

Time Present

The Newsletter of the International T. S. Eliot Society

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Edward C. Sterling and Henry Ware Eliot, Sr. 1898

"Hydraulic": The Company and Its Archive by Frances Dickey University of Missouri

In letters to his mother and brother, T. S. Eliot occasionally mentions "Hydraulic," a reference to the Hydraulic Press Brick Company stock that provided income to the Eliot family. But before "Hydraulic" became a centerpiece of the family investment portfolio, it was an invention that shaped the history and architecture of St. Louis, not to mention the lives of Henry

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T. S. Eliot Foundation Offers Grant to Society

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T. S. Eliot Foundation Offers Grant to Society

By Jayme Stayer
Loyola University Chicago

The International T. S. Eliot Society is happy to announce a generous grant from the T. S. Eliot Foundation in the amount of \$20,000 to fund the production of our newsletter, *Time Present*. This past summer, I met with Clare Reihill and Judith Hooper, co-trustees of the Eliot estate, to discuss plans for a capital campaign to secure the future of the Society. Both trustees expressed interest in the work we do as a scholarly organization. After hearing about our plans for the future and our ambitions for expanding our reach, they were eager to help us with the

perennial problem of how to fund the newsletter.

The first issue of the newsletter, edited by Grover Smith, appeared in the spring of 1987. (Archives of all the newsletters can be found on our website at tseliot.sites.luc.edu). Entitled *News & Notes*, it was a short, four-page affair that Smith banged out on his typewriter, and which he used for short announcements and personal musings. Current members will be familiar with the more modern version, which runs between 16 and 24 pages; we now print short articles, reviews, bibliographies, announcements, and items of interest. Thanks to the work of many past editors, the standards of production have risen as well.

We are very grateful to the trustees and to the Eliot Foundation for this kind gift, and we are delighted to have them join us in our work.

Report from the 40th Annual International T. S. Eliot Society Meeting, September 28-29, 2019, St. Louis, MO

By Anthony Shoplik
Loyola University Chicago

In late September, members of the International T. S. Eliot Society gathered in St. Louis for the Society's fortieth annual meeting. Forty meetings is quite the milestone—and if each of the preceding thirty-nine was filled with as much kindhearted fellowship and insightful scholarship as this gathering was, then this is a milestone that the Society should be especially proud of. This gathering provided occasion to celebrate the realization of two monumental projects: the publication of the final volume of *The Complete Prose* just a few weeks before this year's meeting, and the dedication of the T. S. Eliot Memorial Sculpture at the St. Louis Downtown Transit Hub. From my perspective, these two achievements were reflected throughout our gathering, both in the generosity and hospitality of the Society and its members, as well as in

the way that many of this year's presentations attended to how Eliot's poetry and legacy shape and are shaped by urban, ecological, and international spaces.

Bustling urban settings figure prominently in Eliot's poetry, so it was fitting that the sleek, steel structure of the T. S. Eliot Memorial Sculpture found its home near the St. Louis Downtown Transit Hub. During the dedication ceremony for the sculpture, I was struck by the motion and noise that seemed to surround our group of Eliot scholars and enthusiasts: cars darted across the freeway overpass in the distance; bus and train stations nearby



Some of the Society Members Gathering at the Wheels sculpture



Tony Cuda, Len Dieveveen, Josh Richards

buzzed with activity; a wedding party took photos in front of the Enterprise Center, which towered over us from across Clark Avenue. Amid the commotion, we gathered around the perimeter of the monument and read a few stanzas of Eliot’s poetry, among them the same lines that are engraved in granite around the sculpture’s base: “At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless; / Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is . . .”

For me, this was a profound and importantly public moment (how often do we get the chance to read Eliot’s poetry aloud in highly trafficked spaces?). And it was also a reminder that, although Eliot reflects on stillness in this section of *Burnt Norton*, much of his poetry bears the influence of the hectic, heavily polluted streets of St. Louis. Frances Dickey’s presentation in particular took up this point: her work synthesized accounts of the suffocating smoke that shrouded St. Louis in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and fleshed out disputes between climate activists of the Wednesday Club of St. Louis (of which Eliot’s mother was a member) and the Hydraulic Press Brick Company (where his father was employed as treasurer) that may have made

their way into the Eliot household during Tom’s childhood. Accompanying Dickey’s paper were compelling presentations by John McIntyre and Clint Wilson, who explored climate change and breathing in Eliot’s work, respectively. These three offerings made up an outstanding panel that considered Eliot’s poetry in terms of the ecological—an approach to Eliot that seems to me more relevant with every passing day.

Beyond domestic, urban, and ecological spaces, international spaces also played an important role at this year’s conference. At the sculpture’s dedication, President Jayme Stayer reminded us of the Society’s foundation in the 1980s by a Hungarian immigrant named Dr. Leslie Konnyu. With the completion of the Memorial Sculpture, the Society fulfilled one of Dr.

Konnyu’s very first goals for the Society: “To work toward the establishment of a fitting public monument to T. S. Eliot in the city of his birth.” As our President pointed out, having an immigrant as our founder is especially fitting, considering that we are now the International T. S. Eliot Society. And Eliot’s work certainly continues to travel today as well as it did when Dr. Konnyu first founded our Society in the 1980s. In attendance this year were members from at least eight different countries including the UK, China, Canada, Tunisia, France, Spain, India, and Kuwait.



Prize Winners Suzannah Evans, Michelle Taylor, Cecile Varry

The Society's awareness of its international character was also reflected in the scholarship of several of its members. For example, Anita Patterson's presentation explored Eliot's influence on the work of Richard Wright during his expatriate years in France, concentrating in particular on how the rat imagery of *The Waste Land* is modified and even redeemed in Wright's poetry and prose, while Qiang Huang's paper surveyed Eliot's vast impact on the poets and artistic movements of China in the early twentieth century. These presentations and so many others expanded my knowledge of Eliot in more directions than I have room to adequately express in this space. I was repeatedly impressed by panel after panel of insightful papers that approached Eliot from all angles. The astutely crafted presentations of Susannah V. Evans and Michelle Alexis Taylor come to mind: Evans's work deepened our understandings of Laforgue's influence on Eliot, while Taylor's guided us in a thorough investigation of the modern coterie in *Noctes Binanianæ*, earning them both this year's Fathman Awards. Our other award winner this year was Cécile Varry, whose exploration of touching and holding in Eliot's poetry won her the prize for best seminar paper.



Kevin Rulo, Steven Cullinane, Anthony Shoplik, Naomi Gades

Memorial Lecturer Leonard Diepeveen's spectacular presentation, "T. S. Eliot, Fraud," stood out to me for its detailed examination of intent and sincerity in Eliot's work. Diepeveen's lecture brought into focus the radical newness of Eliot's poetry in the 1920s and ultimately argued that Eliot's early work was "serious but not sincere," a conclusion that I've continued to mull over in the weeks following the meeting. Further, Diepeveen's presentation was not only an example of good scholarship but of good humor. (Diepeveen closed his lecture with a pun on "Tomfoolery.")

On the topic of humor, the Society also enjoyed a performance—funny and tender—of *Me & Mr. Tom*, written by Lindsay K. Adams and directed by Julia Moriarty. The play dramatized an unlikely dinner party that Tom and Valerie Eliot hosted for Groucho Marx

and his third wife Eden when they came to visit the Eliots in London in 1964. After the show, members of the Society migrated to the rooftop of Rosalita's Cantina in downtown St. Louis, where, thanks to the generosity of Tony and Melanie Fathman, we enjoyed refreshing margaritas, wonderful food, good conversation, and the setting sun—a welcome "still point" if ever there was one. Following dinner, Tony and Melanie graciously invited us into their home, where many of us gathered around the piano to sing a lot, dance a little, and relish the waning moments of our time together. As a graduate student who has now attended the Society meeting twice, it's these rituals and traditions that set the Society apart in my mind; it's the welcoming and nurturing temperament of those members who have been in the Society for five, ten, or twenty years—or even since its inception—that makes aspiring scholars like me eager to

come back for our next meeting, to learn more about Eliot from the assembled scholars and also to learn more from everyone gathered at the conference about what it means to be a generous mentor.

I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to express my gratitude to the tireless editors of *The*

Complete Prose. Recently, a friend and I were discussing "scholarship as gift," and I couldn't help but think of our editors' accomplishment in the same terms: they have given us a gift. With the publication of the eighth and final volume of *The Complete Prose*, our editors have finished laying the groundwork for the much-anticipated "golden era of Eliot scholarship." Personally, I can't wait to see all of the projects that will build upon these sturdy foundations in years to come.

Lastly, a word of gratitude to our President, Board of Directors, the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis, our panelists and panel chairs, seminar leaders, and all of those whose hard work and dedication made this meeting such an intellectually and emotionally enriching experience. I hope that you left this year's meeting feeling as energized and full of new ideas as I did, and I look forward to the next time we are all together!

T. S. Eliot and Organicism, By Jeremy Diaper

Clemson University Press, xiii + 218 pages.

Reviewed by Clint Wilson III
Rice University

T. S. Eliot's *The Rock* famously poses a question that might also capture a critique of the scholarly traditions surrounding Eliot's work: "Where is the Life we have lost in living?" (*Poems 1* 153). So familiar are the conventions of reading Eliot's environmental imaginaries—like those famously contained in *The Waste Land* or *Four Quartets*—that one wonders, "Where are the new readings we have lost in reading?" In *T. S. Eliot and Organicism*, Jeremy Diaper unearths Eliot's enduring interest in organicist thinking, demonstrating that even as critics have long noted the poet's

engagement with agrarian imagery, they have yet to address his attention to the material facts of modern agriculture. The organicists believed that the entire universe is an organic entity whose parts are inextricably linked together. As an extension of this philosophy, the organicists, explains Diaper, were defined by "an emphasis on the need to return organic matter to the soil—commonly referred to as 'the rule of return'—and warned of the dangers of using artificial fertilizers and chemicals" (3). Surveying the ways in which Eliot, too, discussed the hazards of eroding or chemically polluted soil, Diaper makes a viable case for reading Eliot as a writer directly commenting upon the organic husbandry debates of his day. "For Eliot," writes Diaper, "a flourishing culture could emerge only from a healthy agriculture" (6). Indeed, *T. S. Eliot and Organicism* illustrates how Eliot's vision of a healthy society necessitated a commitment to both the material and spiritual preservation of an agricultural ethos.

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REPORTS

T. S. Eliot and the Dynamic Imagination, By Sarah Kennedy

Cambridge University Press, 2018. x + 259 pages.

Reviewed by Steve Pinkerton
Case Western Reserve University

In "The Frontiers of Criticism" (1956), Eliot reflected on the "mystery" of how great poets' reading and experience get "transmuted into great poetry." To probe this mystery would require, he thought, "an investigation of process . . . which was, strictly speaking, beyond the frontier of literary criticism." Undaunted, Sarah Kennedy has undertaken just that sort of inquiry in *T. S. Eliot and the Dynamic Imagination*. Her findings include the book's "fundamental argument," namely that metaphor reigns supreme ("as both outward sign and inward determinant") among the forces

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Hydraulic Press Brick, Design Detail

The Great War, The Waste Land and the Modernist Long Poem

By Oliver Tearle

Bloomsbury Academic,
200 pages.

Reviewed by Nathaniel Hill
University of Michigan

In *The Great War, The Waste Land and the Modernist Long Poem*, Oliver Tearle sets out to recover the modernist long poem for our study, claiming that the genre is “so little known as to be almost a secret history” (1). Tearle defines this form as “a



Hydraulic Press Brick, Design Detail

more specific subgenre of modernist poem of a particular length (book-length, but hundreds rather than thousands of lines long) and produced at a particular moment in Anglo-American modernism (namely in the years immediately following the First World War)” (19). In 1986, Margaret Dickie published *On the Modernist Long Poem*, but Tearle argues that she neither delimited the length

of this form nor embedded it within a specific historical context. Whereas the poems Dickie considers, such as William Carlos Williams’s *Pater-son*, H. D.’s *Helen in Egypt*, and Ezra Pound’s *Cantos*, are better described as “modern epics,” Tearle’s medium-sized long poems try to “find ways of fitting the concrete miniature representations of modern life . . . into a broader framework that could encapsulate the full feeling of alienation and despair which characterized the post-war period” (17, 2).

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Report on the T. S. Eliot International Summer School

London July 6-14, 2019

By Steven Cullinane
University of Michigan

July 7, 2019 was another unseasonably vernal day at Little Gidding. Dock it a point for the absence of purgatorial fire (very salutary, as readers of Eliot know), yet from the hedges to the pig sty to the “dull facade and gravestone” the scene was overwhelmingly correct in its details. Even the ice and snow and “glare that is blindness in the early afternoon” were present, in a way, burlesqued by the grand white canvas tent sheltering so many guests in white Sunday suits. Mary Ann Lund led the Annual T. S. Eliot Festival in a meditative act of *lectio poetica*. As so many attendees pored over Eliot’s last great poem in near-monastic silence, this remote chapel once again felt like “the world’s end.”

That was the first full day of the program. Organizing a summer program devoted to the poet of

the anticlimax, who prophesied the world ending “not with a bang, but a whimper,” it’s definitely risky to do anything that might turn the rest of the week into a stretch of waste sad time. But this is the eleventh T. S. Eliot International Summer School, and attendees of the previous ten will know better than to question the directorial staff. The remaining days easily lived up to this remarkable opening: a testament to the sheer vitality of the international community of Eliot scholars, and the formidable roster of presenters assembled this year.

Much more DJing went on than might be expected, as talks were supplemented by clips of Stravinski, Jelly Roll Morton, thrush-song, Shakespeherian Rag and—naturally—T. S. Eliot’s own “rich and fruity” voice (his words, not mine). The subject matter of the presentations themselves was no less eclectic than this soundtrack. Jean-Michel Rabaté reconstructed Jacques Lacan’s engagements with Eliot’s work. Joanna Rzepa charted the intersections of literary and theological modernism. David Chinitz critically examined the sometimes-Kinbotean enterprise of annotation, especially relevant at this present moment, when many of the pre-eminent Eliot scholars are tirelessly working on new and definitive volumes of the

collected writings. Elizabeth Micakovic revealed the extent to which public speaking and vocarium recordings were lucrative for Eliot, justifying his aforementioned boast about richness and fruitiness. Julia Daniel's talk on Eliot's theories of land management gave considerable spotlight to *The Family Reunion*, which I count as a major victory for those of us who like the plays.

The range of topics added up to a composite portrait of Eliot in all his complexity. In the seminar I attended, Jayme Stayer charted the vicissitudes of Eliot's early career, from his *March Hare* apprenticeship to his earliest masterpieces. Come for J. Alfred Prufrock, stay for Aunt Helen Slingsby and the cocktail-shaking speaker of "Suite Clownesque." Certain poems revealed new dimensions after being approached from multiple angles. When I first read it years ago, *Burnt Norton* seemed like one of Eliot's more abstruse and impersonal poems. Jewel Spears Brooker's lecture on the thrush motif and Robert Crawford's biographical explication made the poem accessible like never before. Visiting the site helped, too. Sitting on the edge of the dry pool, listening to the poem recited in Eliot's voice, one can't help but feel the emotional content of the poem reveal itself with heartbreaking clarity.

The owners of Burnt Norton had given us permission to walk its grounds: something Eliot could never claim, having trespassed. Their generosity illustrates the extent to which summer school attendees received unprecedented access to Eliot. Johns Hopkins Press granted all participants free electronic access to the *Collected Prose*, and this may be the only "summer school" where the prospect of 5,000 pages of additional reading was unanimously received with gratitude. Rare footage of a *Four Quartets* ballet was screened; Toby Faber and Nancy Fulford showed hitherto unseen materials from the archives of Faber & Faber and the Eliot estate, including film footage of Old Possum goofily tipping his hat to the camera. And of course, the crowning act of generosity toward young Eliot scholars was the financial support. Many of us have to thank the school's patrons for the bursaries that enabled us to attend; and it's safe to say that everyone in attendance is grateful for the directorial staff who coordinated everything—Georgia Reeves, Elizabeth Micakovic, and of course Anthony Cuda.

I imagined attending a summer school abroad would be a solitary experience. Racing through the Dusseldorf airport to make my layover was not an ideal introduction to European travel; one never feels more alone than when a businessman is sitting in



Tony Cuda at the helm



"Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged"

your assigned seat and the only thing you know how to say to him is "Bin gar keine Russin..." When I made it to the summer school, I was surprised at how immediately I felt a sense of community—and I know other first-time attendees who felt the same. The summer school was much more diverse than the standard academic conference. You never knew if the next person you'd meet would be a poet or a journalist or an undergraduate or a lifelong Eliot fan. Appropriately for this notoriously polyglot poetry, the summer school draws a truly international crowd. The variety of our accents baffled servers when we would dine out together.

And so it turns out there was no need to feign fluency in every language used in *The Waste Land*. (After all, Eliot himself botched the Provençal title of his second book of poems.) On the

final day of the summer school, pausing over London Bridge, each of the languages in the poem's final stanza was read aloud by a native speaker (well, OK, I did the bit in Latin; sorry Italians, I had to put this degree in dead languages to use somehow). Such a moment summed up why a summer school as diverse as this one is an ideal place to read these poems which so many of us love but

cannot wholly contain. For one week at least, piecing together Eliot's fragments is an act of collaboration. In the remaining 51, you'll only feel slightly ridiculous when, stiffening in a rented library carrel, you try to act the role of that precocious Dickensian child who can do all the different voices on his own.



"There they were": Summer School attendees in the garden

Compiled by David Chinitz

A new and shocking valuation. In Syracuse, NY, a squirrel bit a power line and electrocuted itself. For 14 days, the dead animal hung on the wire by its teeth, while residents complained to the utility, the county, and the city to no avail. Disgruntled neighbor Chet Seidel began blogging sarcastically about the squirrel, posthumously christened Freddie (after the 1972 song “Freddie’s Dead”). After two weeks, the blog caught the media’s attention, and the power company finally came at night to extricate Freddie. Seidel posted a video of the removal process, captioned “This is the way the squirrel ends / Not with a bang but a whimper.” Yes, he included the slash. (syracuse.com, 2 July 2019)

The Libertines. Eliot scholars nostalgic for the mid-2000s garage rock revival may be interested to know that the Libertines have opened a hotel in Margate called The Albion Rooms, which features a bar named The Waste Land. The band’s 2002 single “What a Waster” may or may not have anything to do with Eliot’s poem, but it pays tribute to another 1922 modernist landmark: the eponymous waster’s dream journal is said to read like “the unabridged *Ulysses*.” (theliber-tines.com/news, 24 June 2019)

Paralyzed force. In August, Sidney R. Thomas, Chief Circuit Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, invoked *The Hollow Men* in an opinion blocking President Trump’s executive order to withhold federal funds from “sanctuary cities” in California. According to Thomas, the administration’s legal defense of the order amounted to an argument that it was “all bluster and no bite . . . without any real meaning—‘gesture without motion,’ as T. S. Eliot put it.” (leagle.com, “City and County of San Francisco v. Trump,” 1 Aug. 2018)

You are here to kneel. In the *New York Times*, Alexis Soloski reviews a comedy show by Jacqueline Novak, titled “Get on Your Knees.” The ninety-minute show focuses entirely on the topic of oral sex, to which Novak takes a highly intellectual approach. “In place of off-color riffs and lewd visual aids,” Soloski explains, “Novak deconstructs the semantics of heterosexual sex. . . . Bachelorettes in search of a good time and fewer T. S. Eliot quotations may want to look elsewhere.” (22 July 2019)

A fifth quartet. In September 2018, the Eliot Quartett won first prize at the inaugural Karol Szymanowski International Music Competition in Katowice, Poland. Founded in 2014 and based in Germany, the group had won several previous prizes. It is named for Eliot’s *Four Quartets*. (thestrat.com, 9/24/18)

Let us go then. The Dublin neuroscientist Shane O’Mara advocates walking as the best exercise for both mind and body. Walking, he argues from scientific data, stimulates “learning, memory, and cognition” as well as creativity; it reduces stress and depression. O’Mara cites Aristotle, Wordsworth, Nietzsche, and Dickens as inveterate walkers. However, as Amy Fleming explains in the *Guardian*, “O’Mara’s ultimate ode to urban walking is T. S. Eliot’s 1915 poem ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,’ which he describes as ‘a journey on foot, and a journey through states of mind.’” (“‘It’s a superpower’: How Walking makes Us Healthier, Happier, and Brainer,” 28 Jul 2019)

Security to Terminal 5, immediately!



The 41st Annual Meeting of the International T. S. Eliot Society

Boston

October 1-3, 2020

Mark your calendars for next year's annual meeting: Oct. 1-3, 2020, at Harvard University and Gloucester, MA. Thursday and Friday plenaries will be held on Harvard's campus at the Houghton Library, which will be reopening after a year's worth of major renovations. Saturday will feature a trip to Gloucester to tour The Downs, the summer home of the Eliots, now owned by the T. S. Eliot Foundation, who have graciously offered to host the Society for a reception. Stay tuned as other plans develop.

Call for Nominations

The Society seeks nominations for two positions on its Board of Directors. The nominees will be elected to fill the seats presently held by **Vincent Sherry** and **Patrick Query**. These are three-year positions, running from July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2023.

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, **Frances Dickey** (dickeyf@missouri.edu), by January 31, 2020. Candidates with five or more nominations will appear on the ballot.

Members may also offer **nominations for honorary membership and distinguished service awards**. These nominations should be made to the President, **Jayme Stayer**, at the Society's email address (tseliotociety@gmail.com) by August 1, 2020.

Conference Announcements

SAMLA 91 2019 Atlanta

SAMLA 91 (2019) will be held from Nov 15th-17th at the Westin Peachtree Plaza in Atlanta, GA. There will be a special panel sponsored by the International T. S. Eliot Society: "Power, Identity, Relationships, and T. S. Eliot" meeting on Friday, Nov 15th, 3:00-4:15pm, with papers by **Craig Woelfel**, **Anthony Cuda**, and **Gabriel Hankins**.

SAMLA will be in Jacksonville, FL next year (Nov 13th-15th, 2020; a CFP will be forthcoming in the Spring 2020 *Time Present*). Anyone interested can contact **Craig Woelfel** at cwoelfel@flagler.edu

ALA 2020

The T. S. Eliot Society will sponsor two sessions at the 2020 annual conference of the American Literature Association, May 21-24, 2020, in San Diego, CA (www.americanliteratureassociation.org). 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, 2020.

Society Notes

At our September meeting, the Board voted to approve a code of conduct for its members. See our website for the full statement (<http://tseliot.sites.luc.edu/conduct.pdf>).

The eighth and final volume of *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition, Still and Still Moving*, (1954-1965), co-edited by **Jewel Spears Brooker** and **Ronald Schuchard**, was released by Johns Hopkins University Press this fall and is now online at Project Muse.

Joshua Richards, the Bibliographer of the T. S. Eliot Society, has accepted a position on the faculty of the University of Mary in Bismark, North Dakota. Congratulations to Josh, too, on his wedding, on the first of August, to Savanna Schlote Richards.

Congratulations to **Ryan Holston** (Virginia Military Institute), who has been appointed to the Jonathan Myrick Daniels '61 Chair for Academic Excellence. Ryan and fellow society member, **Justin Garrison** (Roanoke College) have edited a collection of essays engaging with the *New Humanism of Irving Babbitt: The Historical Mind: Humanistic Renewal in a Post-Constitutional Age* (SUNY, 2020). Ryan's chapter focuses on Eliot.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sara Fitzgerald, a former Washington Post editor and award-winning biographer has a novel in press based on Emily Hale's life, *The Poet's Girl* (Thought Catalog Books).

Hannah Sullivan is to deliver the UK's Annual T. S. Eliot Lecture in the T. S. Eliot Theatre at Merton College, Oxford on November 28. The title of her talk will be "T. S. Eliot and the Art of Abandonment."

Kudos to **Jewel Spears Brooker**, who received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Who's Who in America this year.

Friend of the Society **William Marx** has been appointed Professor of Comparative Literature at the Collège de France, in Paris. He will give a seminar and lectures, open to the public, focus-

ing on literature and libraries in the winter and spring of 2020.

On the third weekend in October, the **St. Louis Opera Collective** presented the US Premiere of *Vivienne* by Stephen McNeff, with words by Andy Rashleigh. *Vivienne* premiered in 2013 at the Tête à Tête Festival in London; the one-woman opera explores Vivien Eliot's ill-fated marriage, poor health, and latter years spent in an asylum.

Scott Weddell, of **Scena Mundi Theatre Company** announces the performance, this November, of *Murder in the Cathedral* in Southwark Cathedral, London; University Church, Oxford; and Guildford Cathedral—three churches familiar to Eliot.

REPORTS

The T. S. Eliot International Summer School

London July 4-12, 2020

The T. S. Eliot International Summer School will celebrate its twelfth year when it convenes next summer in Bloomsbury, at the literary heart of London, close to the former Faber offices in Russell Square where Eliot worked for forty years. Since its founding in 2009, the School has attracted students from over thirty-nine nations, a testament to the worldwide resurgence of Eliot studies as the Eliot Editorial Project provides student access to new editions of his poems, prose, and letters.

The School features lectures, seminars, and major addresses and readings by award-winning scholars and writers. This year the inaugural lecture will be delivered by renowned novelist Ian McEwan. Each morning during the week, there are two lectures on aspects of Eliot's life and work, featuring state-of-scholarship presentations by prominent scholars. In the afternoon, students choose one option from a variety of seminars for in-depth study under the guidance of one of these renowned scholars. The seminars cover a range of subjects on Eliot's poetry, criticism, and drama. On Friday, a private poetry reading will be held at London Library, fol-

lowed by a gala reception. Attendees will take two day-long excursions to the sites of *Four Quartets*—Little Gidding and Burnt Norton—with picnics, readings, and lectures on the grounds. Full- and partial-tuition tuition scholarships are available.

This year, all International T. S. Eliot Society members will receive a 25% discount on the cost of tuition (use the code: EliotSociety). For the online application, program and seminar information, and accommodation details, visit the website: www.ies.sas.ac.uk/tseliot, or contact **Georgia Reeves**, Summer School administrator: Georgia.Reeves@sas.ac.uk. Or email me directly: ajcuda@uncg.edu. See you in London!



Jayme Stayer leading a Summer School seminar

"Hydraulic": The Company and Its Archive

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Ware Eliot, Sr., his wife, and children. A newly discovered St. Louis archive sheds light on that history.

The hydraulic brick press harnessed steam power to compress clay and produce a harder, heavier, more even-looking brick. Brought to St. Louis in 1865 by Yankee engineer Edward C. Sterling, the hydraulic press inaugurated the industrial revolution in brickmaking, which had been primarily an affair of local hand-made bricks. In Philadelphia, masons and brickmakers had met the introduction of mechanized brick-making with riots. In St. Louis, builders were initially skeptical, but Sterling's rigorous testing and his offer to pay additional wages to masons who had to shoulder the weight of his bricks overcame their objections. Within a few years his company was manufacturing 18 million bricks a year, one-tenth of St.

Louis's total output. A growing city situated on beds of clay, with access to waterways and coal fields, St. Louis was perfectly situated to become a leading producer and market for this essential nineteenth-century building material.

Incorporated in 1868 as the Hydraulic Press Brick Company, Sterling's business rapidly became the provider of choice for St. Louis buildings and public works projects, including the Eads Bridge and railway tunnel. By the mid-1880s, Hydraulic had a virtual monopoly on steam-driven brickmaking machines, produced half the bricks consumed by St. Louis, and shipped their wares throughout the midwest from Canada to Texas. Hydraulic bricks

created such monuments of St. Louis architecture in the 1880s and 90s as the Turner Building (designed by the Boston architecture firm Peabody and Stearns), the Bissell Water Tower, the Laclede Bank Company, the Odd Fellows Building, the castle-like Annheuser-Busch Brew House, and the famous Louis Sullivan Union Trust Building, so that wherever St. Louisians went, their eyes and feet rested on Hydraulic brick. In the twentieth century, New York skyscrapers, Washington embassies, the Navy Pier in Chicago, and many other famous structures were built and faced with Hydraulic brick.

In 1874, Henry Ware Eliot, Sr. joined the company as its secretary and treasurer, eventually rising to president in 1905, managing the financial affairs of a major

company for over a quarter of a century. From six-thirty in the morning to nearly eight at night, Henry Ware Eliot attended to company business, keeping the books, paying employees, and collecting its debts; acquiring new clay fields in St. Louis; adjusting and expanding supply and distribution networks; and overseeing the addition of Hydraulic Press operations in Chicago and other cities in Illinois, Ohio, New Jersey,

Virginia, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Kansas, and beyond. As the company's largest shareholder when he retired in 1908, Eliot was appointed Chairman of the Board, a position he kept until his death in 1919.

Conserved at the National Building Arts Center in Sauget, Illinois (just south of East St. Louis), the archive of the now-defunct Hydraulic Press Brick Company contains a twenty-page typed document by Henry Ware Eliot, Sr., with pencil emendations in his hand that date its composition to sometime after 1905. This document tells the early history of the company and the story of its expansion, failures along the way, and bold speculations that paid off. Henry Ware Eliot's reminiscences, which



Women's Magazine Building, St. Louis

have not previously been viewed by Eliot scholars, illustrate the nature of his work with the company through detailed personal anecdotes, such as of the time when he left the payroll of \$12,000 wrapped in newspaper in a buggy, but luckily found it still there on his return. He explains that in the early days of the company, he was often required to “transact business in the air” with contractors who refused to come down from the buildings where they were working. At other times, they left their business dealings to their wives, whom he had to seek out at their homes, thus “broaden[ing] my female acquaintance.”

H. W. Eliot’s narrative touches on some momentous events of his time by way of personal observations. The majority of laborers in Hydraulic brick yards were former slaves, with whom he was well acquainted:

“I used to talk with them frequently, as I knew the name of every man on the yard, and I got from them experiences which they had undergone down south which proved that none of the statements made in Uncle Tom’s Cabin were exaggerated. Old Sam Jefferson, who fired the boilers, had welts on his back, criss-crossed, 15 inches long which were the scars from cowhide blows he had received from overseers. George Miller, who was a giant 6 feet two inches, showed scars from his hips down which he said were the result of bites of bloodhounds that had chased him through the swamps . . .”

Such scars and stories must have been a regular reminder of slavery times for the entire Eliot family, schooled in the memory of William Greenleaf Eliot’s emancipation efforts. H. W. Eliot’s reminiscences also al-

lude to the labor and racial tensions that ultimately led to the terrible East St. Louis riots of 1917, probably still in the future when he wrote this document. The loyalty of Hydraulic employees led to an armed standoff during “the first attempt to organize the brickmakers of St. Louis,” as he tells it:

“As I said before, our men refused absolutely to go out and we were told that all the white brickmakers from the South End were coming to the yard in a body to drive the negroes off the premises on a certain day. Mr. Sterling and

I sat on the front steps of the office waiting for them, each with a loaded revolver in his hands, but they failed to materialize, and I remember that Mr. Sterling was rather disgusted that he did not have a chance to shoot anything. A flock of the neighbors’ geese walked across the field and he emptied his revolver at them and missed every one of them.”

In addition to illustrating how the legacy of slavery and the pitched battles of the labor movement were experienced by T. S. Eliot’s family, these anecdotes show his father’s feeling for a good story and sense of humor. He enjoys telling about tricks played on him and exceptional animals, such as a famous mule named “Long Eared John.”

The narrative also sheds light on how the Hydraulic Press Brick Company spread across St. Louis, purchasing new tracts of land that contained clay, which was mined, pressed, fired, and carted away to construction sites throughout the city or shipped to other places.

When a clay lot had been leveled to street grade through mining, the company would sell parcels to developers and manufacturers, who might then purchase Hydraulic brick to build their establishments. Sterling was the first to use coal in brick making, Henry Ware proudly remarks. Hydraulic’s coal-fired kilns sometimes came too close for comfort to rapidly growing resi-



Blackstone Building, Chicago 1909

dential areas, however, especially those just north of Forest Park where Eliot's parents moved in 1905 after their youngest son departed for prep school in the east. The introduction of coal gave Hydraulic a competitive edge in its early days but proved detrimental to the trees of the park and an unhealthy nuisance for its neighbors. Eliot's anecdotes and asides paint a picture of how the Hydraulic company shaped St. Louis's geography, architecture, environment, and economy.

In addition to this interesting document, the Hydraulic archive includes correspondence from Charlotte Eliot, Henry Ware Eliot, Jr., and other family members, mostly about the disposition of the stock they inherited after the death of Henry Ware Eliot, Sr.. Charlotte's letters vary from typed business transactions to personal handwritten notes to George Baker, Hydraulic treasurer and erstwhile associate of her husband. In a letter of April 12, 1922, she complains about the recent lack of stock dividend payments: "The passing of three quarterly dividends in succession is in my family something of a tragedy. My son Tom broke down from over work, and was ordered to take three months vacation. My daughter Charlotte depends on her dividends to send her daughter to college this fall. Can you give me any encouragement as to a July dividend?" Because of the irregularity of these dividends, Thomas disposed of most his Hydraulic stock during the 1920s, instead investing in Western Union (in retrospect, there is a certain symbolic significance to the transfer of his loyalties from brick to telegraph stock). The archive also contains a power of attorney signed by Thomas in 1901, granting his father control of his 347 shares of brick company stock and 499 shares of Greenleaf Real Estate, and one letter from the poet, dated 1947, directing the company where to send the dividend for a recently unearthed Hydraulic stock.

These items of interest to Eliot scholars constitute only a small portion of the extensive Hydraulic archive, acquired by the Building Arts Center after the brick company was purchased in 2000. Although uncatalogued, it is not disorganized, and reveals the many points of contact between the brick company and the Eliot family. For example, the first page of a book of handsome stock certificates dating back to the 1880s confirms William Greenleaf Eliot's ownership of 150 shares. Bound in large, locked volumes, minutes of company board meetings are recorded and signed in Henry Ware Eliot's hand throughout the thirty years that he served as secretary.

Several photographs of the Board of Directors show H. W. Eliot front and center, bearded and unsmiling, as was the style of the day (in stark contrast to board photos from the 1960s and afterwards, when smiling came into fashion). Company annual reports from the early twentieth century give an indication of the ups and downs that, we may assume, affected Eliot family pocketbooks as well. The archive contains detailed accounts of the company's real estate and equipment holdings; records of the number of bricks produced and sold each year at each of its many yards and branches throughout the Midwest and Eastern U.S.A.; financial documents and summaries; notes from stockholder meetings; documentation of lawsuits and worker's compensation claims; results of chemical and mechanical tests relating to brickmaking; promotional material including beautiful catalogues of Hydraulic brick designs; tax documents; and, from the later twentieth century, files concerning environmental regulations and waste management. As the 135-year record of a major American manufacturing company, the Hydraulic archive is a significant resource for historians of architecture, business, labor relations, and—most of all—St. Louis itself.

The road to the National Building Arts Center follows railroad tracks through an industrial area across the river from St. Louis. The Arch is just visible through a forest of refinery towers. "St. Louis Steel Casting Inc." is the only sign that greets visitors to the Center, which combines the functions of museum, architectural salvage repository, and document archive. Behind a modest brick building stretches a quarter mile of decommissioned warehouses in various states of disrepair and renovation. Here the director, Larry Giles, stores his extensive collection of rescued architectural elements from St. Louis and beyond, such as cast-iron storefronts, carved and cast stonework, stained glass, antique building hardware and woodwork, liturgical artifacts from demolished churches, and a wealth of decorative bricks and terra cotta tiles produced by the Hydraulic and other local companies in their heyday.

A visit to the collection provides a glimpse into the past grandeur of St. Louis, but for those who can't make it, the Center's website (<http://web.nationalbuildingarts.org>) offers information about the building materials of St. Louis and an informative essay by architectural historian Mimi Stirtz about the Hydraulic Press Brick Company.

T. S. Eliot and Organicism

continued from p. 5

As Diaper's study repeatedly demonstrates, Eliot not only supported and studied the organicist movement, but he also remained devoted to the cause well into the latter stages of his career. In support of this framing, the book's three central chapters provide extended analyses of his editorial assignments through which he championed organicist ideals at *The Criterion*, the *New English Weekly*, and the *Christian News-Letter*. This leads Diaper to consider Eliot's poetic output anew: "While Eliot's use of the desert theme in *The Waste Land* evoked man's lack of spirituality, in the 1930s and 1940s many of the organicists believed that the increasing desert landscape across the globe was a direct result of humankind's loss of religion and the associated lack of reverence and respect for the soil" (14). Diaper is not mounting a simple cause and effect argument, for *The Waste Land* precedes the organicist movement by at least a decade. Instead, he is making a more provocative statement by suggesting that Eliot's poetry grew alongside the conversations surrounding agricultural preservation in England. *The Waste Land* and organicism, the book proposes, are mutually informing. Diaper makes a similar point in his work with *East Coker*, seeing Eliot's religious beliefs as inseparable from his agricultural thinking. He is thus compelled to argue against those who find in Eliot an irreligious or "pagan" concept of agrarianism. Here Diaper explicitly responds to Jed Esty and Alexandra Harris, who have made precisely this assertion with reference to *Four Quartets*' pagan-influenced, "ritualized dance" (114). According to Diaper, however, Eliot's organic imaginary cannot be separated from either his religious or his poetic philosophies, countering scholarship that might move against the grain of the poet's expressed intentions.

Inasmuch as *T. S. Eliot and Organicism* offers bold ways of reading Eliot's organic imaginaries, greater attention to the wider scholarship of ecocriticism and the environmental humanities would have better situated the volume. For instance, Eliot's conception of organicism would be even more compelling if brought into conversation with Ursula K. Heise's *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet* (2008), which makes the case for an "eco-

cosmopolitanism" that weds the urban and rural, the local and global. And were Diaper's claims more self-consciously grounded in the vigorous, decades-long debate concerning the relationship between "nature" and "culture," he might have offered a more compelling critique of Eliot's viewpoint that "a flourishing culture could emerge only from a healthy agriculture" (6). In Diaper's book, the term "agriculture" often functions as a metonym for the "natural" in ways that reify the non-human world and render it subordinate to human culture-making. Within certain environmentalist frameworks, "agriculture" might be considered "inorganic" insofar as it serves, first and foremost, anthropocentric ends. William Cronon's "The Trouble with Wilderness" (1995) or Timothy Morton's *Ecology without Culture* (2007), to say nothing of the countless other ecocritical studies these two salient works inspired, might both have helped to clarify core terms like "culture" and "agriculture."

Still, *T. S. Eliot and Organicism*'s profound reconsideration of Eliot's organic thinking will undoubtedly inspire future approaches to ecocriticism and Eliot studies. Diaper leaves little room to doubt that there was an "organic Eliot," in whose company we might find new methods of approaching a "green modernism" (178). And while attention to other "green" scholarship might have been helpful, the book's critical payoff extends far beyond environmental concerns. In acknowledging "the dwindling of spirituality in an industrialized society," Eliot espouses a vision in which the city and country exist in harmony, as a holistic ecology of societal exchange and Christian-influenced community (55). At stake in Eliot's sense of organicism is nothing less than an entire reconceptualization of culture. As Diaper articulates in no uncertain terms, "Eliot saw redemption only in a thoroughgoing return to the soil. . . . The belief that man needed to renew his love and respect for the soil and to treat it with a sense of humility was common among many members of the organic movement" (82). The organicists clearly shared Eliot's love for defined proclamations about human culture and mankind's thriving. Theirs is a program grounded in the ground itself, and when readers encounter the Eliot of *The Waste Land*, *The Hollow Men*, and *Four Quartets*, they encounter a poet who is likewise "grounded," concerned for the material and spiritual soil upon which we all stand and survive.

T. S. Eliot and the Dynamic Imagination

continued from p. 5

“that transform an observation, feeling, or thought into recognisably poetic form” (3, 7–8). As a thesis, that’s not exactly controversial. Who would question the importance of metaphor to poetry and poetics? To imaginative literature generally? Eliot himself called metaphor “the life of style, of language” (qtd. on 4). But no matter. This book’s considerable strengths lie less in its overarching argument than in Kennedy’s incisive readings of Eliot’s poetry and prose, both at a bird’s-eye level—one senses, throughout, her confident grasp of the poet’s oeuvre—and in granular, local detail. Here she is, for instance, reading *The Dry Salvages*:

Eliot’s phrase “distant rote in the granite teeth” spits furious foam from behind its accretion of sharp dentals. Under the menace of the repeated canine metonymies the denotative function of the verbs begins to break down. . . . The poetic softness of the “torn seine” billows across the line break, catching on the splintered lexical edges of the “shattered lobsterpot.” (77–78)

Note the remarkable agency Kennedy grants Eliot’s language here, as she does throughout the book. Rarely content to leave words at their “denotative function,” she grapples in often strikingly tactile ways with the form and materiality of Eliot’s poetic diction: those sharp dentals, those splintered lexical edges.

This keen attentiveness to word and image characterizes each of the book’s three main sections. In Part I, Kennedy shows how Eliot found his most crucial figurations for literary creation in Shakespeare, especially in *The Tempest* and in “the transformative potential of the sea-change” (13). As a poet, Kennedy argues, Eliot took his “most deeply indebted and powerfully recursive metaphoric language” from Shakespeare, while as a critic he relied on the Bard for “various key self-analytical terms” (83). Yet Eliot’s metaphoric vocabulary was of course not exclusively indebted to Shakespeare. The next section, Part II, turns to the importance of light, twilight, and darkness in Eliot’s imagination, as informed by his wide reading in popular science. In particular Kennedy demonstrates how Eliot’s po-

ems “draw on the conceptual shifts and solar winds of modern physics,” including how the Eliotic trope of “invisible light” derives “directly from the physics of Einstein and Eddington” (108, 152).

Kennedy continues her study of Eliot’s most telling figurations in Part III, which takes up the poet’s recurrent preoccupation with compound ghosts, doppelgängers, and hollow men. In large part, she argues, Eliot drew these figures up from the wells of depth psychology. Especially important were the ideas of Carl Jung, whose doctrine of psychic reintegration “effects the same continuity between the living and dead past as Eliot advocated in ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’” (194). Kennedy has much to say about Eliot’s receptivity to “the mythic and the archetypal in the work of fellow artists (notably Joyce),” although we learn little about the extent of Eliot’s actual reading in Jungian psychology (169). Rather, Kennedy presents Eliot as indelibly influenced by the “literary diffusion” of pseudo-Jungian preoccupations in the interwar period. “Filtered through the work of [Eliot’s] contemporaries,” she writes, such ideas “directed the imagination towards the subterranean springs that might release a poem without requiring that the poet be called to give account of his own dark materials” (169).

One especially resonant trope within “the common language of Eliot and Jung” is the nekua: the rite of “propitiatory blood sacrifice” to the dead, such as Homer depicts in the famous katabasis (descent to the underworld) of Book 11 in the *Odyssey* (194, 209). Eliot shared Pound’s insistence on the nekua’s “specifically poetic dimension, its encoding of the necromantic mysteries of literary patrimony” (213). Kennedy relates these mysteries to Harold Bloom’s apophrades, the Return of the Dead, though one might wish for more explicit discussion of Bloom’s own intellectual indebtedness to “Tradition and the Individual Talent.” (One might also wonder at Kennedy’s inattention here to Eliot’s Christian theological sources for these descents into darkness—as well as at the vanishingly small role Christianity plays throughout this study of Eliot’s creative imagination.) Finally, examining Eliot’s katabases in the last three *Quartets*, Kennedy demonstrates Pound’s particular influence on those poems and even invites us to see, in “the ‘com-Pound’ ghost” of *Little Gidding*, a spectral homage to *il miglior fabbro* (220).

Questionable puns aside, Kennedy is frequently engaging in her efforts to map the charged allusive

associations that emerge across Eliot's body of work. At its best, this study evinces something of Hugh Kenner's talent for identifying and making sense of modernism's "patterned energies." In one brief span of pages, for instance, Kennedy plumbs the metaphorical logics that conjoin the Lysol bath of *Sweeney Agonistes* to the death and transformation of Phlebas in *The Waste Land*, as well as to Prufrock's ragged claws and to moments in "Dans le Restaurant," *Murder in the Cathedral*, and *Four Quartets*. Along the way, she also explains those enigmatic "garlic and sapphires in the mud" in *Burnt Norton* by triangulating them with Ariel's Song in *The Tempest* and with the Verdenal-entombing mud of the Western Front. After all, "mud, like seawater, is a medium of transformative death" (40).

Only very rarely do the connections seem stretched or forced. And occasionally (as occasionally in Kenner), the patterns that emerge seem merely suggestive, revealing nothing so clear-cut as cause and effect, direct or indirect influence. Take chapter 5, which adduces three centuries' worth of

optical investigations by Bishop George Berkeley, Robert Darwin (Charles's father), and Arthur Edgington as relevant to a modest handful of lines in Eliot's essays and poetry, before embarking on a series of observations about Wordsworth and Coleridge, then De Quincey, Hogg, and Hopkins. Kennedy leaves us to make what we will of this constellation of echoes, affinities, associations—though doubtless her very act of constellating them will spur readers to unanticipated inferences of their own.

Overall, this study is distinguished by Kennedy's unflagging attunement to Eliot's language and to its submarine significations. Every chapter contains instructive insights; the analysis leaps nimbly between far-flung nodes within Eliot's corpus, as well as between his writings and diverse literary, scientific, philosophical, and psychological texts. Taken together, the book's virtues at both the micro and macro levels—its trenchant close readings and synoptic scope—recommend it to any serious reader of T. S. Eliot.

The Great War, The Waste Land and the Modernist Long Poem

continued from p. 7

Tearle argues in his introduction that scholars have overestimated the contribution of T. S. Eliot to the history of this form. A "glance at the set texts on university undergraduate modules" in the UK motivates Tearle's revisionism and leads him to his somewhat dated conclusion about the scholarly consensus regarding Eliot's poetry—debatable, at least in the US, in light of the ever-evolving curricula of the last several decades (3). Because "only in the past decade or so has [the virtual monopoly of Eliot and Pound] been seriously challenged," Tearle views himself as a champion of the crowded-out poems of Hope Mirrlees, Richard Aldington, and Nancy Cunard (3; emphasis added). Keen on contesting a "great man" theory of influence, Tearle begins his pivotal chapter on *The Waste Land*—the longest of the book—by endeavoring to "[re-examine] some of the most widely held assumptions about the poem in light of its specific post-war context, as one of several notable modernist long poems rather than a *sui generis* work without precedent" (7). He coins the term "parafluency," or "a kind of convergent evolution of thought

inspired by the same sources," to overturn this past or present idea of *The Waste Land* as a self-contained work of genius (44). "Parafluency," the antidote to studies of influence based upon powerful, individual authors, zeroes in on the "cultural atmosphere" of the time for the shared sources of communal, or even involuntary, developments in poetry (12).

Through its repudiation of cause and effect, parafluency permits Tearle to make abstract claims about how poems arise. In 1920, for example, two years before *The Waste Land*, Hope Mirrlees published *Paris*, which "came to many of the same conclusions about the modernist experiment, but independently of Eliot and before him" (43). Tearle repeatedly insists that common techniques such as "classical and modern parallels" and "literary allusion" were epiphenomenal to the "cultural atmosphere of the time," and he goes so far as to wonder whether these modernist hallmarks were "inevitable in the years following the Armistice" (44; emphasis added). Despite this flirtation with cultural determinism, availing himself of the privilege of historical retrospection, Tearle ultimately concentrates on the direct influence of *Ulysses* on the modernist long poem. "Like Joyce's novel," he rightly observes, *Paris* "contains all of the nominal ingredients of a great epic,

but brought down to earth and shrunk down to size” (46). In *Paris*, “the descent into the underworld is no more than a journey on the Paris underground,” and the sprawling setting of the classical epic—the “vast nation or empire”—is reduced to a single city so that “Mirrlees can focus on the small everyday details of life in the metropolis” (46).

As an “epic shrunk down to size,” the modernist long poem is preoccupied with the fate of heroism in the wake of Versailles. In his chapter on *The Waste Land*, an “epic without a hero,” Tearle aligns modernism’s conflicted attitude toward the hero with ruptures in poetic form (86). He marries the “anti-heroic” mindset of Eliot with the verse form of the “unheroic couplet,” in which “the second rhyme complements the first, not by chiming with it, but by simply repeating it” (101, 102). Tearle traces a literary history of its associated term, “homorhyme,” in effect collapsing his theoretical distinction between parafluence and influence: he finds this technique at play in Ford Madox Ford’s “Antwerp” (1915), D.H. Lawrence’s “New Heaven and New Earth” (1917), and W.B. Yeats’s “The Second Coming” (1919). Homorhyme reflects the “sense of mental deadlock and physical stasis” of post-war life and intertwines shell-shocked psychology with verse; for example, the lines “If there were water / And no rock / If there were rock / And also water” represent the “stuttering near-aphasia” of many of the speakers in *The Waste Land* (104). Indeed, the First World War underlies the emergence of this technique, but it is another thing altogether to suppose that this form would have been handed on even if the poets had been acting in isolation, breathing in the air of a mystical culture that would obviate the need for the stimulation and criticism of their peers.

Although parafluence theoretically avoids the traps of chronology, Tearle emphasizes the fact that Joyce and Mirrlees beat Eliot to the punch. And although parafluence theoretically avoids the traps of influence, Tearle portrays 1925 as a particularly Eliot-tinged year, when Richard Alding-

ton’s *A Fool I the Forest* and Nancy Cunard’s *Parallax* came to grips with the undeniable legacy of *The Waste Land*. In his chapters on Aldington and Cunard, aimed at redressing their undue obscurity, Tearle lauds their stubborn attempts to define themselves in opposition to Eliot, who looms ever larger over the history of the modernist long poem: Aldington “did object to Eliot’s poetry,” and the noteworthiness of Cunard’s *Parallax* rests upon her “need to look back to Eliot’s poem in order to move forward” (135, 165). In his chapter on Pound, moreover, Tearle contradicts his earlier argument for a diffuse determinism. “Eliot’s influence,” he writes, “helped to make Pound’s *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* what it is” (59). Although Tearle questions the idea of Eliot as the *sui generis* shaper of the age, an idea that may strike some readers as a grandiose straw man, Eliot nevertheless remains central to this book. *The Great War, The Waste Land and the Modernist Long Poem* starts off with somewhat unwieldy objectives, but it also helps to break the unnatural prominence often given to 1922 in our accounts of the period. By bringing Mirrlees centrally into the picture, Tearle has enriched our understanding of the wide reach of the modernist long poem. If he had avoided the theoretical burden of a neologism, we would be left with several illuminating close readings of *Paris*—no small merit—and scratching our heads, perhaps, at his claim that the poems he studies had to have been written, regardless of whether the lion’s share of credit goes to Eliot or to the epoch as an overwhelming whole.



At Rosalita's Cantina: Tony Fathman, Laura Coby, Ann Marie Jakubowski, Deryl Davis, Jayme Stayer, Annarose Steinke

40th Annual Meeting of the International T. S. Eliot Society
St. Louis, September 2019

ELIOT AND THE DESERT

This paper interrogates the multifaceted rhetorical significance of deserts in Eliot's works. The term "desert" has multiple definitions, but what unites these characterizations is an "absence": of rain, vegetation, animal life, and, metaphorically, spiritual nourishment. However in *Desert Solitaire* (1968), Edward Abbey claims, "There is something about the desert. . . . There is something there which the mountains, no matter how grand and beautiful, lack; which the sea, no matter how shining and vast and old, does not have." Catrin Gersdorf elaborates, noting that this "something" is the desert's potential to be an "historically, culturally, and symbolically rich terrain," one that "inspires and allows for new forms of social and cultural ordering." Given this complicated notion of desert, I aim to add to the growing conversation on Eliot and ecocriticism by examining Eliot's deserts as not just physical places, but also as metaphorical conditions full of potentiality.

Deserts are not the central scenery in Eliot's works, but when they appear, these landscapes convey a sense of isolated, yet intimate interaction. The personae of "The Hollow Men" dance in the arid "cactus land" around "the prickly pear," and in "Choruses from the Rock," the desert moves from its "remote" location "in southern tropics" to "the heart of your brother." By considering the relationship of the speakers in Eliot's works to a text's physical landscape, I argue that the desert functions as a space of transformation that exists on a continuum from purgatorial transition to a form of salvation. These spaces are not empty; instead, there is a hopeful expectation at the center of Eliot's deserts, a connection between speaker and location, that needs to be unearthed.

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**DESIRING THE PAST, TRANSCENDING THE PRESENT:
WAR AND EQUIVOCAL NOSTALGIA IN T. S. ELIOT'S
FOUR QUARTETS**

While Eliot scholars have thoroughly explored the themes of time and memory in *Four Quartets*, surprisingly little has been written about the role of nostalgia in the poetic sequence. Gabrielle McIntire's brief essay on "Ambivalent Nostalgia in T. S. Eliot's Poetry" points out

that the poet tends to undercut or withdraw from his brief expressions of nostalgia, like the rose garden sequence in *Burnt Norton*. Acknowledging such ambivalence, this paper argues that nostalgia is nonetheless central to Eliot's handling of the past in *Four Quartets*, particularly to his vision of the nation in wartime.

A number of studies of late modernist literature—most notably Esty's *A Shrinking Island* (2003), MacKay's *Modernism and World War II* (2007), and Harris' *Romantic Moderns* (2010)—read *Four Quartets* as an exploration of personal and national identity in light of English political vulnerability. Nostalgia plays a key but under-acknowledged role in this process.

For Eliot, the "imaginative claiming of England" involves a nostalgic vision of the national past, understood through layers of history accumulated by particular places. *Four Quartets*, especially *Little Gidding*, charts the contrast between the riches of a submerged national culture and the struggles and dissatisfactions of modern life, with its spiritual emptiness and wartime violence. It balances longing for past cultural vitality with the desire to transcend the war-torn landscape and the exigencies of human experience more broadly. Examining nostalgia in *Four Quartets* thus sheds light not only on an under-analyzed theme in Eliot's work but also on the paradoxical emotional dynamics of late modernist literature.

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T. S. ELIOT AND HIS LEGACY IN CHINA

Although Eliot did not know much about China, he is a household name among the poets and intellectuals in that ancient nation. Indeed, Eliot's writings and literary criticism exerted a great impact on the development of modern Chinese literature. Understanding Eliot's role in the development of Chinese New Poetry is an imperative step for the understanding of the development of modern Chinese literature. My paper explores both the ways in which Eliot's works were introduced into China, and how Chinese writers and critics since the 1920s received his poetry and literary criticism and gave responses in their own studies and writings. I highlight Eliot's role in the development of modern Chinese literature and suggest that the enduring legacy of Eliot's writings will con-

tinue to have an important influence on Chinese literature in the future.

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ACCESSIBLE ELIOT

In 1947, T.S. Eliot insisted that there should never be an annotated edition of his poetry. When, in 2015, Johns Hopkins released Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue's long-awaited, two-volume, fully annotated *Poems of T. S. Eliot*, several critics singled out the annotations for their esotericism and profusion as well as their essential uselessness to any but the most dedicated Eliot scholars. The authoritative text that should have helped a new generation of Eliot students break through the poet's protective carapace of erudition turned out to be a parody of itself.

Not only does the new edition fall short as a pedagogical tool (What reader would not be discouraged to find that the first stanza of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" was accompanied by no fewer than four pages of dense notes?), but it also reinforces some of the dominant modes of an often patriarchal modernism. Eliot's celebrated position in the traditional masculinist canon, coupled with the obscurity of his references and the complexities of his political context, calls for a feminist digital pedagogy where, in the words of Jane Marcus, "the students do not relate individually to the teacher. They form a common bond with the teacher and the other students to read and critique race, class, gender issues. . . . They teach their teachers and each other without being driven by competition."

In the Spring of 2018, Dr. Lockerd tasked a group of students, with producing a more useful and less daunting annotated edition of Eliot's work. In the Spring of 2019, Dr. Foster's students added to the project. Our presentation introduces and argues for the importance of Accessible Eliot (<https://www.accessibleliot.com>)—a free, web-based, multimedia, annotated collection of Eliot's early poetry.

Martin Lockerd
Schreiner U

Ashley Foster
California State U, Fresno

"PROJECTIONS IN THE HAIKU MANNER": RICHARD WRIGHT, T. S. ELIOT, AND TRANSPACIFIC MODERNISM

In the months leading up to his death in 1960, Richard Wright composed over 4,000 poems, 817 of which he selected for *This Other World: Projections in the Haiku Manner*, a collection that was not published until 1998. I show how these experiments with haiku mark a significant advance in a vibrant tradition of East-West exchange in American literature that includes T. S. Eliot. Wright's close study of Buddhism and haiku, most notably in scholarship by R. H. Blyth and D. T. Suzuki, helps to explain why these haiku-inspired poems are best understood in light of his early, formative encounter with Eliot's *The Waste Land*, and the abiding memory of Eliot in works published throughout Wright's career. Wright's constant revisiting of Eliot's *The Waste Land*, including Eliot's allusions to Buddhist scripture in that poem, fundamentally shaped his style and perspective in *This Other World*.

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THE ROOTS OF ELIOT'S IDEA OF DRAMA

One recurrent idea in Eliot's works after the 1930s is the relation between his social concepts of drama and his ideal of an agrarian foundation to society. In *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, Eliot notes that "a very advanced stage of civilization" is needed for certain kinds of religious and social conflicts to be portrayed in the theater; "for the conflict must have meaning in the audience's experience before it can be made articulate by the dramatist and receive from the audience the response which the dramatist's art requires." Yet just a few years earlier, in "The Responsibility of the Man of Letters," Eliot argues that "within any cultural unit, a proper balance of rural and urban life is essential." This paper argues that Eliot conceives of dramatic poetry as particularly needing a rural substrate to function properly and examines his prose for evidence of this link and its implications for his thought.

Joshua Richards
Williams Baptist U

"MONEY -- ESPECIALLY FOREIGN MONEY -- IS FASCINATING": THE LLOYDS BANK MONTHLY COLUMNS, 1923-24

Superficially, it might seem that the "Foreign Exchange" columns which T. S. Eliot wrote for *Lloyds Bank Monthly* would be among our best resources for extrapo-

lating what Eliot did during his tenure as a banker and what his perspectives were on global finance between the wars. These columns are, indeed, useful in this respect. However, they are far from a transparent resource, as the author's imagined audience is presumed to possess highly specialized financial expertise, consisting of training in neoclassical economics, informed perspectives on interbellum trade, and knowledge of Lloyds macro strategies. Over the last several years, I have attempted to approximate something resembling the competencies and mediocrities of a Lloyds branch manager. In this paper, I attempt

to read some key selections from the "Foreign Exchange" columns as one of Eliot's imagined readers. In so doing, my aim is to capture the corporate culture in which Eliot was immersed and on which he has become influential. I also argue that, even though they are esoteric even by Eliot's standards, there are structures and objects in the "Foreign Exchange" columns that are reconcilable with the more familiar oeuvre of poetry and criticism.

Matt Seybold
Elmira College

SAMLA Atlanta, November 2019

ELIOT'S BELATED MIDDLE POEMS

This paper examines Eliot's strategic use of verse narrative to dramatize belatedness through his "middle period," from 1919-1930. Extending my arguments elsewhere about Eliot's preoccupation with belatedness in his early work, this paper shows how he adapts the narrative strategies that he had learned from Laforgue and others (from the March Hare notebook) to meet his changing religious and political commitments through the 1920s and 30s. It suggests that, for Eliot, states of irrevocable belatedness are not simply accidents of history or timing but, rather, are fundamental to the way we understand the world and to the ability to engage with intense emotional upheavals in the present.

Anthony Cuda
UNC Greensboro

ELIOT'S RELATIONS: PROSE CORRESPONDENCES

This talk puts new material in Eliot's prose work in conversation with the contemporary correspondence, as part of a new model of modernist correspondences. I am particularly interested in the minor correspondences—the linking figures that connect certain phrases in the prose to letters and outside interlocutors. I ask what we might learn about modernist identity as a set of relations in motion.

Gabriel Hankins
Clemson U

ELIOT'S "ANTI-HUMANISM" AND THE ELIZABETHANS

Eliot's theory of the dissociation of sensibility, best laid out in the Clark Lectures, uses the metaphysical poets as its exemplars of the dissociation. By turn, the metaphysicals serve as the chief markers in Eliot's broader literary / cultural history, the point of a shift from the "ontological to psychological" which defines the future direction of western experience and art. The theory makes for a tidy (if quite radical) historical map, and it reshaped the critical and cultural valuation of the metaphysical poets and their work indelibly.

But a deeper examination of the prose relating to the core ideas of his theory of the dissociation of sensibility reveals that the picture is not nearly so simple. The Elizabethans, not the metaphysicals, were often the group around which Eliot worked out his theory, and the core ideas of that theory relate not just to a project of literary historicizing, but encompass the Romanticist / Classicist debates that will shape his future critical and cultural commitments, and can be traced as far back to the fixations of his early philosophy work at Harvard and Oxford. *The Complete Prose* allows the tracking of this complicated thread in ways never before possible. Exploring the links between Eliot's metaphysical poets and his conception of the Elizabethans helps to illuminate why he chose the metaphysicals (and what he meant—and did not mean—by the term); as valuably, it helps us to make better sense of some of his earlier work on the Elizabethans, by virtue of their close connection to the dissociation of sensibility in his thought—perhaps most significantly, his (in)famous dissatisfaction with *Hamlet* in 1920 and with Shakespeare in general.

Craig Woelfel
Flagler College

30th Annual American Literature Conference
 Boston, November 2019

AMERICA CALLING: ELIOT'S WOOD THRUSH

As a young boy, Eliot was an avid bird watcher. The wood thrush was the main bird that lingered in his imagination as a reminder of his youth in America. This paper deals with the relation of the wood thrush to Eliot's desire to return to the world of his youth, the world that included his family and Emily Hale, and to the change in the meaning of the bird that occurred during his residence in America in 1932-33. In *Ash-Wednesday* and *Marina*, he idealized the memories of his youth; the year in New England led to a de-idealization that can be seen in *Burnt Norton*, forcing him to re-conceptualize his "first world."

Jewel Spears Brooker
Eckerd College

**SEGREGATED SENSATIONS: T. S. ELIOT AND THE
 COLOR LINE OF ST. LOUIS**

"Easter: Sensations of April," Eliot's 1910 notebook poem, offers a rare glimpse of the poet's childhood experiences in a densely populated, multiracial urban neighborhood. Significant details such as the heat of April, the smell of asphalt, and the sight of a "little negro girl who lives across the alley" place this poem in turn-of-the-century St. Louis, Missouri, a former slave state that stayed in the Union, developed a system of partial racial segregation. Streetcars were not segregated, for example, but playgrounds were. Residential city blocks were not segregated, but families were. In this poem, how do the poet's sensations (or are they memories?) reflect the child's consciousness of St. Louis's color line? And how were Eliot's perceptions of space, sensation, and other people shaped by the regime of segregation, which is a form of estrangement? My paper examines "Easter: Sensations of April" in the double context of Eliot's college reading in the philosophy of sensation and memory and his childhood environment of Locust Street and urban St. Louis, to propose a new understanding of Eliot's preternatural attentiveness to sensation and his lifelong sense of alienation.

Frances Dickey
University of Missouri

**ELIOT'S AUDITORY IMAGINATION: THE POETICS
 AND POETRY OF SOUND AND SILENCE**

T. S. Eliot's poetry and prose feature auditory experience as content and organizing principle. In his "Matthew Arnold" essay, he broadly defines the "auditory imagination" as something "penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end." Later, in "The Music of Poetry," Eliot claims "the music of poetry is not something which exists apart from the meaning." Far from escaping into obscurantism, Eliot's auditory imagination opens towards a nonrational conception of meaning, one that simultaneously engages the senses and the limitations of language itself. As Eliot developed his poetry in tandem with his changing religious beliefs, he progressively figured listening, music, and silence as the auditory encounter with the divine, one that limns between sounds and silence. Most analyses of Eliot's auditory imagery focus on historical accounts of auditory technology or the poet's various musical influences. I propose a critical shift that sutures historicist and hermeneutical methods by examining how Eliot's auditory imagery materializes his theories on poetic form, meaning, and religious belief. In particular, the dynamic interplay of music and words with silence and stillness provokes us to think of bodily, aesthetic experiences as analogues to and initiators of abstract or religious thought. *The Waste Land* and "The Hollow Men" abound with imagery of voices, while in *Burnt Norton*, Eliot writes, "Words, after speech, reach / Into the silence. . . ." In order to ground this analysis, I employ the rhetorical figures of apophasis and aposiopesis, which both signify language's limits by producing silence. Ultimately, this paper demonstrates how Eliot's poetics of sound and silence resonate in his poetry and beliefs.

Alexander Ruggeri
Tufts University

**AT THE FRONTIER OF METAPHYSICS OR
MYSTICISM: THE RELIGIOUS AESTHETICS OF
ELIOT'S POETIC IMPERSONALITY**

T. S. Eliot's poetological essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" gives a philosophical account of his theory of poetic impersonality. He attacks the personality and praises the ideal of impersonality as a corrective against the Romantic impulse to celebrate "what is individual, what is the peculiar essence of the man." Eliot appeals to a much older allegiance to which he believes the artist should adhere: tradition. This impulse will ultimately carry Eliot from tradition to religious faith; however, in 1919 his essay will "halt at the frontier of metaphysics or mysticism," confining itself to the realm of aesthetics. At this early stage in Eliot's career, the religious stakes of his poetical thinking are not yet explicit. Eliot's early ideas about poetic impersonality prefigure the outright mysticism of *Four Quartets*. My paper sees poetic impersonality as a fundamentally religious aesthetic. I explore the religious stakes of poetic impersonality and show that self-annihilation and creativity are engaged in a dialectical relationship.

Emily King
Stanford University

SITUATING THE MODERNIST GROUND OF ENGLAND'S PASTS: T. S. ELIOT'S POETIC LANDSCAPING

T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and *Burnt Norton* abound with moments where depictions of the tropology of landscape—both natural and unnatural—appear as material representations of British pasts, jutting up through its present—what one might call an anachronistic native primitivism. My paper considers how this points to what, materially, constitutes the ground of modern England according to Eliot's particular brand of modernism. For example, his depiction of the church of St. Magnus Martyr is a figure of a London space constituted by its layered history as much as the modern cataclysms that threaten to alter it, such as the dead flowing over London Bridge. Both are part of the "Unreal City" that constitutes a new version of realism through which Eliot seeks, like Ezra Pound, to "Make It New." The realism of this Britain is a Thames characterized by rats and rot—decay being more symbolic of the heart of empire than his predecessor Joseph Conrad's glorious darkness of the Roman's first landing on British shores in the opening pages of *Heart of Darkness*. I argue that Eliot uses such remnant pasts figured as unreal futures and presents to aid him in inviting readers to re-see English history in the present via depictions of the internal residues of pre-Enlightenment English pasts—from the Roman to the Norman, the Celtic to the Medieval—figured here as ruins and scars upon the landscape of England itself.

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Anita Patterson, Cyrena Pondrom, Nancy Hargrove, Julia Daniel

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