

Time Present

The Newsletter of the T. S. Eliot Society

Number 61

Spring 2007

CALL FOR PAPERS

**The 28th Annual Meeting of the T. S. Eliot Society
September 28-30, 2007**

The Society invites proposals for papers to be presented at the annual meeting in St. Louis. Clearly organized proposals of about 500 words, on any topic reasonably related to Eliot, along with biographical sketches, should be forwarded by June 15, 2007, to the President, Professor William Harmon, Department of English and Comparative Literature, UNC CH, Chapel Hill, NC, 27599-3520; or preferably by email to wharmon03@mindspring.com.

Papers given by graduate students and scholars receiving their doctoral degrees no more than two years before the date of the meeting will be considered for the Fathman Young Scholar Award. Those eligible for this award should include the fact in their submission. The Fathman Award, which includes a monetary prize, will be announced at the final session of the meeting.

PEER SEMINAR: ELIOT, CULTURE, IMPERIALISM

This year's seminar will be led by Jed Esty of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Professor Esty is the author of *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England* (2004) and co-editor of *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* (2005).

The seminar will offer participants an opportunity to share and discuss short papers about Eliot in relation to ancient and modern empires, postcolonial approaches to modernism, and/or colonial archives and discourses (including anthropology). We will examine Eliot's career as both exemplary and idiosyncratic with regard to prevailing ideas about the connection between modernism and colonialism. One central question we might consider is whether new models of British and U.S. empire have shifted the terms of the debate about Eliot and national affiliation (the English Eliot vs. the American Eliot). Other topics might include religion, secularism and empire; Eliot, Conrad, and Kipling; or racism/nativism/localism in the context of the Anglophone world empires. Close textual readings as well as broader historical or contextual methods equally welcome.

The seminar is open to the first 15 registrants; registration will close July 1st. Seminararians will submit 4-5 page position papers by e-mail, no later than September 1st. To sign up, register for the conference by going to the Society Web Site (www.luc.edu/eliot). Questions may be addressed to Michael Coyle (mcoyle@mail.colgate.edu).

THE 2007 T. S. ELIOT MEMORIAL LECTURER: GEORGE T. WRIGHT

George T. Wright is Regents' Professor of English, Emeritus, at the University of Minnesota, and the author of several books and many articles, especially on poetic style, including *The Poet in the Poem: The Personae of Eliot, Yeats, and Pound* (1960); *W. H. Auden* (1969; rev. ed., 1981); *Shakespeare's Metrical Art* (1988); and *Hearing the Measures: Shakespearean and Other Inflections* (2001). This last book includes studies of Wyatt, Donne, Yeats, and Lowell, and two essays that appeared in *PMLA* and won the MLA's William Riley Parker Prize: "The Lyric Tense: Simple Present Verbs in English Poems" (1974) and "Hendiadys and Hamlet" (1981). Among his other articles are "Eliot Written in a Country Churchyard: The *Elegy* and *Four Quartets*" (1976) and "Sustained Stages and States: Eliot's Peculiar Personae" (1990). A former member of the T. S. Eliot Society's board of directors, and a former Fulbright lecturer in France and Greece, he has also published a collection of poems, *Aimless Life* (1999).

Professor Wright was born in Staten Island, NY, attended Columbia (BA and MA) and the University of California—Berkeley (PhD), and served in the U.S. Army in Europe in World War II.

NEWS

Faber to Publish Eliot's *Complete Prose* and to Continue his *Letters*

Faber and Valerie Eliot have announced two significant Eliot-related publishing projects. First, a seven-volume *Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot* is underway, led by General Editor Ronald Schuchard. Faber's press release quotes Ron as saying, "In collecting Eliot's complete prose for the public domain, this multi-volume edition aims to restore his full voice, and to bring back into hearing the voices of those with whom he struggled to resolve the problems and dilemmas of his time. We begin this project in the belief that the availability of his multiform prose writings will greatly invigorate and inform humanistic studies and cultural concerns in this new century."

In the meanwhile, Hugh Haughton (University of York) has been asked to co-edit Eliot's letters with Valerie Eliot. Volume 2 is expected to be published, at long last, in Fall 2008, together with a revised Volume 1. Around 200 additional pre-1923 letters have emerged since the first edition of Volume 1 appeared in 1988, so we can look forward to an expanded edition.

From the T. S. Eliot Society Website

Our website (<http://www.luc.edu/eliot>) is the first place to turn for the latest news, calls for papers, etc., from the Eliot Society. If you have not visited the website recently, please check it out. It is updated frequently and now even includes space for Eliot-related announcements from outside groups, so you will want to visit regularly!

Current announcements posted on the Society's website include:

- The Second Annual T. S. Eliot Festival at Little Gidding (May 2007);
- Call for Papers: International Conference on the Legacy of T. S. Eliot, Sydney, Australia (July 2007);
- Call for Papers: T. S. Eliot, Dante, and the European Tradition, Florence, Italy (January 2008).

Please see the "External Announcements" page on the website for details on these and other events.

For Better Communications, We Need Your Email Address!

To maintain better contact with its members, Cyrena Pondrom, Secretary of the Eliot Society, has created an email "list serve." The Board will use this to give members more timely notification of upcoming meetings, conferences on Eliot, annual elections of officers, or other matters pertaining directly to the business of the Society. Cyrena wishes to assure all members that "this list serve is not a discussion forum with frequent or daily messages." In its first eight weeks of existence, exactly two notices have gone out over the list serve.

If you have not received those messages, that is probably because we don't have your email address! Please write Cyrena (cpondrom@english.wisc.edu), who will be happy to add you to the list.

Call for Book Reviewers and for Personal News

To expand its coverage of the latest scholarship on Eliot, *Time Present* seeks qualified volunteers to review recent books. In addition to our regular reviews, we will be experimenting with alternative formats, including brief notices (e.g., of books on other subjects containing a significant chapter on Eliot) and omnibus reviews (i.e., reviews discussing more than one book together). Volunteers will receive free copies of the books they review.

If you would like to be added to the list of potential reviewers, please send the following information to David Chinitz (dchinit@luc.edu):

- Name
- Mailing address
- Phone number(s)
- Institutional affiliation, if any
- Subjects of books you are interested in reviewing (e.g., Eliot's plays; Eliot and religion; anything)

Also, please send David news of yourself for *Time Present*. Appropriate news would include anything from publications and career moves to relocations, retirements, marriages, and similar items of personal interest. The purpose of these "Society Notes" is to help members of the Society get to know each other and keep track of one another, recognizing that not everyone is able to attend every Annual Meeting.

NEWS (continued)

Society Notes

The scholarly journal *Twentieth Century Literature* recently awarded Frances Dickey the Andrew J. Kappel Prize in Literary Criticism for her essay “Parrot’s Eye: A Portrait by Manet and Two by T. S. Eliot”—an essay that began as a pair of talks she gave at Eliot Society meetings. Jahan Ramazani was the judge. The article was published in the journal’s Summer 2006 issue.

In December 2006, Keiji Notani published *Catholic Renaissance in England*, which deals with Newman, Chesterton, Belloc, Dawson, Gill, Eliot, Waugh, Greene, and Lodge. “Unfortunately,” Keiji reports, “the book is all written in Japanese.”

Patrick Query has been appointed Assistant Professor at the United States Military Academy (West Point), where he teaches literature and composition.

Paul Robichaud’s *Making the Past Present: David Jones, the Middle Ages, and Modernism* will be published by the Catholic University of America Press in May. The book explores the significance of Jones’s medievalism in its modernist contexts.

Call for Nominations

The terms of four members of the Board of Directors—Chris Buttram, Michael Coyle, Elisabeth Däumer, and Melanie Fathman—are due to expire soon. Society members are invited to submit nominations. Five nominations are needed to place a name on the ballot. It is permissible to nominate more than one person, and self-nominations are accepted.

Please send your nominations to both the supervisor of elections, Ben Lockerd, and the president, William Harmon. Their email addresses: lockerdb@gvsu.edu; wharmon03@mindspring.com.

AMERICAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE BOSTON, MAY 24-27, 2007

The Society is sponsoring two sessions at the American Literature Association Conference this May in Boston.

T. S. Eliot: Poem by Poem

Chairs: Rev. Earl K. Holt, King’s Chapel, Boston; Lee Oser, College of the Holy Cross

1. “‘Between the conception / And the creation’: Eliot’s ‘The Hollow Men,’” Thomas Day, University of Central Lancashire.
2. “‘Circles in ‘Sweeney Among the Nightingales,’” Debra San, Massachusetts College of Art.
3. “‘Do(ing) Trauma in *The Waste Land*,’” Richard Badenhause, Westminster College.

T. S. Eliot: Bigger Pictures

Chair: William Harmon, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

1. “‘Actual Visions’ or ‘Agreeable Possibilities’: Nativity Narratives in Eliot and Auden,” Georgiana Banita, Yale University.
2. “‘Eliot and Publication,’” Marcia Karp, Massachusetts College of Art.
3. “‘Eliot on Herbert Howarth’s *Notes on Some Figures Behind T. S. Eliot*,’” Timothy Materer, University of Missouri, Columbia.

For further information, please go to the ALA web site: www.calstatela.edu/academic/english/ala2.

BOOK REVIEW

Richard Badenhause. *T. S. Eliot and the Art of Collaboration*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.

Professor Badenhause's book provides a rich and complex consideration of Eliot's writing and writing habits, and of Eliot's relation to his work, his readers and his tradition. It is also a lucidly written text that does not obfuscate its major critical premises. I like the book very much, but I am unable to identify a central methodology of research or approach in it. I see this absence of a narrow or overly determined approach as a healthy sign of the scholar's large grasp of his subject matter.

Badenhause's broad canvas is defined by lively investigation of the nature of collaboration in Eliot's work and working assumptions. During my reading of this stimulating book, I was at times tempted to see it as a wide-ranging essay on the idea of collaboration itself, as well as on Eliot's working habits and critical predilections. In a loose sense, the book reminded me of the brilliant expositions of Christopher Ricks of such words as "embarrassment" and "prejudice." Badenhause is not, I must point out, primarily motivated by the semantic reach of the word "collaboration" one finds in the Empsonian enthusiasm of Ricks. Nor should he be required to be. If the book has a similarity to another critic's habit of interest in words, it is to T. S. Eliot's almost normative practice in his prose writings of scrupulously—at times much too scrupulously—defining and refining the meaning of the critical concept he means to discuss: say "tradition," "education," or "culture." In a way, then, a long familiarity with Eliot's work, and perhaps a life-long passion for it, has rubbed on to Badenhause's style something of the master's method. If this is not exactly Ricks, I am happy to note that Badenhause's approach is not Bloomian, either: that is to say, it does not give us a strictly classified "map" of poetic collaborations. Eliot's persistent anxiety about collaboration is, however, a major part of what Prof. Badenhause explores and unpacks in his study.

Of late, books on Eliot seem have followed one of two paths, presenting us with either the outcomes of narrowly focused "cultural studies" or materialist/pragmatic aspects of Eliot the writer and his literary personality; or a sometimes much too detailed examination of the minutiae of the author's life, usually establishing a scenario of fracture or doubleness, complete with a narrative of motivations. Though from time to time *T. S. Eliot and the Art of Collaboration* brings us to questions of motivation and authorial predilection, for the most part Badenhause spares us elaborate presentation of impossible-to-verify psychological dramas.

The book's five main chapters are arranged more or less in a chronological way. The first examines Eliot's earlier essays in terms of authorship and impersonality. The second introduces the fruitful concept of "collaboration as conversation" and discusses *The Waste Land* mainly in terms of the Pound-Eliot interchanges about that poem. The middle chapter, quite logically, talks about Eliot's own speculations about collaboration, especially in the context of his great anxiety about his own authority with respect to poetic drama—the feeling that he might not be adequately "credentialed" to discuss such issues. The next section goes into Eliot's almost tentative entry on the scene as a writer for the theater, including the important role played by Martin Browne. The familiar story, however, is narrated with a number of shrewd observations about Eliot's hesitant and sometimes painful journey into authorship as a playwright. It is for this chapter that Badenhause reserves the metaphor of midwifery one usually finds applied to Ezra Pound's role in the 1920s. The last chapter revisits the enabling yet problematic role of John Hayward in the Possum's literary thinking and compositional process.

The book concludes with a brief additional section that suggestively revisits Badenhause's main interest throughout: the multiple implications and values of collaboration in Eliot's creative life. The nominal focus of this concluding section is on Eliot's late essays. My complaint, albeit a small one, is that at least here in the conclusion Badenhause might have given himself freedom for some critical speculation and for theoretical thinking. We are clearly shown that various aspects of "collaboration" operate in the making of Eliot's oeuvre. Badenhause also highlights Eliot's view of collaboration as a necessary tool in strategizing and positioning his works within a world of readers, reviewers, audience and other writers—including, of course, writers who are dead. He makes clear the importance of these matters in a reasonable and persuasive way. This reviewer thinks, however, that some concerted effort might have been made to extend the idea of collaboration to the more general twentieth-century literary scene. That may indeed not have been Badenhause's purpose in this book, but the absence of such elaboration strikes me as something of a lost opportunity.

As with most books one happens to enjoy, I discovered in this book little gems of insight that do not necessarily have massively weight-bearing function in the arguments. For example, I am delighted to find the suggestion that Eliot's Notes to *The Waste Land* can be thought of as an overture to the reader for participation and dialogue, or at least as an attempt to make the inherent angularities of the poem somewhat approachable. In a similar vein, we are urged to see

how in his drama Eliot made his audience co-creators. This possibility, of course, has not been entirely unknown to us. But Badenhuisen contextualizes the phenomenon within the paradoxical frame of Eliot's almost bloody-minded desire for ascendancy in the London literary world, arguing that the same impulse also motivated Eliot's prose writing about drama, which, in turn, educated his readers sufficiently to appreciate his works for the stage. To conclude, I find *T. S. Eliot and the Art of Collaboration* to be, despite its slim size, a well-researched, thought-provoking and enjoyable exploration of a key aspect of the creativity of a master writer.

Shyamal Bagchee
University of Alberta



THREE ABSTRACTS FROM THE 27th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ELIOT SOCIETY St. Louis, MO, Sep. 22–24, 2006

T. S. Eliot and Wyndham Lewis: Convergence and Contrast

This paper addresses the question of Eliot's support for writer and painter Wyndham Lewis. Letters from Eliot to Lewis held in the Wyndham Lewis Collection at Cornell University Library (some of which are published in the first volume of Eliot letters) show that the two were personally close, and that Eliot strongly supported the publication of Lewis's work, granting unconditional inclusion in the *Criterion* for anything Lewis was prepared to submit.

Eliot helped to advance Lewis's work in a number of ways. He endorsed Lewis's novel *Tarr* in the *Egoist* in 1918, finding in Lewis "the thought of the modern man and the energy of the cave-man," a phrase which reflected on the aesthetic theories of both authors. In 1924, the *Criterion* published an early section from what was to become Lewis's satirical doorstop, *The Apes of God*. Lewis's satirical narrative poem *One-Way Song* was published by Faber in 1933 with a Foreword by Eliot in which he was content largely to transcribe the publisher's note supplied by Lewis himself; Eliot was also instrumental in obtaining republication of the work by Methuen in 1960 and supplied a further note.

The importance of the connection between Lewis and Eliot is only infrequently addressed for a number of reasons. Lewis is more closely associated with Pound owing to their joint creation of Vorticism. His indebtedness to Futurist aesthetics (which he simultaneously repudiated) seems far removed from Eliot's involvement with symbolism. Lewis's force-

ful temperament seems very different from Eliot's more reflective demeanour. The denunciation by Lewis of his contemporaries was more famously focussed on Joyce and Pound in *Time and Western Man* (1927). It may be that his attack on Eliot in *Men Without Art* (1934), in which he finds in Eliot "the last of that line of romantics" including Baudelaire and Wilde discussed by Mario Praz in *The Romantic Agony* has proved merely puzzling to readers of Eliot. Above all, the numerous satirical portrayals of Jews in Lewis's work, alongside the explicit support for Hitler, may have made it seem simply undesirable to pay too much attention to his connection with Eliot.

Eliot's support for Lewis reflects their common commitment to classicism. Classicism leads Lewis to create an aesthetic far removed from that of Eliot's poetry. There is also a substantial shared political agenda in terms of the "classicist" rejection of the revolutionary ideal of progress, although Lewis's focus is to avoid violence and war by rejecting the contemporary fetish with change, while Eliot's is to suggest models of stability with reference to pre-modern social ideals. The imponderable element in this relationship is Eliot's attitude to Lewis's caricature of Jews (as in the piece included in the *Criterion*). Lewis's apparent anti-Semitism can be linked to references to Jews in Eliot in a manner likely to inflame aficionados of Eliot. This paper asks whether there is any way to describe this aspect of Eliot's association with Lewis and examines the possibility that discussion of representational codes might allow a just treatment of the issues without creating a polarized contestation around issues of authorial opinion and psychological disposition.

David Ayers
University of Kent



T. S. Eliot and David Jones: Biographical Intersections

The poet and painter David Jones read *The Waste Land* in 1927 and said "That's it"—the first poem he'd seen that was modern in form. Probably he knew what he'd been waiting for because he was a visual artist—"post Cezanne," as he and his friends put it. *The Waste Land* became his favorite poem, and as the century progressed, it seemed only to gain in truth. (It was also his favorite modern work of literature, until the following year, when he read chapter 8 of *Finnegans Wake*.) Two years later he was reading *All Quiet on the Western Front*, put it down and said, "I can do better than that." And he began writing *In Parenthesis*, an epic of his experience in the trenches.

While writing it, in 1930, he met Eliot at a lunch to which Jones's friend, the editor Tom Burns, invited them both. Eliot knew Jones was writing "something," but Jones handed the final typescript to de la Mare. It then went the rounds, and when Eliot read it he immediately thought it "a work of genius." In 1937 it won the Hawthornden Prize, then the only important British literary award. From then on Jones and Eliot were friends.

This paper talks about their friendship; Jones's love of Eliot, whom he thought "a great man"; and his reservations about Eliot's puritanism. It discusses Jones's debt to Eliot in the form of parts of *In Parenthesis* and in the whole of *The Anathemata*; his leering about his debt; his contribution to Eliot's post-war essays on civilization; his allusions to *Four Quartets* in his later poetry; his private, critical dislike for the subjective aspect of *Four Quartets*.

Thomas Dilworth
University of Windsor



Pierre Janet's *désagrégation* in "Gerontion" and *The Waste Land*

Lyndall Gordon, in her chronology dating the *Waste Land* fragments, claims that "The turning-point between a hoard of fragments and a unified poem comes about through 'Gerontion,' which was written in May-June 1919." Whether or not a "unified poem" results and regardless of the precise dating—now reconsidered by Lawrence Rainey—Eliot did see "Gerontion" as a prelude to *The Waste Land* but dropped it at Pound's insistence. Although Gordon does not discuss the implications of this, as a "prelude," the 1919 poem represents a reappearance, as central, of a figure hovering at the edges of poem after poem in Eliot's early work: the disturbed or mad, muttering, and decayed old man as doppelgänger or alter self. In the persona of this mad old man, Eliot represents forms of consciousness central both to his own poetics and to modernist thought.

In *The Protean Self* (1993), Robert J. Lifton argues for the emergence of a new form of self as "fluid and many-sided." This multiplicity of self and consciousness—if not first recognized in the early 20th century—was nonetheless a key characteristic of modernism: indeed, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is as originary to modernism as *Heart of Darkness*. In the late 19th and early 20th century, a major definition of this multiplicity was Pierre Janet's concept of "*désagrégation*," a term that has been translated as "dissociation" and also as "disintegration." Eliot, who knew Janet's work, used both terms at different

times. For Janet, "dissociation" was always the defining characteristic of "hysteria." In its forms of "depersonalization," "derealization," and "dédoublement," or dual personality, this form of consciousness appears repeatedly in Eliot's *Inventions of the March Hare*. In *The Waste Land*, dissociative images recur in coded forms that retain early representations of consciousness in newly structured ways: key examples include the speaker in the hyacinth girl scene, the images of derealization in the destroyed landscape of section V, and the overt doubling of Stetson.

Less defined but more pervasive is the role of Tiresias, who can be read both as the "union" of all the characters and as the contradictory dissolution of consciousness into all fragmented voices. Like Gerontion, he is decayed and his "vision" is sordid. Tiresias is male and female, ancient and modern, sighted and blind, living and dead, the violator and violated in the typist scene (he has "foresuffered all"). Gerontion and Tiresias compose and decompose, multiply personae and disintegrate.

By the time Eliot composed *The Waste Land* in its published version, his prose comments on "*désagrégation*" had shifted from primarily using "dissociation" to primarily using "disintegration," a more total dissolution of self, like that of Gerontion's "thousand small deliberations" and "fractured atoms." In *The Waste Land*, while retaining images of depersonalization, derealization, and doubling, Eliot represents a fragmentation of consciousness so extensive as to be disintegration and at the same time, paradoxically, to define a form of cohesion. In Robert Lifton's words, rather than collapse in the face of confusion and loss of "psychological moorings," "the self turns out to be surprisingly resilient."

Lifton is describing a postmodern response of "tactical flexibility" to the "threats and pulls" in a world of contradiction; the modern response was far less affirmative. My argument is that *The Waste Land* confronted this breakdown of unified consciousness, immediately during and after WWI, at a time when "a heap of broken images" left Western culture without apparent ways to reconstruct a cohesive "self." While the many fragments, drafts, and unused poems of the *Waste Land Facsimile* reveal an unassimilated dissociative consciousness, the function of "Gerontion" and Tiresias is to regain not only an aesthetic "unity" but a newly imagined form of multiple or fluid consciousness. *The Waste Land*, thus, stands as a defining reaction to "*désagrégation*." That this attempt has mixed results is partly due to the available psychological models, but is also a function of Eliot's reading of the discourse of dissociation.

Nancy K. Gish
University of Southern Maine

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