational tradition of western Europe. Of that tradition Virgil is the symbol.” In his 1944 Presidential Address, “What is a Classic?,” Eliot defined that tradition and placed, at its center, Virgil—specifically the *Aeneid*. Throughout his life, Eliot had not only sustained his idea of a Latin Europe, his literary and cultural criticism as well as his editorial choices at Faber and Faber played an important role in promoting it. For Eliot, Virgil was “one of the great masters” whom “you are able to understand ... better” at every stage “of one’s whole life”; he embodied the meaning of a “classic.”

I have argued elsewhere that *The Waste Land* is, as Hugh Kenner speculated in 1973, far more “a modern *Aeneid*” than a medieval quest epic. My specific focus is on the importance of the Dido story for Eliot’s poetry from as early as “La Figlia che Piange” and even “The Death of St. Narcissus” through *The Waste Land* to his late, developed idea of the meaning of that story in “Virgil and the Christian World.” The *Aeneid* is an epic of war, conquest, and the founding of the Roman Empire; it is also the story of a great and tragic woman, desired, loved, and abandoned for the purpose of pursuing war and empire. Despite the divine requirement that Aeneas—having accepted Dido’s love and joined her life in Carthage—leave her in despair and rage, his act has been read as cold and cowardly and—to many commentators, even Eliot—deserving of guilt. For though it was Venus who caused Dido to fall in love, and Jupiter who sent Aeneas on to Italy, as in other stories of the gods’ interventions, human responsibility remains.

How to evaluate the abandonment of Dido was a major topic in at least three early Virgil Society addresses in addition to Eliot’s, ranging from blaming Dido to condemning Aeneas. In each case, the judgment is linked to a view of the Imperium Romanum, and by the time of Eliot’s 1951 talk on “Virgil and the Christian World,” his cultural ideals were clearly formed and his commentary on Dido in connection with them revealing. In both his own life and his ideal of culture, Eliot saw in the *Aeneid* the anguish of love and war but also, by the late essays, a value structure in which Christianity and the Roman Empire converge in a world of order and dignity. By 1951 Eliot’s life, like that of Aeneas in Eliot’s

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Marianne Huntington and Vince Sherry

“mature understanding,” had moved beyond the journeys through exile, love, war, and violence to a sense of assurance about the destination or “End” as prophesied by Jupiter and Anchises, an “End” framed by the iconic image of Dido as an abandoned woman whose role and significance is to facilitate a male destiny. Like at least two other presidential addresses at the Virgil Society, Eliot’s places significant emphasis on Dido; unlike them, it focuses less on what it meant about her and more on the meaning for Aeneas, and in parallel images from early in his work, for Eliot.

Nancy Gish
U of Southern Maine

ELIOT’S DEBT WORK AND LIBERAL GOVERNANCE AFTER VERSAILLES

This paper centers on Eliot’s debt work, in particular his daily duties processing the postwar debts controlled by the Versailles Treaty. How do we properly register our indebtedness? This question works its way throughout Eliot’s postwar work of day and of night, in the dense postwar poetic experiments and also in his clerical work at Lloyds of London. We are fairly accustomed to tracing out Eliot’s complex poetic debts to Baudelaire, Laforgue, and Corbière, less familiar with Eliot as “un peu banquier,” a clerk transcribing and summarizing indemnities. This has begun to change, in recent work by Paul Delany, Adam Trexler, and Matthew Seybold, all of whom argue that Eliot’s banking work is crucial to his poetic production, not a distraction from it. Building on their work, my paper reads Eliot’s daytime clerical work as a primal scene of the official work of liberal governance, a

crucial microtheater of paperwork that opens onto the shifting history of liberal governance after Versailles. Eliot’s work at Lloyds connects modernist politics to a key liberal scene of mediation, the work of office life within financial capitalism. My central argument is that during the period of his “high” modernist works—just during the formation of new liberal institutions intended to represent global political and economic order—Eliot’s office work, his class position as clerical worker, and his registration and inscription of debts, mediates and grounds the central concerns of his major postwar poetry: failures of representation, broken figures of leadership, the evacuation of liberal political discourse, and the intimate conjunctions of human and nonhuman agents at the heart of social order. I will fill out this reading with brief readings of “Gerontion” and of office work in *The Waste Land*, and frame this argument within my larger project on the relationship between modernist politics and liberal world order between the wars.

Gabriel Hankins
Clemson U

ELIOT’S INFLUENCE ON POPULAR CULTURE: CARTOONS

While recent scholarship has revealed how popular culture influenced Eliot, no one has yet explored how Eliot and his works have influenced popular culture, particularly in the realm of cartoons. This paper reveals the ways in which this influence has been manifested, using Powerpoint illustrations of many striking cartoons.

I begin with Eliot’s own cartoons that are found mainly in his letters, including those of French children and King Bolo. Second, numerous cartoons capture Eliot’s physical appearance, typically with large ears and/or nose. The most recent appeared on the cover of the journal *Humanities* in the fall of 2016; he is sitting in a chair with his legs crossed in a contorted position, surrounded by cats and crumpled up pieces of paper. In another he is lounging in a martini glass holding a flowerpot containing a cactus, while in two others he is nattily dressed.

Finally, his most well-known works are often depicted. “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” appears in a *New Yorker* cartoon titled “The Love Song of J. Alfred Crew,” in which two men discuss pants that they have ordered, one saying, “I shall wear white flannel trousers backordered until May 19th and walk upon the beach”; yet another is on a greeting card showing a clever revision of the opening passage. But

the most extensive treatment of this poem is Julian Peters' online comic book. Peters' *Prufrock* looks exactly like Eliot, and he is spot-on in his interpretation of the poem. *The Waste Land* inspired among others a *New Yorker* cartoon titled "T. S. Eliot Meets Beavis and Butthead," in which a man staring out at a rainy day thinks, "April sucks," as well as one titled "The New, Approved *Waste Land*," in which a studious-looking young man reads, "April is the cruelest month, er . . . since records began, probably due to global warming." There are also numerous cartoons on *Four Quartets* and *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, including the cover of the original publication.

The paper shows the (perhaps surprising) extent to which Eliot has permeated our popular culture, indicated varying interpretations of the man and his works, and was entertaining because of the humor in these clever cartoons.

Nancy D. Hargrove
Mississippi State U

PSYCHOACOUSTICS AND LANGUAGE REFORM IN ELIOT'S
FOUR QUARTETS

Throughout his career, T. S. Eliot was preoccupied with the relationship between sound and sense. As such, he looked for a means to reconcile a poetic theory that valued both linguistic fixity and movement—that protected the English language from degradation while allowing for its acoustic augmentation. The tension inherent in this poetic logic has led critics such as Christopher Ricks, Robert Crawford, Michael North, and Morag Shiach to conjecture about Eliot's participation in—or, alternately, his resistance to—Britain's national and imperial project of linguistic purification. I propose that this discussion can be productively illuminated by situating Eliot's poetry and writings about language reform in the context of contemporary discoveries in psychoacoustics, or the study of human hearing through the use of sound technologies. As my reading of *Four Quartets* suggests, he might have looked to the telephone and its inscriptive counterpart, the sound spectrograph, to pinpoint a means of refining poetic language. Attending to his involvement with the BBC, I assert that his preoccupation with the relation of voice to form was shaped by his experience with telephonic technologies and the transmission model of communication that developed alongside them. I contend that he drew inspiration from the concept of "jamming," or the obstruction of sonic transmission by "noise" internal

and external to the system, to cultivate a poetics of "live, unmodified" English. Just as scientists at Bell Labs incorporated people's hearing capabilities into the phone system to streamline communication, removing redundant frequencies and compressing others to maximize bandwidth, Eliot makes use of the jamming in his poetic system to purify and expand both poetic language and the vernacular. Ultimately, I argue that advances in communication engineering provided Eliot with a model for a purified poetics that, while economical, could enlarge the "wavelengths" of verse to allow for an expansive temporality—one that could perform the historicity of the English language while also stabilizing its usage.

Jennifer Janecek
U of Iowa

THE VIOLET HOUR: ELIOT, COLOR, AND THE
PSYCHOLOGY OF VISION

This paper considers Eliot's poetic rendering of light through the evolving science of vision. The eye became for Eliot an increasingly contested symbol of empirical vision and its opposite—the inner vision, which may or may not reveal the "truth" the



Prufrock's birthday cake, served with peaches

eye conceals. Charting Eliot's engagement with the science of optics and color perception, the analysis extends from the eye to vision (in parallel with the poetic movement from depictions of the physical eye to psychological symbols of inner vision). It considers Eliot's wavering between imagining the universal aspect of vision (he once wrote that "Speech varies, but our eyes are all the same"), and an awareness of the propensity for vision to play tricks with the specters and shadows of its own casting. Eliot's conception of the symbolic and spiritual function of twilight, light, and darkness was informed by advances in the theorization of color at the emerging nexus of art and psychology. The poet of *Four Quartets* tends to locate the psychological action of the work within a twilight space existing in the momentary psychic threshold between day and night. A disaffection with the "twittering world" and an immersion in "the violet hour" allows the poetic consciousness to perceive the dark substance of the shadows lying beneath the surface of reality. The dusk world is given muted color, complicating and elevating it beyond shades of grey into the realm of art and aesthetics. The "dim light" that transforms the familiar world into an uncertain psychic space is the sensory precursor to the aphotic deprivation of the poetic underworld briefly depicted in *East Coker*. When read in relation to a mixture of Einsteinian and Dantean images of light, even this darkness becomes intelligible as the "Light Invisible" of a spiritualized poetic universe.

Sarah Kennedy
Downing C, U of Cambridge

THE DYSTOPIAN ELIOT: DYSTOPIAN MOTIFS IN *THE WASTE LAND* AND *THE HOLLOW MEN*

The genre of dystopian literature is typically thought of as comprising works of prose fiction (in particular, the novel form), and, to an increasing extent, film. With respect to Euro-American modernism, novels like Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, George Orwell's *1984*, and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* immediately spring to mind. Yet it is certainly possible to gesture toward themes, images, and motifs in certain works of poetry that, however loosely, could be termed "dystopian" in character. T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, and, to a lesser extent, *The Hollow Men*, are two such poems—although they have never been considered explicitly from this critical perspective, aside, perhaps, from remarks made in passing. This paper examines

what Audrey F. Cahill has called "The terrifying plight presented in *The Waste Land* and *The Hollow Men*" in order to trace a number of recurring dystopian motifs that collectively constitute a sustained critique of Western society (64). These analyses are intended to serve as an exploration of the resonances between the two poems and the modernist dystopian novels that were beginning to appear in 1920s and '30s. Given the increased scholarly attention to the so-called "critical dystopias" of the 1980s and '90s over the past two decades, the current popularity of Young Adult dystopian fiction, and the continuously evolving audience for and conventions of the genre of dystopian literature, I suggest that the dystopian dimensions of Eliot's poetry during the period 1921 to 1925 offer new avenues for considering these poems, their relation to Eliot's later poetry, and to other works of dystopian literature.

Roderick B. Overaa
U of Tampa

PULSE AND VOICE IN *THE WASTE LAND*

There's no lack of critical works about "musical" aspects of *The Waste Land*; still, few of these engage directly the signifier of the poem, discussing the content and meaning of references rather than typography, metrics and pronunciation (with some notable, but scarce, exceptions). This research focuses on the musical analysis of *The Waste Land* as it looks, laid on paper, and as it sounds, recorded on tape, claiming that this can truly assist interpretation.

First, I examine speed ratios of reading performance, constant in Eliot's different recordings of the poem, showing (1) how free verse intrinsically contains more musical values than normally thought of, and (2) how Eliot systematically uses the typographic space as a rigorous musical tool (the time signature "3/4"), resulting in a shift in the reading performance from qualitative to quantitative meter (this not being a "given" mathematical consequence, but the result of a very conscious work). Also considered is the extent to which Pound influenced Eliot in some of these realizations.

Then, Eliot's essay *The Three Voices of Poetry* is put in connection with the changes in pulse in the recordings, asserting that these are instrumental to represent and diversify inner thought, rhetorical argument and dramatic speech (by means of their respectively different relationships with their addressees and contexts). It

is argued how metrical modulation, alongside a more general semantic modulation—a change in context flagged by the repositioning of grammar operators, like personal pronouns and correlatives—works as a device creating variety inside of a continuum. I then derive some logical conclusions about the nature of the transformations of the speaker in *The Waste Land*, highlighting the dichotomy between the mimeses that drive the swift turnovers of the poem (often leading the reader to infer multiple voices) and the metamorphoses that keep it together, ensuring its horizontal development from such abrupt vertical leaps.

Lorenzo Peyrani
Turin

THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF T. S. ELIOT

This paper explores the overlapping careers of Eliot and John Maynard Keynes. The most famous and exhaustive of Keynes's eviscerating critiques of the Treaty of Versailles, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, was widely reviewed during the opening months of 1920, just as Eliot was promoted into a new position at Lloyds Bank. He was expressly charged with managing the bank's positions and liabilities in Germany and the disputed territories. Eliot's interpretations of the microeconomic consequences of German reparations for Lloyds and its clients drew heavily upon Keynes's argument, while Keynes found, in Lloyds, a powerful corporate ally in his disputes with David Lloyd George's government.

I will argue that the Eliot-Keynes alliance is far more significant than heretofore understood. Eliot increasingly saw himself as Keynes's amanuensis as he tried to advise and anticipate the diverse effects of the armistice, hyperinflation, the Rhineland occupation, and other volatile circumstances throughout Europe.

Nearly a decade after Eliot finally resigned from Lloyds, he and Keynes still indulged a mutual admiration, the effects of which are apparent in Keynes's magnum opus, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, & Money* (1935). During the composition, Keynes read Eliot's *After Strange Gods* (1934) and discussed it at length with the author. Considerations of heresy, orthodoxy, originality, and personality central to Eliot's lectures are both directly and indirectly engaged by Keynes in his *The General Theory* and beyond.

Matt Seybold
Elmira C

"MAKING THE SMALL GREAT": THE SATIRE OF FRESCA

Among *The Waste Land*'s various compositional materials, the drafts opening Part III centering on the character of Fresca, excised from the final version of the poem, are usually those most associated with satire. The question remains, though, what motivated this satire and under what aesthetic theoretical frameworks it operated. It has often been assumed, partly due to Eliot's and Pound's own testimonies, that Eliot was offering a "parody" of Pope. That these facts might beg further scrutiny can be demonstrated easily enough by noting, as did James E. Miller some time ago, that the actual import of the two figures—Eliot's Fresca and Pope's Belinda—and of the worlds of their respective texts, could not be more different. Ronald Schuchard has provided much needed context for the aesthetic backgrounds of the Fresca material in showing how they can be situated within Eliot's larger project of "savage comedy" of that time. In so doing, Schuchard has thus demonstrated the extent to which the ultimate imaginative provenance of Fresca lies not in the world of Pope's mock epic, light-hearted and fanciful as it is, but instead in the more brutal and bold universe of Eliot's short poems of this period. How then do the Fresca passages relate to Pope's poem? A careful reading of Eliot's prose essays written close to the composition of the Fresca drafts shows that while the basic situation of Pope's mock epic offers raw material for the poem, Eliot shaped this material to fit his needs, and in a way that was consciously in opposition to Pope. For the satire of Fresca, Eliot found Dryden, not Pope, to be the most useful model for his satiric methods.

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DESCRIBING A PATH OF CONVERSION: ASCETICISM AND THE RE-COMBINATION OF RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS IN *KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE*

In this paper, I argue that the conclusion of *Knowledge and Experience* reveals several religious influences to the text whose importance and impact have not been sufficiently recognized. Indeed, they reveal that what Eliot has done in this text, among many other things, is to provide a description of conversion, of the movement from one view of the world to another, of transformation and self-transcendence. This becomes abundantly clear in Eliot's evocations of two distinct religious concepts, transmigration and faith, at the text's conclusion. Transmigration, or the reincarnation

ABSTRACTS

of the self in another body, would have been familiar to Eliot in and through the Indian religious texts with which he had extensive contact in his graduate studies. In the dissertation, Eliot uses this concept to describe the passage of the self from one point of view and one version of the self to another. The self is, in a sense, reincarnated into different ways of being situated in the world. In this, I suggest that Eliot evokes the Buddhist notion of *upaya*, or skillful means, to describe how one passes from one set of truths to another. In this Buddhist teaching, the Buddha uses different means to teach different types of human beings, even if the means the Buddha uses do not represent the fullness of the Buddhist truth. This teaching implies that the movement from one version of the self to another is the movement between different degrees of truth, and one degree of truth could prepare one for a higher degree. On the other hand, Eliot introduces the Christian concept of faith to describe the leap that is required to move from one point of view to the next, once one is presented with an alternative and possibly better way of evaluating the world. Eliot unites these terms through the concept of pilgrimage: to move from one point of view to another, to boldly give oneself over to a new perspective in faith, is an act of pilgrimage, of moving gradually towards a destination of ultimate meaning in and through praxis. Moreover, in combining concepts from different religious traditions, along with his more obvious philosophical influences, Eliot is attempting to enact this very thing, moving to a different point of view by combining objects from different metaphysical systems, aiming at a broader truth and a more effective praxis. He is also recovering and reasserting certain elements of religious practice by bringing them into dialogue with his philosophical sources.

Edward Upton
Christ C, Valparaiso U

JOHN "MUDDLETON MORAL," *ASH-WEDNESDAY*, AND THE DISSOCIATION OF BELIEF

The topic that comes most readily to mind is a reading of the model of conversion (or, perhaps, "conversion") that we see presented in *Ash-Wednesday*, read in the context of Eliot's debates with John "Muddleton" Murry leading up to the Clark Lectures on Metaphysical poetry in 1925-26. It seems perhaps that nothing more needs to be said about the Romanticism/Classicism debates. But my work revisits them in light of Eliot's broader engagement with the problem of religious experience and, perhaps more



Ria Banerjee and Matt Seybold

notably, in light of the recently published letters between Murry and Eliot at the time, which seem to call for drastic revision of the standard narrative of their relationship.

In reading the debates and the Clark Lectures that they produced, I argue that the famous "dissociation of sensibility" central to the lectures is not really a theory of art or the aesthetic tradition, but a history of beliefs about belief; in other words, it is a theory of secularization. The lectures track secularization through both an intellectual and poetic history (in metaphysical poetry) because that is precisely the paired history—thought and feeling—which registers the dissociation of belief, the term which is the focus of my larger book. What this dissociated belief means, in plain language, is that the emotional (or possibly spiritual) dimension of religious engagement becomes problematically dissociated from its former alliance with the particular beliefs which it used to authorize—intellectual content, memories, forms, etc.—all of which tend to remain the objects of secular skepticism, solipsistic suspicion, or pragmatic evaluation, even in the minds of believers.

In turn, these lectures can be seen to cast a long shadow over Eliot's 1927 turn to Anglo-Catholicism, accounting for some of the eccentricities of the representation of belief in *Ash-Wednesday*. I read the poem as a powerful representation of what Charles Taylor calls the "cross-pressured" problems that shape what it means to believe in the modernist moment, dissociating belief even for those who turn to traditional or institutional religion.

Craig Woelfel
Flagler C

Eliot in 1917:

Le poète jemenfoutiste

By Kit Kumiko Toda

Université Lyon III Jean Moulin

Although 1917 saw the triumphant publication of *Prufrock and Other Observations*, in private Eliot was undergoing writer's block, fearful that he would never write another poem that matched this early promise. This was a worry of some long-standing; as early as 1914, he wrote a letter to Conrad Aiken complaining that he has "done nothing good since J. A[lfred] P[rufrock]" and that whatever he managed to write was "forced in execution." By September 1916, the frustration had become dejection: in a letter to his brother, he writes that a good review of the book gives him only "posthumous pleasure" and he confesses that he feels "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" was, in fact, his "swan song" (L1 165).

Beyond the misery of a frustrated artist, he also felt a great deal of pressure not to let down his wife ("Vivien is so exceedingly anxious that I shall equal it ["Prufrock"], and would be bitterly disappointed if I do not" [L1 165].) It seems, too, from reading his exaggerated assurances of success that he felt the need to justify to his parents (and to himself) his crossing of the Atlantic Rubicon, an act of "awful daring" that forever cut him off from the safety of a life spent as a Harvard academic—a born member of the prestigious milieu of Boston Brahmins—and that consigned him to an insecure and frequently impecunious life as a London man of letters.

As outlined in the two previous installments of this column, this anxiety was exacerbated by marital troubles and financial insecurity, not to mention the ongoing war. However, Eliot eventually found a

novel way to circumvent his poetic impasse: writing in French. "[C]uriously enough," he writes to his father, "it has taken me that way" (L1 194). Curious indeed, for although Eliot's French skills were impressive, he himself admitted that he never obtained the native ease of the true bilingual. Despite this, for Eliot, France and the French language represented a sort of carefree liberty and a site for poetic creation: in the same letter to Aiken quoted above, he says revealingly after his complaint of poetic "impotence" that "Sometimes I think—if I could only get back to Paris. But I know I never will, for long. I must learn to talk English. Anyway I'm in the worry way now."

Eliot could not of course "get back to Paris" but he did the next best thing—by switching to French, he found a linguistic escapism which allowed him freedom from "the worry way," perhaps even a sense of going back in time to his relatively carefree existence in Paris. Decades later he explained to Donald Hall: "I think it was that when I was writing in French I didn't take the poems so seriously, and that not taking them seriously, I wasn't so worried about not being able to write" (*Poems* 1 460). Three of these French poems, "Lune de miel," "Le directeur," and "Mélange adultère de tout" were published in the July 1917 issue of *The Little Review*. The latter is a poem with a humorous tone, which begins with a list of the various roles Eliot fulfilled in different locations: "En Amérique, professeur; / En Angleterre, journaliste." "C'est à Paris," he writes, "que je me coiffe/ Casque noir de jemenfoutiste" [It's in Paris that I put on / Black cap of the couldn'tgiveadamnist] (*Poems* 1 41).

Here, with a suitably slangy word, he pays homage to the untroubled quality of his French experience. The poems themselves are a putting on of the "casque noir de jemenfoutiste," a release that allowed him a route back to poetry. But Eliot knew that eventually he must "learn to talk English" again.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Eliot Society seeks nominations for two seats on its Board of Directors—those presently held by Cyrena Pondrom and Nancy Gish. These are three-year positions, running from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2021.

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 2, 2018. Candidates with five or more nominations will appear on the ballot.

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