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## Eliot Among the Typists: Writing *The Waste Land*

Lawrence Rainey

In Memory of Donald Gallup (1913–2000),  
Bibliographer of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound

To students of twentieth-century modernism, 1971 was the year when Valerie Eliot published a facsimile edition of *The Waste Land's* pre-publication manuscripts. The event invited new accounts of the poem's genetics and fresh assessments of how those might bear on our understanding of the poem.<sup>1</sup> One year later Hugh Kenner and Grover Smith published two essays which, while differing sharply in premises and procedures, reached a consensus that Part III, "The Fire Sermon," was the earliest portion of the poem to have been written, probably around midsummer 1921, followed first by Parts I and II, then by IV and V, the latter completed in December 1921.<sup>2</sup> Their efforts were followed in 1977 by Lyndall Gordon's attempt at "Dating *The Waste Land* Fragments," a wide-ranging survey which addressed both the principal parts of *The Waste Land* and the various drafts and ancillary poems.<sup>3</sup> In the end, however, Gordon remained divided over the claims of two sharply incompatible hypotheses for dating the principal parts of *The Waste Land*, and concluded that the question was, at least for the present, "unresolved" ("DTWLF," 146). In 1979 there was still another consideration of the dating by Peter Barry.<sup>4</sup> Barry urged a complicated chronology which assigned priority to the first leaf in the typescript for Part I, a passage recounting a rowdy night on the town in Boston (assigned to April–May 1921), followed by all of Part III (September–October), then the rest of Part I and all of Part II (early November), and finally Parts IV

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*Revisiting The Waste Land*  
and his edition of *The  
Annotated Waste Land,  
with Eliot's Contemporary  
Prose* will both appear  
in April 2005 (Yale  
University Press).



and V (November–December). Finally, in 1984, Ronald Bush offered a reading of the poem which echoed Smith's and Kenner's thesis assigning priority to Part III, and relied on Gordon's conjecture that a specific fragment, the one beginning "London, the swarming life," might date from as far back as 1918.<sup>5</sup>

By 1985, however, debate had come to a standstill, and since then a lack of new evidence or argumentation has effectively put a halt to discussion. What had once seemed a new dawn has turned into a lunar landscape, with critics condemned to retracing the dusty tracks left by Kenner, Smith, Gordon, and Barry. At the same time, as Christine Froula has lately noted, more recent criticism has increasingly drawn upon the pre-publication manuscripts to offer "readings that cross easily between the 1921 and 1922 texts," despite lingering uncertainty about the date or status of virtually all the pre-publication manuscripts.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, as Froula's repeated references to "the 1921 manuscript" and "the 1921 text" indicate, the specificity of the pre-publication materials—their heft, their material and historical density—has been levelled by a process of abstraction into "text," or even "the 1921 text," that definite article urging a monolithic entity which jars against the experience of pondering the undated, disordered scraps that jostle one another in the facsimile edition. That experience inevitably raises a host of questions. Did one passage or fragment antedate the others and preserve the trace of an original program which had later dissolved? Were specific passages composed all at once or in discrete and discontinuous moments? Were the ancillary poems conceived as independent works or meant to form part of the poem's texture? Was the poem's composition a straightforward progress or did it entail more entangled loopings? If we are to address these, if we are to restore the specificity of the pre-publication materials and assess their bearing on critical understanding of *The Waste Land*, we must first return to the manuscripts themselves, revisiting the debates which ground to a halt in the mid-1980s. More concretely, we must resolve the vexing question concerning the priority of Parts I–II and Part III, a question that hinged on the identity of a mysteriously missing typewriter. Then, we must establish a chronology for the entire corpus of pre-publication materials to furnish a coherent account of the poem's production, assaying its significance for longstanding debates about the plan or program which shaped the poem's composition. And last, we need to integrate those considerations into a history specific to the early twentieth century, a culture of the book that gravitated around that epitome of modern communication flows, the typewriter, and that recognizably modern protagonist, the typist. "Such an exercise needs no apology," wrote Hugh Kenner at the outset of his own attempt to address the pre-publication manuscripts some thirty years ago. "*The Waste Land* is still a determinant of modernist consciousness, post-modernist also if it has come to that, and the profit . . . may be that we shall learn a little more about the history of our own minds" ("UA," 24; ellipsis added). Or, as Ezra Pound put it in his preface to the facsimile, "The more we know of Eliot, the better" (*TWL:AF*, vii).

## I. Confessions of a Typewriter

The first two scholars who attempted to date the *Waste Land* manuscripts, Hugh Kenner and Grover Smith, agreed that the principal question was the problem of the typewriters—three of them, to be exact. One was especially distinctive: its characters were discernibly larger than those of the others and, as Valerie Eliot noted that it had been used with the kind of “violet ribbon used by Pound” (*TWL:AF*, 63), both inferred that this machine was Pound’s. Eliot must have worked on it while visiting him in Paris in January, 1922, and it had been used to type fair copies of Parts IV and V of the poem because these were apparently the last to be drafted and had still not been typed when Eliot came to Paris (“UA,” 24; “MOTWL,” 131). That left a more difficult question: what was the relationship between Parts I and II, typed on a second kind of typewriter, and Part III, typed on a third? The facts were both suggestive and confusing: suggestive because in theory the different typewriters offered a key to identifying discrete levels or times of composition; confusing because in practice there seemed to be no way of establishing the chronology of their usage.

Both the typewriters had smaller characters than the third and were generally rather similar in appearance. Yet on closer scrutiny they could be distinguished from one another by several features. One was the minuscule forms of the letters *t* and *f*. In the typewriter used for Parts I and II (Fig. 1), the descender of the lowercase *t* ended with a finishing stroke that seemed oddly constricted, curving back sharply as it rose toward the cross-stroke above. Similarly, the ascender of the lowercase *f* concluded with an arc that curled back toward the character’s body, giving it a crabbed appearance, and it ended at a point high above the level of the cross-stroke. The other typewriter, the one used for Part III, was recognizably different (Fig. 2). The finishing stroke of the lowercase *t* culminated in a wide, stately curve, arcing beyond the length of the cross-stroke above, while the ascender of the lowercase *f* also finished with a wide, graceful arc, circling downward until it nearly touched the cross-stroke below. Moreover, this machine had apostrophes and quotation marks that were notably elongated, numerals such as 2 and 3 without serifs, alignment that was straight and even, as opposed to the often wobbly alignment of the other machine, and characters that were crisp and well-defined, as opposed to the worn appearance of the other machine (“UA,” 24; “MOTWL,” 131–2). There was one other distinction that Kenner and Smith did not notice: the machine with apparently wider characters, the one used for Part III, actually allocated less space per letter than the other, 2.10 mm in width, while the machine with the crabbed finishing strokes (Parts I and II) allocated more, 2.12 mm in width.

Both Kenner and Smith concluded that Part III, typed on the 2.10 typewriter, was the earlier material, though they did so on very different grounds. Kenner noted that much of the material in Part III was written in elegiac quatrains (a stanza pattern so named because of its use by Thomas Gray in his famous “Elegy in a Country Churchyard”). The same stanza, he observed, had also been used by John Dryden in his “Annus Mirabilis,” a poem that celebrated the reconstruction of London after the fire of 1666 and elaborated a sustained analogy between modern London and ancient Rome. Eliot

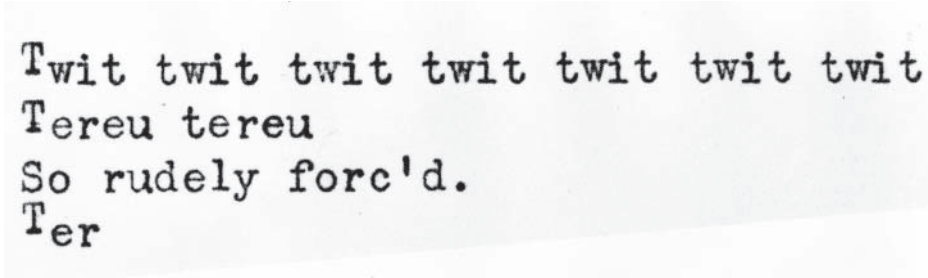
The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne  
 Glowed on the marble, where the swinging glass  
 Held up by standards wrought with golden vines  
 From which one tender Cupidon peeped out  
 (Another hid his eyes behind his wing)  
 Doubled the flames of seven-branched candelabra  
 Reflecting light upon the table ~~where~~ as  
 The glitter of her jewels rose to meet ~~it~~ it,  
 From satin cases poured in rich profusion;



Fig. 1. Text typed with the typewriter that allocates 2.12 mm. per character, used for Parts I and II of *The Waste Land*. From Valerie Eliot, ed., *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1971), 10.

published a review of a new book on Dryden on 9 June 1921, allowing us to infer that he was reading Dryden in May. Further, on 9 May he had notified John Quinn that he had “a long poem in mind,” and that it was “partly on paper” already.<sup>7</sup> Thus, Kenner concluded, the material “partly on paper” was most likely the typescript draft for Part III. And even if this typescript draft was not completed by 9 May, it was certainly completed shortly thereafter, and certainly preceded the composition of Parts I and II. The 2.10 machine, with its rounded, stately finishing strokes, was Eliot’s “London typewriter” (“UA,” 25), which had first been used to type Part III; while the 2.12 was “the one he used at Lausanne” (“UA,” 38).

Grover Smith reached the same conclusion by a complex body of assumptions and inferences. First and foremost, Smith assumed that the passage depicting Madame Sosostriis in Part I derived from Aldous Huxley’s portrait of a fortune teller in *Crome Yellow*, a novel published in November, 1921. If so, he reasoned, Parts I and II, both typed with the 2.12 machine, could not have been written earlier. Second, Ezra Pound had once remarked that the passage beginning “Summer surprised us . . .” contained “snatches of conversation heard by Eliot from his fellow patients” in Lausanne (“MOTWL,” 132).<sup>8</sup> If so, Smith inferred, it reinforced the hypothesis that Parts I and II were written after Eliot’s journey there in November 1921. Third, Vivien Eliot’s written comments on one copy of Part II indicated that she was surprised when she saw it for the first time; and though Smith did not explicitly state this, apparently he assumed that “the first time” could only have been in Paris in January 1922. If so, it corroborated the view that Parts I and II were primarily composed and typed in Lausanne. That inference, in turn, became the premise for another. If Parts I and II were composed and typed in Lausanne, then Eliot must have taken this typewriter with him: “It is assumed that Typewriter [2.12] was a portable machine and that Eliot took it to Lausanne” (“MOTWL,” 133). And from this premise, yet another inference followed: Part III was neither composed nor typed in December in Lausanne, for Eliot would have used the same typewriter to do so; therefore: “It follows, then, that



▲  
Fig. 2. Text typed with the typewriter that allocates 2.10 mm. per character, used for Part III of *The Waste Land*. From Valerie Eliot, ed., *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1971), 30.

the fair [or typescript] copy of Part III was made before Eliot left England on November 18" ("MOTWL," 133). Indeed, it was very likely that "Part III, or some prototype of it, existed by the time Eliot and Vivienne went to Margate about the middle of October" ("MOTWL," 133).<sup>9</sup>

Kenner and Smith, then, agreed that Part III, typed on the 2.10 machine with the rounded *t*'s and *f*'s, had been written and typed before Parts I and II, typed on the 2.12 machine. For Kenner Part III was "the earliest continuous stretch of the poem" ("UA," 25), for Smith "the first germ of *The Waste Land*" ("MOTWL," 133). They also agreed on its date of composition: Kenner assigned it to May 1921, or not long thereafter; while Smith thought it had "probably" ("MOTWL," 133) been composed by early May, and in any case sometime before Eliot left for Margate in mid-October 1921. Finally, they also concurred that the 2.12 typewriter, the one with the crabbed finishing strokes used for Parts I and II, was firmly linked with Eliot's experience in Lausanne: for Kenner it was "the one he used at Lausanne" ("UA," 25), for Smith "a portable machine . . . that he took . . . to Lausanne" ("MOTWL," 133). But that claim entailed an obvious puzzle: if Eliot used this typewriter in Lausanne to type Parts I and II, why did he not also use it to prepare a typescript of Parts IV and V? Why, in fact, bother to prepare a fair copy of Parts IV and V by hand if one had a typewriter at one's disposition? Smith never considered the question, but Kenner clearly foresaw it: when Eliot prepared Part IV, he said, "a typewriter" was "for some reason inaccessible" ("UA," 41). It was at least an answer, however vague ("for some reason"? which reason?). To Smith's hypothesis that Eliot had taken a "portable machine" with him to Lausanne there was a still stronger objection. For when Eliot went on to Paris in January 1922, why did he use Ezra Pound's typewriter to prepare typescripts of Parts IV and V? Had he jettisoned his own typewriter while in Lausanne, or lost it while en route to Paris?

Lyndall Gordon, writing seven years later, struggled to address these questions. She was the first to consult the manuscripts themselves and to focus on evidence offered by study of their papers. By collating the kinds of paper used in *The Waste Land* manuscripts with those used in poems whose dates of composition were already established, she hoped to date not just the major parts of *The Waste Land*, but all the fragments and independent poems. For our purpose, her comments on the chronol-



ogy of Parts I and II, versus Part III, are the most important. Having examined the typescripts of other poems by Eliot, Gordon was aware that the 2.12 typewriter, the one with the crabbed finishing strokes, appeared not only in Parts I and II of *The Waste Land*, but in numerous poems that Eliot had composed much earlier. Gordon, in fact, dubbed it “his Harvard typewriter” (“DTWLF,” 144), implying he had used it at least since 1914, perhaps even earlier. But if so, its usage typified not Eliot’s stay in Lausanne, but his everyday life in London, and therefore it would seem that Parts I and II had been written not late in 1921 in Lausanne, but earlier. And this suspicion was buttressed by other evidence. First, Parts I and II were written on the same kind of paper as a poem titled “Song for the Ophion,” and since “Song” had been published already in April 1921, in the *Tyrol*, Parts I and II had been composed around the same time—long, long before the Lausanne period (late November/December) urged by Kenner and Smith. Second, the original opening of Part I had described a raucous evening in Boston, a scene redolent of the Night-town episode in *Ulysses*, which Eliot was reading in manuscript in early May 1921, so corroborating an earlier dating of Parts I and II. And third, Eliot’s letter of 9 May to Quinn, stating that his “long poem” was already “partly on paper,” could be deemed further confirmation: “on paper” might refer not to Part III or some part of it, as Kenner and Smith had urged, but to Parts I and II.

But against this scenario were two arguments that Gordon found compelling. Eliot, she assumed, would always show any new poems almost immediately to Pound; and since Eliot and Pound were known to have met briefly in mid-October 1921, when Pound returned to London for a week, and since Pound’s letter describing their encounter to John Quinn made no reference to Eliot’s new poem, it could only be because no major poem was yet in existence. Also, Gordon accepted Smith’s assumption that the name of Madame Sosostris came from “Sesostris the Sorceress” in Huxley’s *Crome Yellow*, published in November 1921, completed only in August, 1921—much too late to permit the inference that Parts I or II had been composed so much earlier, in the spring of 1921. On these grounds Gordon rejected her first hypothesis and advanced another. Since nothing about a major poem had been mentioned to Pound in mid-October, nothing had yet been composed. Immediately thereafter, Eliot went to Margate, taking only a few fragments assembled from poems written much earlier, and there wrote Part III, “The Fire Sermon.” The different typewriter used for this manuscript, the 2.10, was “an office typewriter” (“DTWLF,” 145) that he presumably borrowed from Lloyds Bank. (The idea that a bank would lend out office equipment may strike some readers as a bit far-fetched.) After leaving Margate, Eliot had returned to London, then traveled to Paris for a few days. It was there that Pound made his first comments on Part III. Eliot next proceeded to Lausanne, where he composed Parts I and II, then IV and V. Gordon confessed, however, to being puzzled by an obvious objection to this view: why had Eliot typed only Parts I and II in Lausanne, and not IV and V? She concluded: “The story of *The Waste Land*’s composition in 1921 remains, as yet, unresolved. There are two possible hypotheses and one can do no more at present than weigh one body of circumstantial evidence against the other” (“DTWLF,” 146).

Gordon's account revealed the impasse which had been reached in efforts to date the *Waste Land* manuscripts which were based primarily on the facsimile edition. Even her attempt to draw on the papers used in Eliot's earlier poems rested on a documentary base too slender to resolve the outstanding questions. It was only in 1988, when Valerie Eliot published the first volume of Eliot's letters through 1922, that scholars could gain a panoramic view of his correspondence, a precondition for an account of his writing practices that would have sufficient breadth to address not only the vexed debate about the typewriters, but also the papers used in the fragments and independent poems affiliated with *The Waste Land*. If we could collate data about the papers that were used in the *Waste Land* manuscripts with corresponding data from Eliot's letters from 1914 to 1922, we would have reasonable grounds to infer the manuscripts' dates, for most of Eliot's letters are dated, and those that are not can be conjecturally dated with sufficient accuracy.

Mrs. Eliot's edition of *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, vol. 1 1898–1922, contained transcriptions of 509 letters by Eliot. (It also contained 37 by his first wife, Vivien, and 40 by various third parties.) Not all the 509, however, were derived from extant originals. For sixteen letters included in Valerie Eliot's edition, the text was taken from published transcriptions, the originals being no longer extant (chiefly letters to the editors of periodicals); for another thirteen letters, the originals turned out to be held in private collections that could not be consulted. In addition, there are six letters for which the originals have been lost since they were first located by Mrs. Eliot; and for two other letters, both from Eliot to his brother Henry and both dating from December, 1922, I did not obtain permission to examine the originals (though these last two would not affect the dating of the *Waste Land* manuscripts.)<sup>10</sup> In short, there were 37 published letters whose originals I could not examine, leaving 472 of the published letters whose originals I consulted. In addition, I have examined another 166 unpublished letters which were omitted from the 1988 edition: all together then, 638 letters, written on more than 900 leaves. These letters, together with synoptic descriptions of the paper on which they were written, are registered in Table 1, which will be published in *Revisiting "The Waste Land"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005). In addition, I have examined more than 200 leaves of Eliot's student papers, which range in date from 1910 to 1915 and are held at the Houghton Library of Harvard University. These are described in synoptic form in Table 2, which will be published in *Revisiting "The Waste Land."* Finally, I have also examined more than a hundred leaves containing poems and essays by Eliot in a variety of libraries, and these are described in Table 3 (also to be published in *Revisiting "The Waste Land"*). Taken together, more than 1,200 leaves of Eliot's writing have been examined, ranging over a decade, from 1913 to the end of 1922.

The evidence from these tells an unequivocal story about the two typewriters. In all of Eliot's student papers from 1913 to 1915, in all his typed letters from 1914 up to 6 July 1921, and in all the typescripts of his poems and essays during the same period, Eliot uses only one typewriter, the 2.12 machine with the crabbed finishing strokes, the one also used in typing Parts I and II of *The Waste Land*. The other typewriter, the 2.10 machine with wider finishing strokes (the one used in typing Part III), appears for



34 the first time in a letter to Richard Aldington, dated 8 September 1921, (*LOTSE*, 468–9), and it appears in every typescript letter and essay that Eliot wrote thereafter until the end of 1922. Moreover, the 2.12 machine vanishes forever, at least in Eliot's usage.

What brought about this change of typewriters is sketched in a letter by Vivien Eliot to Eliot's brother, Henry, written only three days after Henry, together with his mother and sister, had left England on 20 August 1921. Eliot's mother and sister had been staying in the Eliots' flat at 9, Clarence Gate Gardens for some ten weeks since their arrival on 10 June, while Eliot and Vivien had moved to a temporary flat at 12, Wigmore Street. Returning to their old flat in August after the Eliot family had vacated it, Vivien wrote to Henry:

And the typewriter? What does that mean please? You can hardly have mistaken them *in* (as Tom insists) the circumstances. But whatever it means, you are shown up as an angel. A bloody angel, as they say over here . . . Tom will write about the typewriter. (*LOTSE*, 456–66)

As he did, finally, on 3 October: "I was most painfully touched at finding that you had secretly left your typewriter behind instead of my old wretched one, which I hope will not fall to pieces" (*LOTSE*, 472). Henry, it is now clear, had done something remarkable when he left the Eliots' flat and England on 20 August: he had taken away Eliot's old typewriter, the 2.12 with the crabbed finishing strokes, the one Eliot had used a few months earlier to type Parts I and II of *The Waste Land*, and in its place left behind his own, newer machine, the 2.10 typewriter with the wider strokes, the one that Eliot would soon use to type Part III of *The Waste Land*.

In retrospect, we can see all too plainly how the speculative arguments about the dating of *The Waste Land's* parts went astray. One mistake was the repeated attempt to postulate an opposition between a "London typewriter" ("UA," 25) and "the one [Eliot] used at Lausanne" ("UA," 38) or even "a portable machine . . . that he took . . . to Lausanne" ("MOTWL," 133), or "an office typewriter" ("DTWLF," 145) which Eliot borrowed and then mysteriously lost while in Lausanne. The other was the assumption that the name of Madame Sosotris in Part I could only be derived from the character of Sesotris the Sorcerer in Aldous Huxley's *Crome Yellow*, published in November 1921, and hence that Part I could only have been written thereafter.<sup>11</sup> As if Eliot were incapable, on his own account, of using that most common expression, "so so," to invent a name meant to suggest equivocation.

## II. Paper Tigers

Evoking the holidays in France which he had spent together with Eliot in the summer of 1919, Wyndham Lewis recalled that his companion possessed a curious habit:

I hope I shall not be destroying some sentimental illusion if I record that to my surprise my companion entered most scrupulously in a small notebook the day's expenses. This he

would do in the evening at a café table when we had our night-cap. There was not much more he could spend before he got into bed.<sup>12</sup>

Eliot was a frugal man, at least in the years that ran from 1914 through 1922. Despite earning a relatively substantial salary at Lloyds Bank from 1917 onward, he was beset by worries over money, chiefly prompted by Vivien's many medical expenses and the need to keep a cottage in the country where she spent much of her time. His frugality extended to his consumption of paper as well: he seems to have purchased relatively small batches of paper that would last at most a few months, often only a few weeks, before he would purchase another. (Table 1.) As a consequence, his letters can serve as a control base for establishing the dates of the pre-publication materials of *The Waste Land*. No, we cannot identify the precise day on which a given passage or poem was composed; but often we can establish the week or weeks, and more broadly we can also establish a working account of the poem's documentary evolution and an understanding of its composition—up to a point. And yes, the boundaries of that point will need to be carefully delineated later.

The twenty-six documents which make up the *Waste Land* manuscripts can be divided into four principal groups. One consists of the manuscripts and typescripts which contain the text (or a large block of it) for each of the five parts of the published poem:

1. Burial of the Dead, typescript, 3 ll.
2. A Game of Chess, typescript, 3 ll.
3. A Game of Chess, carbon copy typescript, 3 ll.
4. The Fire Sermon, typescript, 5 ll.
5. The Fire Sermon, carbon copy typescript, 5 ll.
6. Death by Water, autograph fair copy, 4 ll.
7. Death by Water, typescript, 4 ll.
8. What the Thunder Said, autograph fair copy, 6 ll.
9. What the Thunder Said, typescript, 2 ll.

A second group consists of autograph fragments and independent poems which were written contemporaneously with the main text of *The Waste Land*; the fragments were wholly or partly incorporated into Parts I and III, while the independent poems were ultimately set aside:

#### Fragments

10. "Those are pearls," autograph, 1 l., incorporated into Part I
11. "O City, City," autograph, 1 l., incorporated into Part III
12. "The river sweats," autograph, 1 l., incorporated into Part III
13. "Highbury bore me," autograph, 1 l., incorporated into Part III
14. "On Margate Sands," autograph, 1 l., incorporated into Part III
15. "From which, a Venus Anadyomene," autograph, 1 l., incorporated into Part III, then rejected

Independent Poems

16. "Elegy"/"Dirge," autograph, 1 l.
17. "Dirge," autograph fair copy, 1 l.
18. "Exequy," typescript, 1 l.

A third group consists of four poems, conserved in five documents, which are known to have been written some years prior to *The Waste Land*, though there is no agreement concerning their precise dates:

19. "The Death of St. Narcissus," autograph draft, 1 l.
20. "The Death of St. Narcissus," autograph fair copy, 1 l., of which five lines, with alterations, are incorporated into Part I
21. "The Death of the Duchess," typescript, 2 ll., of which six lines, with alterations, are incorporated into Part II
22. "So through the evening," autograph, 1 l., of which eight lines are incorporated into Part V
23. "After the turning," autograph, 1 l., of which 1 line was incorporated into Part V

A fourth group consists of two brief poems, of which no part was ever incorporated into *The Waste Land*:

24. "I am the Resurrection," autograph, 1 l.
25. "Song [for the Opherion]," typescript, 1 l.

Finally, there is the title page, which was added to the manuscripts in January 1922, after Eliot had returned from Paris to London.

The earliest stratum of materials consists of three poems, of which two provided lines incorporated into Part V ("After the turning," and "So through the evening," *TWL:AF*, 108–9, 112–3), while the third ("I am the Resurrection," *TWL:AF*, 110–1) left no traces in *The Waste Land*. "From the handwriting," Valerie Eliot urged that all three "were written about 1914 or even earlier" (*TWL:AF*, 130). Certainly all three are on the same kind of paper, which measures 267 x 205 mm and has a thickness of 0.12 mm. Each has a watermark reading "Linen Ledger," which measures 36 x 124 mm, and a pattern of quadrupled lines that is distinctive. Though Eliot used several varieties of paper bearing the watermark "Linen Ledger" during the academic year 1913–1914 (Table 2), these can be distinguished from one another by their thickness and different patterns of printed lines. Only two exemplars match the paper used in the three poems. One is Eliot's "Notes on Eastern Philosophy," dated 3–10 October [1913], the other his notes on "Perry: Philosophy 25," dated 2 October [1913]. These leave little doubt that the poems should be dated to the same period, between 2 and 10 October 1913.

The second stratum of materials consists of two poems, one of which ("The Death of St. Narcissus," *TWL:AF*, 90–3) is conserved in both draft and fair copy form. From this poem there were five lines which, after revision, would become lines 26–9 of Part I in *The Waste Land*. From the other poem, "The Death of the Duchess" (*TWL:AF*,

104–7) there were six lines which, after alteration, would become lines 108–10 and 136–8 in Part II of *The Waste Land*.

The draft version of “The Death of St. Narcissus” is written on paper which measures 262 x 203 mm, and has a thickness of 0.09 mm. The paper is laid and has 8 chainlines which appear as vertical lines on the leaf at intervals of 28 mm. It also has a watermark reading “EXCELSIOR | FINE | BRITISH MAKE,” one that measures 71 x 125 mm. The same sort of paper turns up only once in Eliot’s correspondence, in a letter to Ezra Pound which is dated 15 April [1915] from Merton College, Oxford. Tellingly, however, the same type of paper also appears in three of Eliot’s student essays titled “[On Matter],” “[Matter and Form],” and “[Aristotle: Definition of . . .]” (Table 2, items 35–37.1). None is dated, but all clearly stem from the same period when, as he explained in a contemporary letter, he “was writing papers for Joachim on Aristotle” (*LOTSE*, 98; Harold Henry Joachim was the Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy at Merton College). The same paper also appears in the penciled first draft of “Mr. Apollinax” (Table 3, item 16) and we may assume that this poem should also be assigned to the same period, mid–April 1915.<sup>13</sup>

The fair copy version of “The Death of St. Narcissus” is written on paper which measures 250 x 198 mm and has a thickness of 0.10 mm. The paper has no watermark, but it does have 8 horizontal chainlines at intervals of 27 mm. The paper is also quadrupled, forming an identifiable pattern: the horizontal lines begin 29 mm from the top edge of the leaf, occupy a block of space that measures 207 mm and contains 24 lines, and come to an end 14 mm from the bottom edge of the leaf (or: 29.207(24).14). No such paper appears in Eliot’s correspondence, nor among his student papers. However, the same sort of paper is used for the autograph fair copy of “Mr. Apollinax,” written in black ink (Table 3, item 17). Since Eliot typically made fair copies shortly after writing a draft, the fair copies of both poems should be assigned to May 1915.

“The Death of the Duchess” is written on paper which measures 258 x 202 mm and has a thickness of 0.07 mm. It has no watermark, but is laid, with 9 horizontal chainlines at intervals of 27 mm. The same paper appears in a small group of five letters by Eliot, all written between 5 and 7 September 1916 (to Eleanor Hinkley, his mother, Henry Eliot, Harriet Monroe, and J. H. Woods; Table 1). The poem should also be assigned to the same period, early September 1916.<sup>14</sup>

The third stratum of material for *The Waste Land* consists of a single poem, “Song [for the Ophion]” (*TWL:AF*, 98–9). A brief work of fifteen lines, it was published under the pseudonym “Gus Krutzsch” in the first issue of Wyndham Lewis’s new journal the *Tyrol*, which appeared on 9 April 1921.<sup>15</sup> The typescript, with corrections in black ink and pencil, is on paper which measures 263 x 200 mm and has a thickness of 0.07 mm. The paper is laid, with 8 vertical chainlines at intervals of 26 mm. It also has a watermark, “BRITISH BOND | [device: S entwined with B],” which lies horizontally on the leaf and measures 65 x 125 mm. There are three different papers among Eliot’s correspondence which have the British Bond watermark, but this one (which I shall designate British Bond [B]) is distinguished from British Bond [A] and British Bond [C] by having chainlines.<sup>16</sup> In Eliot’s correspondence, it appears it was used for sixteen

38 letters which date from 13 September 1920 to 30 January 1921, a long period comprising nearly twenty weeks.<sup>17</sup> I suspect, however, that “Song” was written at the very end of this period, around 23–30 January 1921. For on 30 January when Eliot wrote to Scofield Thayer, the editor of the *Dial*, to apologize for the poor quality of a “London Letter” he had sent him only “a week ago,” he added a comment about his recent writing: “. . . but remember it is the first writing of any kind that I have done for six months; and therefore it came very hard” (*LOTSE*, 435). There is every reason to credit Eliot’s testimony, and on the basis of it we should assume that “Song” was written not long after his “London Letter,” in late January of 1921.<sup>18</sup>

The fourth stratum of materials for *The Waste Land* marks the beginning of the poem as it was eventually published. It comprises four documents: first, a verse fragment beginning “Those are pearls” (*TWL:AF*, 122–3), one line from which is then incorporated into the next document; second, the typescript of Part I (*TWL:AF*, 4–9); third and fourth, the typescript and carbon of Part II (*TWL: AF*, 10–5, 16–21). All these are found on paper which measures 264 x 203 mm with a thickness of .08 mm. The paper has a watermark reading, “BRITISH BOND | [device: S entwined with B],” which lies horizontally on the leaf and measures 66 x 123 mm. What distinguished this paper from the British Bond paper used in “Song” is that it has no chainlines.

The “British Bond [C]” paper also appears in seven letters by Eliot from the first half of 1921:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Recipient</u>	<u>LOTSE PG.</u>	<u>Letter No.</u>
13 February	Mother	436	T.329
9 May	John Quinn	450	T.343
21 May	Scofield Thayer	453	T.345
22 May	Robert McAlmon	449	T.342
22 May	Dorothy Pound	456	T.347
[15 June]	Mary Hutchinson		U.81
15 June	Leonard Woolf	457	T.349

(The letter to Robert McAlmon is incorrectly assigned to 2 May in Mrs. Eliot’s edition.) In addition, the same paper appears in the typescript of Eliot’s “London Letter: May, 1921” for the *Dial*, which appeared in the June issue.

In his correspondence from this period, Eliot makes three references to his work on the poem. Writing to Sydney Schiff on 3 April, he commented (*LOTSE*, 444):

My poem has still so much revision to undergo that I do not want to let any one see it yet, and also I want to get more of it done—it should be much the longest I have ever written. I hope that by June it will be in something like final form. I have not had the freedom of mind.

Nearly three weeks later on 22 April, apparently replying to a query from John Middleton Murry, Eliot observed: “It is true that I have started a poem” (*LOTSE*, 444). Over two weeks later again, on 9 May 1921, Eliot wrote to John Quinn: “I am not

anxious to produce another [book of criticism] for a year or two; and meanwhile have a long poem in mind and partly on paper which I am wishful to finish." But there were also problems: "The chief drawback to my present mode of life is the lack of *continuous* time, not getting more than a few hours together for myself, which breaks the concentration required for turning out a poem of any length" (LOTSE, 451).

Given the preponderance of letters of "British Bond [C]" which date from the period between 9 and 22 May, as well as the "London Letter: May 1921," which must have been posted by 1 May or thereabouts, it seems safe to say that the typescripts of Parts I and II were produced during this period, and that they represented a summation of work that had been in progress since March or February, perhaps even the last week of January.<sup>19</sup> Eliot had good reason for attempting to sum up his work on the poem at just this time: his mother, together with his sister Marian and brother Henry, was due to arrive in England on 10 June, and since he and Vivien were to vacate their flat for them, now was an appropriate time to summarize his progress to date. No doubt there were other autograph drafts and fragments, aside from "Those are pearls," which were jettisoned when Eliot prepared the typescripts in mid-May. How many, we shall see later.

Two qualifications need to be added to this account. The first concerns the first leaf of the typescript for part I, "The Burial of the Dead," which portrays several incidents in the course of a drinking binge that takes place one night in Boston. The protagonists go to a vaudeville show, stop in a brothel, and later are saved from being arrested by the police through the intervention of a Mr. Donovan, a respectable citizen who boasts about his influence down at City Hall. The episode loosely recalls the closing portions of the "Circe" episode in *Ulysses*, with Mr. Donovan playing much the same role as Corny Kelleher. Joyce evidently sent a copy of both the "Oxen of the Sun" and "Circe" episodes to Ezra Pound in April 1921. On 20 April Pound wrote to a friend: "Joyce's new chapter is enormous—megaloscrumptious—mastodonic."<sup>20</sup> Four days later he reiterated this view to his mother: "Joyce next chapter great stuff."<sup>21</sup> It is not clear whether Pound forwarded the manuscript to Eliot or Joyce sent it to him independently, though it is far more likely that Pound did so just after 9 May.<sup>20</sup> Eliot must have read the material quickly, since he returned the manuscript to Joyce on 21 May and commented specifically on what he termed "the Descent into Hell," or "Circe": "I have nothing but admiration; in fact, I wish for my own sake that I had not read it" (LOTSE, 455). The very next day he also wrote to Robert McAlmon, praising "Oxen of the Sun" for its "marvellous parody of nearly every style in English prose from 1600 to the *Daily Mail*" (LOTSE, 450), and in a letter written the same day to Dorothy Pound he exclaimed: "the unprinted manuscript [of *Ulysses*] is even finer stuff than the printed" (LOTSE, 456). While the precise chronology of this complex of events is unclear at several points, it seems likely that the Boston incident, typed on a separate leaf, was a late addition to the typescript which had originally begun on leaf two, with "April is the cruellest month." If so, it may explain why what was then the provisional title of the poem as a whole, "He Do the Police in Different Voices," is so conspicuously out of alignment with the block of the text on the first leaf of the typescript. In this scenario,



40 both the title for the whole poem and the page numbers of leaves two and three were added when the Boston incident was incorporated into the already existing typescript in late May 1921.

That scenario invites a second qualification to our tentative dating of Parts I and II. For if it is true that the first leaf of Part I, the leaf that follows a lead from Joyce in recounting a drinking binge in Boston, was added to the typescript only sometime after 9 May, it follows that the earlier or original version of Part I consisted only of the four verse-paragraphs that we also have in the published poem, the result of Pound's having deleted the drinking episode when he later edited the poem in Paris. That scenario is confirmed by a letter from Wyndham Lewis to Sidney Schiff, the generous patron who was funding the first issue of Lewis's new journal, *Tyro*. Reporting on his progress in gathering materials for it, on 7 February 1921, Lewis wrote:

Everything is practically now complete . . . Eliot I saw 2 nights ago. He is doing his article apace. He also showed me a new long poem (in 4 parts) which I think will be not only very good, but a new departure for him.<sup>22</sup>

Lewis, we must infer, had seen Part I of *The Waste Land* in its original state ("in four parts"), before it acquired a fifth part or the beginning scene of the drinking binge which was added three months later, sometime in May 1921. If so, Eliot's progress had been rapid at first. Beginning sometime after 23 January, when he completed his "London Letter" ("the first writing of any kind I have done for six months"), he had already completed Part I much as we have it today by 5 February, when he showed it to Lewis. Distracted by the two essays he was writing for Lewis's *Tyro*, by another on "Prose and Poetry" for Harold Monro's *Chapbook*, by two more substantial ones on "Andrew Marvell" and "John Dryden" for the *TLS*, and by yet another "London Letter" due at the *Dial*, Eliot progressed slowly in writing Part II during the period from February to April. With the prospect of his mother and family due to arrive on June 10, sometime toward mid-May he summarized his progress so far, preparing the typescript of Parts I and II, and adding a new beginning, the incident of the drinking binge influenced by "Circe," to Part I.

### III. Reconnoitering

Before we address the fifth stratum of materials in the *Waste Land* manuscripts, we must briefly recall the events which engulfed Eliot in mid-1921, and which shaped the conditions of his writing in this period. On 10 June, Eliot's family arrived in London, where they would stay for ten weeks before leaving on 20 August. Eliot's mother and his older sister Marian stayed in the Eliots' flat at 9, Clarence Gate Gardens, while Eliot and Vivien moved into some portion of a flat taken by Lucy Thayer, sister of Scofield Thayer (editor of the *Dial*) and a friend of Vivien's since 1915. Eliot's brother Henry, meanwhile, would be lodged in a separate room at 41, Gordon Square.<sup>24</sup> But with Vivien still feeling poorly, as she had been since February, it was decided in early July

that she would go out “to a place in the country on Chichester harbour” (LOTSE, 459), while Henry would leave Gordon Square and join Eliot in the flat at 12, Wigmore Street.

It was at this moment, however, that Lady Rothermere first broached a plan for publishing a literary and cultural journal, an idea that eventually led to the creation of the *Criterion*. In the short term, it threatened considerable correspondence to work out the terms of her support and Eliot’s participation, and by mid-July Vivien was called back from the country to help. Now Eliot together with Vivien and his brother Henry were “encamped in an attic with a glass roof” (LOTSE, 461) at Wigmore Street, as Vivien put it, or in “very confined and uncomfortable quarters for three people” (LOTSE, 461), as Eliot put it. There they would stay for the next five weeks until the Eliot family departed. When they left, as we have seen, Henry Eliot took away Eliot’s old typewriter, the one he had used since early 1914 at Harvard, and left in its place his own, much newer machine as a present.

The Eliots themselves spent yet another week at Wigmore Street and only moved back to Clarence Gate Gardens, the weekend of 27–28 August. Both Eliot and Vivien were increasingly ill. To Mary Hutchinson he wrote on 1 September: “Also I am feeling completely exhausted—the departure of my family laid us both out—and have had some splitting headaches” (LOTSE, 467). And six days later he reported to Richard Aldington: “My wife has been very ill, we have had to have new consultations, and to make matters worse we have been moving from Wigmore Street back here” (LOTSE, 468). There were also pressing commitments for journalism. In late August he wrote his regular “London Letter: September, 1921,” for the *Dial*, his first essay typed on the new 2.10 machine that Henry had left him. On 16 September he “finished an article, unsatisfactory to myself, on the metaphysical poets” (LOTSE, 469–70), his review of Herbert J. C. Grierson’s anthology, *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler*, which would appear next month in the *Times Literary Supplement*.<sup>25</sup> By the end of September Eliot’s condition was so poor that Vivien arranged for him to see a “nerve specialist” who promptly advised Eliot to “go straight away for three months complete rest and change and . . . live according to a strict regimen which he has prescribed” (LOTSE, 471). But because plans for the *Criterion* had now crystallized and called for Eliot to produce a first number in January 1922, he took a further ten days to postpone the journal’s planned appearance and wrap up affairs in London. It was during this interval, on 10 October, that Ezra Pound arrived in London, where he stayed for eight days with his mother-in-law, Olivia Shakespeare, at 12, Brunswick Gardens in Kensington. Pound met Eliot on the evening of 12 October (Wednesday), went to Oxford to visit Yeats on 13 October, and reported to his wife Dorothy on 14 October: “Eliot at last ordered away for 3 months—he seems rejuvenated [*sic*] at prospect.”<sup>26</sup>

Finally, on 15 October Eliot left for Margate, accompanied by Vivien. Vivien stayed with him at the Albemarle Hotel, Cliftonville, for almost two weeks until 31 October, then returned to London, leaving him alone. But already by 26 October she had reported to a friend that Eliot was “getting on *amazingly*,” looking “younger, and fatter and nicer” (LOTSE, 479). Eliot, in the solitude of a seaside resort grown quiet after its high

42 season, stayed for another twelve days, then returned to London late on 12 November.

He stayed for less than a week, from 12 to 18 November, when he departed for Paris, again accompanied by Vivien. In Paris they stayed at the Hotel Pas du Calais, 59 rue des Saints Pères, Paris VI, where Ezra and Dorothy Pound had been residing until only a few weeks before. Pound and Eliot certainly met during the brief period when Eliot was still in the city. But it seems unlikely that Pound would have had enough time to go through *The Waste Land*. Eliot departed for Lausanne, either on 21 or 22 November, leaving Vivien behind in Paris.<sup>27</sup> In the weeks ahead she would receive little companionship from the Pounds, who were preoccupied with other matters. On 1 November they had moved into a studio at 70bis, rue Notre Dame des Champs, and Pound was soon busy painting the walls and constructing furniture. More alarmingly, on 13 December Dorothy was hospitalized for an abscess on her left forefinger; it required surgery to cut off the tip of the bone and she remained in the hospital until 27 December.<sup>28</sup> In Pound's extensive correspondence Eliot's visit went almost unnoticed, except for one letter written on 5 December to Scofield Thayer: "Eliot seemed fairly well when I saw him on his way through Paris last week."<sup>29</sup>

In Lausanne, Eliot stayed at the Hotel St. Luce, a quiet pension, from 24 November until 2 January, when he returned to Paris. Lausanne, he wrote on 4 December, was a "very quiet town, except when children come downhill on scooters over the cobbles. Mostly banks and chocolate shops" (*LOTSE*, 490). But it was there, amidst "banks and chocolate shops," that Eliot finished his draft of *The Waste Land*. Now, having set out the parameters of Eliot's movements from June through December of 1921, we can turn to the remaining strata of his manuscripts.

#### IV. More Paper Tigers

The fifth stratum of materials for *The Waste Land* comprises five documents. The first is a single leaf containing two independent poems, both in autograph, "Elegy" and the first draft of "Dirge" (*TWL:AF*, 116–9). The second is also a single leaf (*TWL:AF*, 48–9), this one containing a section of verse of twenty-six lines, beginning, "The river sweats." With very light revisions, this becomes lines 266–91 of the published poem. The third document is yet another single leaf (*TWL:AF*, 50–1) which contains a section of verse of nineteen lines, beginning "Highbury bore me," a draft for two of the three songs of the Thames Daughters. With the excision of ten lines and some further revisions, these become lines 292–9 of the published poem. The fourth document is another single leaf (*TWL:AF*, 52–3), which contains twelve lines after cancellations, beginning "On Margate Sands." With no revisions at all these became lines 300–311 of the final poem.

The fifth and final document is a single leaf (*TWL:AF*, 36–7) which contains two fragments. One consists of seven lines and begins, "O City, City"; the passage is later lightly revised to become lines 259–65 of the published poem. The other consists of twelve lines and begins, "London the swarming life"; this passage, with further revisions, became lines 106–9 in the typescript of Part III which Eliot will type up later in London, discussed further below.

All these five documents are written on a distinctive type of paper. Each leaf measures 227 x 177 mm, and has a thickness of 0.11 mm. The paper is wove rather than laid—that is, it has no chainlines—but has a watermark reading “HIERATICA | BOND | BRITISH MAKE | J. S. & C<sup>O</sup> L<sup>TD</sup>.” The watermark is vertical on the leaf, and measures 45 x 48 mm. Hieratica Bond was a popular brand of paper, and it is hardly surprising that other instances of it should turn up in Eliot’s correspondence. The first time is in late 1914, but the size is very different (226–7 x 152 mm) and the paper has a printed letterhead reading “Merton College.” (Table 1, T.19 and T.23; for the sake of clarity we’ll call this paper Hieratica Bond [A].)<sup>30</sup> It also turns up in one letter of August 1918 (Table 1, T.143), but once again the size is very different (224 x 151 mm; we can call this paper Hieratica Bond [B].)<sup>31</sup> And it even turns up a third time in 1919 (Table 1, T.218 and T.222), but this time its size differs more sharply still (178 x 114 mm; we’ll call this paper Hieratica Bond [C].)<sup>32</sup>

The fourth time that a Hieratica Bond paper appears in Eliot’s correspondence (Hieratica Bond [D]), its size exactly matches that of the five documents we have been discussing. And the dates of its usage are revealing:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Recipient</u>	<u>Letter No.</u>
16 November 1921	to Harold Monro	U.88
[16? November] 1921	to Sydney Schiff	T.382, <i>LOTSE</i> , 486
[16 November 1921]	to Mary Hutchinson	U.89
17 November 1921	to Richard Aldington	T.383, <i>LOTSE</i> , 487
30 November 1921	to Ottoline Morrell	T.385, <i>LOTSE</i> , 409
5 December 1921	to Jacques Rivière	U.91

Eliot, in other words, begins to use the Hieratic Bond [D] paper in his correspondence in the first letters that he writes after his return from Margate to London. Quite plainly, the paper was part of a small supply which he had purchased while in Margate, the remainder of which he then proceeded to use up while in London. The Hieratica Bond [D] passages, then, were all composed while Eliot was in Margate, an inference which is confirmed by Eliot himself. For while still in Margate he wrote on [4? November] to Sydney Schiff:

I have done a rough draft of part of part III, but do not know whether it will do, and must wait for Vivien’s opinion as to whether it is printable. I have done it while sitting in a shelter on the front—as I am out all day except when taking rest. But I have written only some fifty lines. (*LOTSE*, 484–5)

If we now take the passages written on “Hieratica Bond [D]” and count not the total lines written, but only those passages which were not deleted, and correlate them with the published poem, we see a distinct pattern:

<u>Hieratica Bond [D] Passage</u>	<u>No. lines</u>	<u>Published Poem</u>
“O City, City” ( <i>TWL:AF</i> , 36–7)	7 lines	259–65
“The river sweats” ( <i>TWL:AF</i> , 48–9)	25 lines	266–91

44	"Highbury bore me" (TWL:AF, 50–1)	9 lines	292–99
	"On Margate Sands" (TWL:AF, 52–53)	12 lines	300–11
		<hr/> TOTAL	53 lines

These passages, then, were plainly the ones that Eliot had in mind when he wrote to Schiff that he had "written only some fifty lines." They were in good enough shape for Eliot to regard them as an identifiable unit: "a rough draft of part of Part III."

But a word of qualification needs to be entered here. Eliot plainly wrote these passages sometime after Vivien left either on 30 or 31 October, since she had not yet seen them, and before he wrote to Schiff. But when did he write to Schiff? Eliot's letter to him is dated simply "Friday evening," and the date of [4? November] is Mrs. Eliot's conjecture. But is this the best conjectural date? Eliot's letter to Schiff complains that Vivien "tells me very little about her own health, in spite of my complaints." The plural "complaints" implies (a) that Eliot has already received several letters or notes from Vivien, and (b) that in reply to them he has already complained at least twice, something it would have been difficult to do in only four days time. Instead it seems more likely that the letter to Schiff should be conjecturally dated to Friday, [11 November], and therefore that the passages in question were written between 31 October, when Vivien left, and 11 November, the most likely date when Eliot addressed Schiff.

There are further implications which can be drawn from Eliot's comments to Schiff. We should recall that the four passages that I have listed immediately above do not exhaust the Hieratica Bond [D] documents. Three texts are conspicuously not included in Eliot's account to Schiff: the two independently titled poems, "Dirge" and "Elegy" (both written on one leaf), and the passage beginning, "London, the swarming life" (this last written on the same leaf that contains "O City, City," though separated from it by a line that slashes across the middle of the page). Let us deal first with the independently titled poems. Eliot makes no mention of them to Schiff. It is possible, of course, that he makes no mention of them because they were not yet composed, or, in other words, that they were composed only after he had written to Schiff on 11 November, and before he returned to London on 12 November. But that seems rather unlikely. And if they were not composed after the Schiff letter, if instead they were composed before, then Eliot's decision not to mention them carries the implication that the independent poems "Elegy" and "Dirge" were not viewed as part of the long poem which he had been discussing with Schiff since April, but were conceived as independent works. I suspect that this was the case, and there is further evidence for it in the way that Eliot treats the independent poems. For Eliot never mines them for lines or passages to be inserted into *The Waste Land*. Instead, they are conceived as having their own integrity. And this treatment differs sharply from how he treats the poems and passages contained in the first two strata of materials which date from October 1913 ("After the turning," and "So through the evening"), mid-April 1915 ("The Death of St. Narcissus"), and September 1916 ("The Death of the Duchess").

These, though originally conceived as independent or potentially independent works, were now in 1921 considered simply raw material from which lines and passages might be wrested—quite differently from the independent poems which Eliot wrote in the course of 1921, such as “Dirge” and “Elegy,” or later “Exequy.” Those poems, written contemporaneously with the drafts of *The Waste Land*, were a concession to Eliot’s concern that his long poem might not be long enough to make up a book, and they were intended to do just that—make up a book. In effect, their place was later assumed by the notes to the poem.

The third text not mentioned in the letter to Schiff is the twelve-line passage, beginning “London, the swarming life,” written on the same leaf that contains “O City, City.” Unlike the independent poems, which were neither incorporated into the larger poem nor treated as raw material from which individual lines or passages might be wrested, this passage was incorporated, with alterations, into the typescript draft of Part III (and its carbon) that Eliot would produce the next week while in London (TWL:AF, 30–1 and 42–3, lines 106–19). Why was it not mentioned to Schiff? There are two possible reasons. The first is that Eliot was describing a coherent “part of Part III,” the section that would become Part III’s conclusion and stretch across lines 259–311 of the published poem. Since “London, the swarming life” formed no part of that coherent section, there was no need to mention it. At the moment he was writing to Schiff, it was simply a fragment that might or might not be later incorporated into Part III, too trifling an affair to announce to a devoted reader and friend. The second possibility is that it simply had not yet been composed. On that hypothesis, it was written still later, sometime during the span of six days when Eliot was back in London (12–8 November), hurriedly preparing the typescripts of Part III, hastily packing for Lausanne. Possible, but not very likely. Better to assign it to the period between 31 October and 11 November, with the other Margate or Hieratica Bond [D] materials.<sup>33</sup>

The sixth stratum of manuscript materials for the *The Waste Land* consists of two typescripts of Part III, a top copy and a carbon (each five leaves); one independent poem titled “Exequy” (one leaf), which is also in typescript; and an autograph draft of ten lines, beginning “The rivers tent is broken,” which has been written on the verso of leaf one of the typescript Part III. For the moment we can set this last text aside and deal with the other three documents. All three documents are preserved on the same kind of paper, which measures 265 x 202 or 203 mm, and has a thickness of 0.06 mm. The paper has eight chainlines, which are vertical, at intervals of 25.5 mm. It also has a watermark reading: “VERONA LINEN.” It measures 14 x 128 mm.

Dating the typescript copies of Part III presents little difficulty. Incorporated into both is the fourteen-line passage, beginning “London, the swarming life” (TWL:AF, 30–1 and 42–3, lines 106–19) which Eliot had recently drafted in Margate, the passage preserved in autograph draft on the same leaf as the “O City, City” passage (TWL:AF, 37). The typescripts, therefore, can only have been produced *after* the Margate or Hieratica Bond [D] passage, and can only have been produced when Eliot had access to the new, 2.10 typewriter which Henry Eliot had given to him as a gift when he left England on 20 August. That dovetails with what we already know: that Eliot did not



46 have access to his typewriter when in Margate, since the eight letters and the Hieratica Bond [D] passages and poems which he wrote there were all written by hand. It follows that these typescripts were produced in the brief interval between Eliot's stays in Margate and Lausanne, the period of little less than a week, from 12 to 18 November, when Eliot was in London again and had access to his typewriter. It is most likely that the independent poem, "Exequy," was also typed up during the same period.

Having dated these typescripts to the six-day period when Eliot was back in London, or between his stays in Margate and Lausanne, we can also discern the broad arc of Eliot's intentions in producing them. Knowing that he would be away in Lausanne for some six weeks, and planning to make a final effort to bring his long poem to completion, Eliot was assembling a working version of the materials he had so far written, a neatly typed "working draft" which he could consult while in Lausanne. Not that Eliot managed to fulfil his good intentions: he plainly failed to type up the autograph leaves which form the fifth or Margate stratum of materials for *The Waste Land* (apart from the passage "London, the swarming life"), those that correspond to the closing portion of Part III of the published poem (lines 259–311). Most likely he simply didn't have enough time.

While we can pinpoint the moment when these typescripts were produced, and integrate that knowledge into a coherent account of Eliot's travel and writing plans, we can only speculate about when Eliot first wrote the rough drafts which he must have used (and then jettisoned) as he produced the typescripts of Part III and "Exequy." When were they written? Not, plainly, during the Margate period from 15 October to 12 November, when he was writing the autograph drafts ("O City, City," "The river sweats," "Highbury bore me," and "On Margate Sands") and the independent poems ("Dirge," "Elegy") which we have already discussed. The rough drafts that went into making the typescript of Part III must date from earlier. In fact, there are really only two periods possible: one, the period from 20 August to 15 October which followed his family's departure for the United States; the other, the period from 10 June to 20 August when his family was visiting and he was staying at Wigmore Street. The later period, 20 August to 15 October, seems less likely. Eliot was busy moving back into his flat from 20 August to 27–28 August, occupied with typing up his "London Letter: September 1921" for the *Dial* in early September, pressed with writing "The Metaphysical Poets" in mid-September, obliged to visit the Woolfs in late September, and worried by his health and hastily planned departure for Margate from 1–14 October. It is more likely that he wrote the rough drafts that went into the typescript of Part III during the ten weeks when his family was visiting, a lengthy period (10 June to 20 August) when he was wholly free from his regular round of social obligations, the dutiful visits to Mary Hutchinson, the Woolfs, the Schiffs, and Richard Aldington. Though we cannot be certain, this period is the more likely candidate.

Finally, we must turn to the passage that we momentarily set aside, the autograph draft of ten lines beginning "The rivers tent is broken" (TWL:AF, 24–5) which is found on the verso side of leaf one in the "Fire Sermon" typescript, the top copy. These lines are, of course, the famous opening to Part III of *The Waste Land*. It is possible that

they were drafted contemporaneously with the production of the typescript, the period between 12 and 18 November before Eliot left for Lausanne. And if so, they would have been thought of as a fragment awaiting some future destination. But such a scenario defies what little we know of Eliot's compositional practices at this time: if his comments to Sydney Schiff are indicative, he wrote with the idea in mind that a new draft would form part of something already in progress or definitely planned, "a rough draft of part of Part III," for example, rather than just writing for the sake of writing. Yet if that is true, then it is much more likely that he wrote what would later become the beginning of Part III only when he was actually in need of a beginning to Part III. That was hardly the case when he was back in London from 12 to 18 November. Then he had a firm, perhaps even too firm, beginning for Part III:

Admonished by the sun's inclining ray,  
And swift approaches of the thievish day,  
The white-armed Fresca blinks, and yawns, and gapes,  
Aroused from dreams of love and pleasant rapes.  
(*TWL:AF*, 22–3)

Moreover, Eliot believed that the seventy-two-line passage about Fresca formed the beginning to Part III not just when he was briefly in London from 12 to 18 November, but during the entire time when he was in Lausanne, from 22 November till 2 January, so much so that while there he even drafted another passage of seventeen lines, "From which, a Venus Anadyomene" (*TWL:AF*, 28–9), that was to be inserted into the Fresca passage between lines 56 and 57. By now, of course, it will be obvious that Eliot needed a beginning for Part III only after Pound, in Paris, had repeatedly run his pen downward across the entire Fresca passage, with nine swift gashes, one so deep that it scored the paper and allowed the ink to bleed through to the verso side. Appropriately, it is on that very verso, and literally right on top of the ink left by Pound's pen, that Eliot wrote "The rivers tent is broken." For when in Paris, as we shall see in more detail below, Eliot lacked paper and had to borrow some from Pound. To write a new beginning to Part III, then, he used the only paper to hand, the discarded old beginning to Part III. In short, Eliot wrote this passage in Paris, probably between 5 and 10 January. It was the last passage that he composed for *The Waste Land*, wedged into the middle of the poem, and preserved in a documentary stratum that antedated its composition by two months.

The challenge posed by the passage beginning "The rivers tent is broken" throws into relief a potential problem which until now has remained only latent, a tension between the poem's documentary stratification and its compositional stratification. That tension surfaces only twice among the *Waste Land* manuscripts, both times within the sixth documentary stratum which we have just discussed. It surfaces here, with "The rivers tent is broken," and it surfaces again with the two typescripts for Part III which, though typed between 12 and 18 November in London, were clearly written earlier (between 10 June and 20 August, in my view). For the moment we need not tease at the implications of that tension, since it has no practical consequences for dating the prepublication manuscripts.

The seventh stratum of materials for *The Waste Land* consists of four documents: the autograph fair copies of Parts IV and V of the poem (TWL:AF, 54–61 and 70–9); an autograph fair copy of the independent poem “Dirge” (TWL:AF, 120); and an autograph passage of seventeen lines, beginning “From which, a Venus Anadyomene” (TWL:AF, 28–9), which was inserted into the Fresca episode that originally began Part III.

All four are written on paper which measures 270–71 x 208 mm and has a thickness of 0.06 mm. The paper is wove, and so without chainlines. It also lacks a watermark. It has however, a distinctive pattern of violet quadrules: the horizontal lines, which begin 21 mm from the top edge of the leaf, consist of twenty-seven lines that occupy a block of space that measures 234 mm, and come to an end 16 mm from the bottom edge of the leaf (or: 21.234(27).16). The paper is not of the quality which Eliot normally used in his correspondence. It should be no surprise, then, that it appears in only one letter, a note from Eliot to Sydney Schiff, dated 19 December 1921 and written when Eliot was in Lausanne. As scholars have long suspected, these materials were composed between 21–22 November, the date when Eliot left for Lausanne, and 2 January, the date when he returned to Paris with the sheaf of manuscripts which Ezra Pound would now edit.

The eighth stratum of materials for *The Waste Land* consists of two documents, the typescripts for Parts IV and V of the poem (TWL:AF, 62–9 and 82–9). The paper used in each is briefly described in Table 4 (to be published in *Revisiting “The Waste Land”*), an account that need not be repeated here. The papers do not match any found in Eliot’s letters, and for an obvious reason: we have no surviving letters from Eliot for the period between 25 December 1921 and 20 January 1922, and it is very likely that these papers were simply borrowed from Ezra Pound. The violet typewriter ribbon and the large sized typewriter (its individual characters are 2.54 in width) are recognizably those of Ezra Pound. There can be no doubt that these typescripts were prepared in Paris sometime between 2 January 1922, when Eliot arrived from Lausanne, and 16 January, when he left Paris to return to London. It is reasonable to infer that the typescript was made early in the visit, between 2 and 5 January.

Because we are tracing both the compositional and documentary strata of the pre-publication materials, we must devise an additional or ninth stratum here to account for the ten-line passage beginning “The rivers tent is broken.” Composed by Eliot to serve as a new beginning for Part III after Pound had removed the entire Fresca passage, it represents the last stretch of continuous writing that Eliot did for *The Waste Land*.

The tenth and final stratum of materials for *The Waste Land* consists of a single typescript leaf, which contains the poem’s title and an epigraph from Joseph Conrad’s *The Heart of Darkness*. The paper measures 263 x 203 mm, and has a thickness of 0.06 mm. It has eight chainlines, which are vertical, at intervals of 25.5 mm. It also has a watermark (“VERONA LINEN”) that measures 14 x 128 mm. The same type of paper appears in two letters by Eliot from January 1922: one, dated 20 January 1922, addressed to Scofield Thayer (T.391, LOTSE, 501), the other dated [26 January 1922] to Ezra Pound (T.394, LOTSE, 504).<sup>34</sup>

The second of these is the most important, for it replies to a letter that Pound had written two days earlier on “24 Saturnus,” or January (*LOTSE*, 497–9), in which he had commented: “I doubt if Conrad is weighty enough to stand the citation.” In his reply of [26 January], Eliot asked: “Do you mean not use Conrad quot. or simply not put Conrad’s name to it? It is much the most appropriate I can find, and somewhat elucidative” (*LOTSE*, 504). Though Pound’s response was diffident (“Do as you like . . . re the Conrad; who am I to grudge him his laurel crown” [*LOTSE*, 505]), Eliot decided to jettison the epigraph by Conrad and find another. All of which makes clear that the single leaf which we have been discussing, containing the Conrad epigraph and the title of the poem, was the topmost sheet of the nineteen-page manuscript seen by Pound on 24 January, containing the penultimate version of *The Waste Land*. It had never formed part of the materials which Pound saw in Paris between 2 and 15 January, 1922, nor was it part of that nebulous entity which recent scholars have called “the 1921 text.” It was typed between 16 January, the day Eliot returned to London, and 20 January 1922, the day he probably sent the typescript off to Pound. Sadly, the rest of the famous nineteen-page manuscript has never been found, and was probably discarded by Eliot when he made a final draft of the poem sometime after 30 January; but if the missing manuscript ever does turn up, we can be sure that it will have been typed with the same 2.10 machine which Henry Eliot had left behind on 20 August 1921, and that it will be on paper bearing the “Verona Linen” watermark.

Having completed our tour through the pre-publication manuscripts which are reproduced in Valerie Eliot’s facsimile edition, we can summarize our conclusions in a synoptic table:

#### Stratum 1

Dates: 2–10 October 1913, Cambridge, Massachusetts

“After the turning” (*TWL:AF*, 108–9)

“So through the evening” (*TWL:AF*, 112–3)

“I am the Resurrection” (*TWL:AF*, 110–1)

#### Stratum 2

Date: c. 15 April 1915, Oxford

“The Death of St. Narcissus,” autograph draft (*TWL:AF*, 90–1)

Date: May 1916, London

“The Death of St. Narcissus,” autograph fair copy (*TWL:AF*, 92–3)

Date: September 1916, London

“The Death of the Duchess” (*TWL:AF*, 104–7)

#### Stratum 3

Date: 23–31 January 1921, London

“Song for the Ophion,” autograph draft (*TWL:AF*, 98–9)

#### Stratum 4

Dates: typed 9–22 May, 1921; missing drafts for lines 1–76 of the published poem composed between 23 January and 5 February, shown to Wyndham Lewis on 5 February;

missing drafts for Part II composed between 6 February and 9 May; missing draft for Boston version of "Night-town" incident (*TWL:AF*, 4–5) composed c. 21 May  
 "Those are pearls," autograph draft (*TWL:AF*, 122–3)  
 Part I, typescript (*TWL:AF*, 4–9)  
 Part II, typescript (*TWL:AF*, 10–5)  
 Part II, carbon typescript (*TWL:AF*, 16–21)

Stratum 5

Dates: composed 31 October to 11 November 1921, Margate

"Elegy" and "Dirge," first draft (*TWL:AF*, 116–9)  
 "O City, City," autograph draft (*TWL:AF*, 36–7)  
 "The river sweats," autograph draft (*TWL:AF*, 48–9)  
 "Highbury bore me," autograph draft (*TWL:AF*, 50–1)  
 "On Margate Sands," autograph draft (*TWL:AF*, 52–3)  
 "London, the swarming life," autograph draft (*TWL:AF*, 36–7)

Stratum 6

Dates: typed 12–18 November 1921, London; composed, 10 June to 20 August 1921, London

Part III, typescript (*TWL:AF*, 22–3, 26–35)  
 Part III, carbon typescript (*TWL:AF*, 38–47)  
 "Exequy," typescript (*TWL:AF*, 100–101)

Dates: composed 5–10 January 1922, Paris (see also *Stratum 9*)

"The rivers tent," autograph draft on Part III, typescript, leaf 1, verso (*TWL:AF*, 24–5)

Stratum 7

Dates: composed 22 November–31 December 1921, Lausanne, Switzerland

Part IV, autograph fair copy (*TWL:AF*, 54–61)  
 Part V, autograph fair copy (*TWL:AF*, 70–9)  
 "Dirge," autograph fair copy (*TWL:AF*, 120–1)  
 "From which, a Venus Anadyomene," autograph draft (*TWL:AF*, 28–9)

Stratum 8

Date: typed 2–5 January 1922, Paris

Part IV, typescript (*TWL:AF*, 62–9)  
 Part V, typescript (*TWL:AF*, 82–9)

Stratum 9

Dates: composed 5–10 January 1922, Paris; preserved on document from Stratum 6.

"The rivers tent," autograph draft on Part III, typescript, leaf 1, verso (*TWL:AF*, 24–5)

Stratum 10

Date: typed 17–22 January 1922, London

Title page with epigraph, typescript (*TWL:AF*, 2–3)

The creation of the title page for a penultimate version of the poem marked only a passing moment in the protracted conclusion to the poem's genesis. Even after Eliot returned to London on 16 January, his manuscripts now bearing Pound's editorial

interventions, the poem had still not assumed the shape we know today. Writing on 20 January to Scofield Thayer, the editor of the *Dial*, to offer him the poem for publication, Eliot briefly characterized his new work as “a poem of about four hundred and fifty lines, *in four parts*” (*LOTSE*, 502; emphasis added). Remarkable as it seems to us, Eliot was planning to issue the poem without Part IV. Six days later, however, when writing again to Pound on [26 January], Eliot had second thoughts, asking: “Perhaps better omit Phlebas also???” (*LOTSE*, 504). Pound replied with characteristic vigor: “I DO advise keeping Phlebas. In fact I more’n advise. Phlebas is an integral part of the poem; the card pack introduces him, the drowned phoen. sailor, and he is needed ABSolootly where he is. Must stay in” (*LOTSE*, 505).

For Eliot, at least, the decision to retain Part IV effectively marked the end of his actively composing the poem, a process that had required just over a year of time, from the final days of January 1921, when he had first begun the draft of Part I that he soon showed to Wyndham Lewis, to the final days of January 1922, when he was absorbing the last admonitions of Ezra Pound. Indeed, in contemporary letters Eliot repeatedly alluded to the length of time it had taken him to write the poem. When Scofield Thayer offered him \$150 for the poem (sight unseen), Eliot refused because the sum “did not strike me as good pay for a year’s work” (*LOTSE*, 507); he had no intention of accepting such a figure “for a poem which it has taken me a year to write” (*LOTSE*, 515). The yearlong saga of the poem had indeed reached its end. But the story of its coda, the composition of the notes, was just beginning.

Even after he had acceded to Pound’s demand that the ten lines of “Phlebas” or Part IV be restored, Eliot still faced a nagging problem which had intermittently troubled him throughout the time when he had been composing *The Waste Land*. The poem was too short to make up an independent book. Worse still, Pound had vetoed the idea of including what Eliot called the “miscellaneous pieces” (three independent poems, “Song,” “Exequy,” and either “Dirge” or “Elegy”), or what Pound termed “Those at end” (*LOTSE*, 504). Moreover, Eliot’s concern over this question had been exacerbated by that of an eminent authority, the American publisher Horace Liveright. Back in January 1922, when Eliot had first returned to Paris from Lausanne, he had been introduced by Pound to Liveright, who was traveling in France and England in search of new authors. Liveright had promptly agreed to offer Eliot a \$150 advance for the poem and a royalty of 15%, largely on Pound’s recommendation, as he hadn’t yet read the poem. But already on 11 January Liveright, by then in London, had written to Pound about his concern over the poem’s length: “I’m disappointed that Eliot’s material is as short. Can’t he add anything?” he pleaded with Pound, who doubtless relayed his worry to Eliot, then still in Paris.<sup>35</sup>

It was Liveright’s suggestion that Eliot “add anything” which ultimately led Eliot to furnish the poem with notes. While they might not make the poem long enough to suit Liveright, they would suffice to make up a small volume which could be published as a deluxe or limited edition in the event that Liveright balked. On 16 February, having learnt from his friend Conrad Aiken about Maurice Firuski, a publisher of deluxe editions who was situated in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Eliot wrote to pursue this prospect:



Your name has been given me by Conrad Aiken . . . I understand that you issue these books in limited editions, and that for the volumes you take in this series you give a sum down in advance royalty.

My poem is of 435 lines; with certain spacings essential to the sense, 475 book lines; furthermore, it consists of five parts, which would increase the space necessary; and with title pages, some notes that I intend to add, etc., I guess that it would run to from 28 to 32 pages.<sup>36</sup>

But Firuski was slow to reply, and by 12 March Liveright had confirmed his interest in publishing the poem as a book. When Liveright finally sent him a contract in mid-June, however, Eliot was alarmed at the vagueness of its terms and turned to John Quinn, the New York lawyer and cultural patron who had generously handled Eliot's contracts with his previous American publisher, Knopf, without charging a fee. To Quinn, therefore, he wrote describing his new work: "I have written . . . a long poem of about 450 words [lines], which, with notes that I am adding, will make a book of 30 to 40 pages" (*LOTSE*, 530). Even now, four months after his letter to Firuski, Eliot had still not completed the poem's notes, and at best had begun "adding" them. But "with notes that I am adding" may well have been more a pious aspiration than a statement of fact, and as late as mid-June 1922, Eliot may not have written even a portion of the poem's notes.

Meanwhile the deadline for submission of a final manuscript, if the book were to be included in the autumn list, was fast approaching: "Liveright said he would print it for the autumn if he had the poem by the end of July" (*LOTSE*, 531). When Liveright, around 9 July, sent Eliot a letter suggesting that he was amenable to the revised contract that Quinn had proposed in the interim, Eliot hurriedly addressed the problem of a typescript in a letter to John Quinn, dated 19 July:

As it is now so late I am enclosing the typescript to hand to him when the contract is complete, or to hold if he does not complete. I had wished to type it out fair, but I did not wish to delay it any longer. This will do for him to get on with, and I shall rush forward the notes to go at the end. (*LOTSE*, 547)

If Eliot really had begun "adding" the notes in mid-June, he must have proceeded very slowly if he hadn't finished by mid-July. Plainly it was a task he approached with diffidence, even indifference.

When Ezra Pound requested a copy of the poem in order to show it to James Sibley Watson, Jr., the co-owner of the *Dial* who had been entrusted with negotiating for the serial rights to the poem after Eliot had quarrelled with his colleague Scofield Thayer, Eliot replied on 28 July: "I will let you have a copy of the *Waste Land* for confidential use as soon as I can make one. Of the two available copies, one has gone to Quinn to present to Liveright on completion of the contact, and the other is the only one I possess" (*LOTSE*, 552). If this second copy of the poem was an exact replica of the copy sent to Liveright, it too lacked the notes. Though we cannot be entirely certain, it appears that the notes were not completed until early August, and that they were then posted directly to Liveright. Only then was *The Waste Land* completed in the form that we know it today.

By 15 September Eliot could tell Pound, in a brief postscript to a letter about other matters: “Liveright’s proof is excellent” (LOTSE, 570). Eliot was much less happy, instead, with the printer who produced the *Criterion* version of the poem in London. To Richard Cobden-Sanderson he wrote on 27 September, “I am also sending you the manuscript and the proof of the first part of my poem, so that you may have a record of the undesired alterations made by the printers” (LOTSE, 574). And on 3 October Eliot wrote him again: “You will see that I am enclosing the corrected proof of the rest of *The Waste Land*. I shall ring you up tomorrow morning at about eleven and will explain why I have done so” (LOTSE, 576). But at last the long travails of the poem were drawing to a close. Two weeks later the first number of the *Criterion* appeared, on 16 October, containing the first publication of *The Waste Land*, without notes. Publication of the poem in the *Dial*, an American magazine, took place a few days later. Five weeks after that, about 1 December, the poem appeared for the first time as an independent book, complete with notes, issued by the American firm of Boni and Liveright.<sup>37</sup>

V. Connecting the Dots

Most of the pre-publication manuscripts for *The Waste Land* are typescript and autograph fair copies, rather than drafts, documents which Eliot assembled from extant drafts in anticipation of a turning point in his private life (Parts I and II in May before the arrival of his family in June; the typescript of Part III between 12 and 18 November, prior to leaving for Lausanne). Drafts, instead, can tell us more about the process of composition. If we set aside the materials produced prior to February 1921, or strata 1 to 3, then we have only seven or eight autograph drafts extant: seven if we think, as Mrs. Eliot does, that “Highbury bore me” and “On Margate Sands” formed a single draft; eight if we think, as I am inclined, that these were separate drafts. If we arrange them in order by their length, from shortest to longest, and then note how many lines from each draft were retained in the final poem, the result would look like this:

Passage	No. of Lines	Lines Surviving in Published Poem
“Those are pearls” (TWL:AF, 122–3)	5	1
“O City, City” (TWL:AF, 36–7)	7	7
“Highbury Bore me” (TWL:AF, 50–1)	8	8
“The rivers tent” (TWL:AF, 24–5)	10	10
“On Margate Sands” (TWL:AF, 52–3)	12	12
“London, the swarming life” (TWL:AF, 36–7)	12	0
“From which, a Venus Anadyomene” (TWL:AF, 28–9)	17	0
“The river sweats” (TWL:AF, 48–9)	25	25
	96	63

Whether these figures represent seven or eight drafts, it remains remarkable how short was a typical draft by Eliot: 13.7 lines in length if they represent seven drafts,

54 only 12 lines if they represent eight. Moreover, since on average only two thirds of a draft typically survived into the published text, it is equally remarkable how many drafts it would have required to make a poem of 433 lines. If the 63 lines that have survived into the final poem represent seven drafts, it would have required 48 drafts. (These calculations suggest that between forty to fifty drafts were lost or discarded during composition.) The trick in writing such a long poem, then, was how to stitch together between 48 and 55 separate drafts. Connectedness, plainly, was a pressing problem.

Of the seven drafts that survive (henceforth we shall follow Mrs. Eliot's view that "Highbury bore me" and "On Margate Sands" are a single draft), one went into the making of Part I ("Those are pearls"), while the other six all went into Part III. Of those six, we recall that four were composed in Margate between 31 October and 1 November, and that three were already conceived as forming a "part of Part III" by [11<sup>?</sup> November] when Eliot described them to Sydney Schiff—"O City, City" (TWL:AF, 36–7), "The river sweats" (TWL:AF, 48–9), and "Highbury bore me" (TWL:AF, 50–3). Together they make up lines 259–311 of the poem as published and form the conclusion to Part III. What unites the three is an associative logic dictated by motifs of music and the river, both fused (after line 266) by the ghostly echo of Wagner's Rheinnai-  
 mens, now the Thames-daughters. For our purpose, we needn't tease out all the possible implications of these passages, which are the subject of considerable debate.<sup>38</sup> Instead we want to stay close to the surface of the poem, to the associative logic and syntactic patterning which shape the flow of composition. The first of the three passages starts up just after the loveless coupling of the young man carbuncular and the unnamed typist, a scene followed by two lines that quote from *The Tempest* (already quoted in Part I), then surge eastward across the cityscape of London, as if traveling from the flat of the typist toward the heart of the financial district, the City (already invoked in Part I):

'This music crept by me upon the waters'  
And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.

Now the poem resumes with a new draft:

O City, City, I have heard and hear  
 The pleasant whining of the a mandoline  
 Outside/Beside a public bar in lower Thames Street,  
 And a clatter and a chatter in the bar from within  
 Where fishermen lounge and loaf and spit at noon at noontime  
 out there/where the walls  
 Of Magnus Martyr stood, and stand, and hold  
 Inviolable { music  
 Their joyful } splendour of Corinthian white and gold  
 Inexplicable (TWL:AF, 36–37)<sup>39</sup>

What is striking in this draft is the repeated tension among three conflicting imperatives: the ambition to assert connectedness to earlier parts of the poem (and especially

to earlier passages in Part III) through either repeated images or syntactic and aural patterning; a countervailing tendency to turn away or digress into new subject matter that threatens to prove a dead end; and a discernible worry that the assertion of connectedness will be too obvious. The phrase “I have heard and hear,” for example, resolutely recalls “But at my back from time to time I hear” (a line that appears twice in the earlier portions of Part III), but is also vexed by the need to be different, to avoid mere repetition.<sup>40</sup> When not working to establish external connectedness to previous portions of the poem, local revisions enhance an assertion of internal relatedness within the draft passage itself: the word “Beside” replaces “Outside” so as to reiterate the plosives of “public bar” and “pleasant,” while “there” (in “there the walls of Magnus Martyr”) must give way to “where” so as to create exact syntactic repetition (“Where fishmen lounge” and “where the walls”). Yet this way of proceeding also courts the risk of too much repetition, of being rather too obvious in its way of asserting relatedness, a dilemma that is played out in the last line of the “O City, City” passage: the phrase “inviolable music” obviously echoes the “inviolable voice” of the nightingale in Part II—much too obviously, we want to say. And so it must be deleted, to be replaced instead with “Inexplicable splendour,” a phrase which reinforces aural connectedness with the preceding lines (still three more plosives), but which is no longer too obvious in reinforcing the motif of music. “Inexplicable splendour” now harks back to “inviolable voice,” but in a very muted way, having changed the ground of likeness from an auditory to a visual register. So muted, in fact, that the passage effectively reaches an impasse: for if one risk that attended this passage had been the danger that it might become too obvious in emphasizing music (“inviolable music”), the other was that it would simply trail off to nowhere, twist away into a dead end, turning into a “withered stump” of composition, we might say. And so it does. True, a very marvelous “withered stump”—but still a “withered stump.” And the passage comes to an end. There is no choice now except to begin again, which is precisely what Eliot will do in his next draft.

And just as we see these procedures at work at a micro-level, so they can also be discerned at a macro-level. For when Eliot completes the three drafts that now form the ending to Part III, with their insistent stress on music, the river, and nymphs or watery semi-deities (the Thames-daughters), the conclusion isn’t just good, it is too good: it seems strangely unrelated to Part III’s opening, the seventy-odd lines of acerbic couplets that depict the wealthy socialite Fresca. The only solution is to force the Fresca passage into having more relatedness with the conclusion, and that is just what Eliot does in the draft that he subsequently writes in Lausanne. As before, the point of connection must be water, and so Eliot puts a large asterisk and the command “insert” directly opposite a passage about Fresca’s reading habits, her immersion “in a soapy sea / of Symonds- Walter Pater- Vernon Lee.” Once more he begins, this time transforming Fresca into a version of Venus rising from the sea:

From which, a Venus Anadyomene  
 She stept ashore to a more varied scene,  
 Propelled by Lady Katzeegg’s guiding hand,  
 She knew the wealth and fashion of the land. (TWL:AF, 28–9)

56 And so it continues for another thirteen lines, all in what Pound called the “too loose” manner of Eliot’s pastiche of Pope (*TWL:AF*, 38–9). (The image of Venus Anadyomene even furnishes a neat echo of the “gilded shell” in which Elizabeth and Leicester sail, in the Thames-daughters’ song.) But our concern here is not with the passage’s success or failure, but with the kind of order which is dictating the composition of the poem: that order is fundamentally contingent and retrospective. It is not, in other words, an order being achieved as the realization of a plan or program, dictated by some predetermined notion of mythic structure or ritual pattern; what *The Waste Land* achieves are always relative and incremental orders of coherence that are local, contingent, and retrospective in nature.

Which brings us to the last of the six drafts written for Part III, the draft written so late it is effectively the final extended passage of the poem, penciled in only after Pound had gutted the eighty-seven lines devoted to Fresca. As before when drafting “From which, a Venus Anadyomene,” Eliot starts with the same givens inherited from his earlier composition of the ending to Part III, music, the river, and nymphs or watery semi-deities:

The rivers tent is broken and the last fingers of leaf  
Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind  
Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed.  
(Sweet Thames etc.)  
The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers  
Ca Newspapers, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends  
Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are departed.  
(And their friends, the loitering heirs of City directors)  
Departed, have left no addresses.  
By the waters  
(*TWL:AF*, 24–5)

In one sense, this passage does exactly what it was meant to do: it “anticipates” the City location, the motifs of music and song, and the nymphs (or Thames-daughters) that appear at Part III’s end. Its diction resonates with calculated echoes that extend both backwards and forwards, with “clutch” looking back to Part I (“What are the roots that clutch?” line 19), or “brown,” glancing not only back to a line in Part I (“Unreal City, / Under the brown fog . . .,” lines 60–1) but also ahead to its repetition in Part III (“Unreal City / Under the brown fog . . .,” lines 207–8), and still further ahead to the brown tones that dominate the opening of Part V (“the sandy road” [332], “the mountains of rock” [334], the “mudcracked houses” [345] and “dry grass” [355]) and culminate in the mysterious figure “gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded” (364). And because this new introduction so closely “anticipates” the terms of Part III’s conclusion, Part III now acquires an envelope, circular, or ring structure in which music, nymphs, and City location appear at both the beginning and the end, a structure that all the more firmly sets off the little five-line coda which has been excluded from the circle’s interior and so contrasts all the more violently with, and comments all the more damningly on, what has come before it:

To Carthage then I came

Burning burning burning burning  
O Lord Thou pluckest me out  
O Lord Thou pluckest

burning

Surely it does. Surely the desolating power of the coda has only been enhanced by the new introduction to Part III. And yet many readers, I think, may still deem the introduction to Part III a bit forced, a tad strained. And signs of such strain are all too readily detected: why is that we are being asked to bid farewell to nymphs who, until this point in the poem, have never appeared? How can we say “good-bye” before we’ve managed to mutter “hello”? And doesn’t this transparent rupture in logical-causal relatedness work to undermine the very assertion of connectedness which this passage was meant to achieve through the use of anticipatory repetition? Or is it perhaps the other way around? For isn’t it the case that the factitious use of repetition to intimate connectedness, say at the beginning and ending of Part III, works to disable, to neutralize, to annihilate the claims to logical and spatio-temporal connectedness which are elsewhere being asserted, say in the line “and along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street” (258), that line which was to transport us from the flat of the typist to the locale of the City? Such attention to the demands of the cityscape, and to an implied logic of spatio-temporal coordination, is rendered otiose by the competing claims of a wholly different kind of order that is organized around the use of repetition and pattern to suggest symbolic depth, resonance, and development. The outcome is something of a standoff: the incremental moments of coherence which *The Waste Land* fashions are not only local, contingent, and retrospective in nature, they are also driven by conflicting imperatives derived from their claim to modes of coherence—one appealing to repetition and pattern to invoke symbolic depth, resonance, enhancement; the other appealing to the kind of logical, causal, and spatio-temporal connectedness typical of narrative—that are deeply contradictory, perhaps even self-cancelling.

Yet that self-cancelling quality is not solely or strictly an effect of juxtaposition. Consider the tensions at play in one especially notable instance of repetition and patterning which spins around the phrase “Unreal City” that turns up with artful symmetry in Parts I, III, and V:

Unreal City  
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn (60–1, Part I)

Unreal City,  
Under the brown fog of a winter noon (207–8, Part III)

Readers, by this point, will reasonably expect the next variant to run:



Unreal City  
Under the brown fog of a winter evening

Or perhaps:

Unreal City  
Under the brown fog of a winter twilight

But instead the poem offers up:

Falling towers  
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria  
Vienna London  
Unreal (374–7, Part V)

Pattern, in this stunning sequence, dissolves into something that resembles patter—the schemata of a list, that lowest of all literary forms, unorganized by any syntax; a bare heap lacking even the fig leaf of a comma. Surely repetition and pattern have been invoked in this sequence of passages; but just as surely they have also been undermined in a histrionics of non-relationship. “Unreal City / Under the brown fog of . . .”: that phrase, we are led to infer, has somewhat the same status as the “inviolable music” which flickered into view when Eliot was drafting the “O City, City” passage. It is obvious, the poem seems to say, it is too obvious. And the effect is wickedly corrosive, for it also decomposes the claim to connectedness and resonance advanced by the repetition of “brown”—the “brown land,” the “sandy road,” or the “brown mantle, hooded.” Here are likenesses, the poem murmurs, but likenesses that only turn into illusions. So perhaps the real work of signifying, we reason, is being done somewhere else: perhaps there, in that grim catalogue of toponyms, or in the kind of spatio-temporal connectedness which place names imply, connectedness that is a property both of realistic fiction and our sense of the world to which such fiction lays claim. But of course, we have already traveled “along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street” once before, and we have seen where that led.

Consider another example, the verse paragraph that makes up the poem’s famous opening, with its surfeit of lexical, syntactic, and thematic gestures toward pattern and cohesion, some of which I emphasized:

April is the cruellest month, *breeding*  
Lilacs out of the dead land, *mixing*  
Memory and desire, *stirring*  
Dull roots with spring rain.  
Winter kept *us* warm, *covering*  
Earth with forgetful snow, *feeding*  
A little life with dried tubers.  
Summer surprised *us*, *coming over* the *Starnbergersee*  
With a shower of rain; *we* stopped in the colonnade,

*And* went on in the sunlight, into the *Hofgarten*, 10  
*And* drank coffee, *and* talked for an hour.  
*Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.*  
*And* when we were children, *staying at the archduke's*,  
 My cousin's, he took *me* out on a sled,  
*And* I was frightened. He said, Marie, 15  
 Marie, hold on tight. *And* down we went.  
 In the mountains *you* feel free.  
*I* read much of the night, and go south in the winter.

Here is pattern and repetition—and with a vengeance. As sentence after sentence uncoils, new modes of syntactic and lexical patterning spring into shape, creating recognizable if evanescent zones of coherence.<sup>41</sup> No one, after all, can miss the five participial constructions that set off the line-endings in lines 1–6, or the insistent use of six adjective-noun pairings (“cruellest month,” “dull roots,” “spring rain,” “forgetful snow,” “little life,” and “dried tubers”). A second and overlapping zone of coherence springs up at line five with the appearance of the poem’s first pronoun, an “us” first echoed and then elaborated in lines eight, nine, and thirteen before giving way to “me” (14) and “I” (15, 18). Still a third zone, overlapping with the second, looms into view at line eight, stretching to at least line thirteen and typified by words that are either German (“Starnbergersee,” “Hofgarten”) or associated with a German-speaking area, the former Austria-Hungary (“archduke”). While yet a fourth zone, overlapping again with both the second and third, begins to materialize at line ten with the conjunction “and,” which is artfully reiterated at lines eleven (two times), thirteen, fifteen, sixteen and eighteen. And we might identify still other tonal zones within this verse paragraph—the gnomic sobriety of the opening or the conversational banality of the closing, separated by the uneasy oscillations of the middle—while we would certainly agree that a semantic vein that concerns the seasons flickers across the entire verse paragraph: “April” (1), “spring” (4) “winter” (5), “summer” (9), “winter” (18). Yet one may legitimately wonder why should there be no “autumn” in this catalogue of the seasons, if catalogue it be; or why the catalogue follows no discernible order. And is the winter that occurs in “Winter kept us warm, covering / earth in forgetful snow” really identical with the one that occurs in “I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter”? The one is oracular; the other, insipid. Yet the effect of their conjunction is devastating: for here repetition functions not to intensify semantic likeness, but to eviscerate it. Likeness, again, is giving way to illusion. And indeed, a similar movement occurs over the paragraph’s entire trajectory, which begins by intoning a pattern of oracular solemnity, but ends by reporting empty patter—those final spasms of vacant thought, twitching like the limbs of a dying animal.

The problem, then, is not in recognizing the syntactic and lexical repetitions that unfold in the opening verse paragraph. If anything, they are not just discernible, but are too readily discernible. Five participial constructions; six adjective-noun pairings; eight first-person pronouns; six instances of the conjunction *and*—in only eighteen lines? Their obviousness seems to urge their unimportance; it is not here that the poem is

doing the real work of offering an account of the world. And that impression is reinforced by another: the assertions of connectedness may be remarkably insistent, but the connectedness itself isn't really vivid; it remains inert and extraneous, like so much scaffolding erected around a building that remains obstinately and mysteriously invisible. (Even today, eighty years after the poem was first published, critics disagree about that building's shape or how many rooms it contains, still divided over how many speakers are voicing these lines.) As zones of coherence loom into sight and recede, like ghosts who beckon us down darkened paths that repeatedly issue in dead ends, they insinuate that the poem's real reckoning with the world must be happening elsewhere: perhaps in the intersection and overlap of those evanescent zones; or in the interchange of oracular solemnity and blinding banality; or in the overall play of opacity and transparency. Or perhaps somewhere else altogether.

Critics have not, of course, been slow to respond to that insinuation. After all, one "somewhere else" is quite explicitly indicated in the first note which immediately follows the poem proper: "Not only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem were suggested by . . ." But surely this is just one more dead end, perhaps the deadest of them all. *The Waste Land* has as much to do with Grail legends and vegetation rituals as *Ulysses* has with the rickety schema that Joyce concocted as he neared the end of his masterpiece. Both writers, as publication approached, worried their works might seem too disordered, too structureless for contemporary readers and critics, and both responded by hinting that the work was governed by an arcane logic that could be reconstructed "by any who think such elucidation of the poem worth the trouble." But the core of *The Waste Land* is not to be found in the turgid speculations of Jessie Weston, nor in the pseudo-arcana of vegetation rituals.

Critics have also been fond of turning the poem into a narrative in which there is a "protagonist" or (in more Grail-inflected versions) "quester" who, in some mysterious way, moves through the poem's scenes. And there is a sense in which this responds, however crudely, to one aspect of the poem. Although much attention has been given to Pound's role in cutting out three major narratives from the draft poem (from Parts I, III, and IV), not enough has been given to his insistence that the final ten lines of the original Part IV be retained as an independent part. Pound was typically laconic when explaining his view, offering a rationale that borders on tautology. "Phlebas is an integral part of the poem; the card pack introduces him, the drowned phoen. sailor, and he is needed ABSolootly where he is" (*LOTSE*, 505). Yet his appeal to the cards dealt out by Madame Sosostris is suggestive, for it implies that he assigned her and the card pack a certain degree of authority. Threadbare authority, perhaps, but enough for the needs of the poem. "She must," one critic has observed, "provide the dots that the rest of the poem must connect into a semblance of plot."<sup>42</sup> This is a perceptive account, provided we understand that its key word is really *semblance*, to be taken in the strong sense as "an assumed or unreal appearance of something; mere show." What *The Waste Land* needed wasn't plot or narrative coherence, but the likeness of a plot, one that would instantly dissolve into illusion. For it requires only a moment to recall that Madame Sosostris is a charlatan, or that the drowned Phoenician sailor isn't even a card in

the traditional Tarot pack. And when she discloses the drowned Phoenician card, the text swiftly divorces itself from straightforward narrative, intruding cruelly: "Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!" Phlebas the Phoenician, whose reappearance (repetition) at first promises narrative connectedness between the first and later parts of the poem, turns out to be another figure in the poem's grim histrionics of non-relationship. *The Waste Land* doesn't have a narrative; instead it has the scent of a narrative, hovering in the air like a perfume after someone has left the room.

## VI. The Office Bombshell

Histrionics: an exaggerated, wild quality; and fierceness, a notion comprising wildness and rage, even cruelty—*The Waste Land* thrives on those dark qualities. To say that, admittedly, is to depart sharply from our received notion of Eliot as a neo-classical poet. But depart from it we must. "It has been too tempting for too long," one of Eliot's most astute readers has recently observed, "to assimilate the poem to the events that came later in the decade, even shortly later, to see it as safely predicting the dispositions of the mid and late twenties: the poem as proto-Anglican, crypto-classical, or neo-monarchist."<sup>43</sup> Indeed, to read the ten essays that Eliot wrote in 1921 while working on *The Waste Land* is to discern the discontinuous but coherent outline of an aesthetics deeply at odds with the notions of decorum, repose, sobriety, and equilibrium typically associated with neo-classicism.<sup>44</sup> One key word in Eliot's critical vocabulary is *surprise*, a term he stresses again and again. Writing about Andrew Marvell in February 1921, Eliot notes "the high speed, the succession of concentrated images" in his "Coy Mistress," then observes that these are the basis for another effect: "When this process has been carried to the end and summed up, the poem turns suddenly with that surprise which has been one of the most important means of poetic effect since Homer." Citing another passage by Marvell, Eliot remarks: "There is here the element of *surprise* . . . the surprise which Poe considered of the highest importance, and also the restraint and quietness of tone which makes the surprise possible."<sup>45</sup> Writing in early April, when now well into work on Part II of *The Waste Land*, he praises Dryden's "Mac Flecknoe" because it offers "the most fun . . . the most sustained display of surprise after surprise of wit from line to line . . . Dryden's method here is something very near to parody . . ."; while in the same essay he dismisses a passage by Abraham Cowley because it lacks "the element of *surprise* so essential to poetry."<sup>46</sup> Writing in mid-June, when now at work on the first half of Part III, Eliot reformulates his view of "surprise": "The strange, the surprising, is of course essential to art . . . The craving for the fantastic, for the strange, is legitimate and perpetual; everyone with a sense of beauty has it."<sup>47</sup> The strange, the surprising, the fantastic, something very near to parody . . . these are terms at some remove from the cool sobriety conjured by "Tradition and the Individual Talent." Not that "Tradition and the Individual Talent" doesn't encapsulate certain Eliotic aspirations which will grow more prominent over time, so much so that Eliot himself will eventually enshrine it as the gateway into that vast graveyard known as his *Selected Essays*. But that was much later. In 1921, instead,

62 “Tradition and the Individual Talent” was only one of several options facing Eliot, and in relation to *The Waste Land*, “The Road Not Taken” might be the most appropriate title for it. And the road taken? The strange, the surprising, the fantastic, something very near to parody . . . histrionics.

Similar terms preoccupy Eliot over the course of 1921, among them “ferocity.” Praising Marie Lloyd, the music hall star whose death a year later would elicit one of Eliot’s finest essays, he praises her for having “wit” that is “mordant, ferocious.” Of Nellie Wallace, another music-hall star whom he admired, Eliot writes: “The fierce talent of Nellie Wallace . . . holds the most boisterous music hall in complete subjection.”<sup>48</sup> He finds some of H. M. Bateman’s caricatures compelling because they “continue the best tradition from Rowlandson and Cruikshank. They have some of the old English ferocity.” And he adopts with relish Baudelaire’s dictum concerning caricature: “*Pour trouver du comique féroce et très-féroce, il faut passer la Manche*” [“To find comedy that is ferocious and very ferocious, one has to cross the English Channel”].<sup>49</sup> A related if more muted term is “intensity,” and the cognate words “intense” and “intensify.” They appear twenty-one times in Eliot’s essays from the first half of 1921 (“The Romantic Englishman,” “The Lesson of Baudelaire,” “Andrew Marvell,” and “Prose and Verse”). But Eliot also deploys another term far more extreme than “intensity.” Quoting Dr. Johnson late in 1921, he praises the metaphysical poets because in their works “the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together.”<sup>50</sup> A few months earlier he praises Baudelaire over Dryden because he “could see profounder possibilities in wit, and in violently joined images.”<sup>51</sup> While around the same time he enthusiastically takes up Baudelaire’s view on the distinctive trait of English comedy: “*le signe distinctif de ce genre de comique était la violence*” [“the distinctive sign of this kind of comedy was violence”].<sup>52</sup> Ferocity, intensity, violence, companions to the strange, the surprising, the fantastic, something very near to parody: here is the core of Eliot’s aesthetics while he was writing *The Waste Land*. Which is why, of course, his essays of the time also show him so responsive to caricature and music hall, modes of cultural production which thrive on wild exaggeration, hyperbolic repetitions which pivot on the play of likeness and illusion, a grotesque machinery of extremism.

If *The Waste Land* repeatedly engages in a histrionics of non-relationship which effectively undermines the modes of connectedness (repetition, narrative) that the poem elsewhere takes pains to assert, nowhere do the tensions between these assume starker form than in the grisly puppet show staged by the typist and the young man carbuncular at the heart of the poem, the middle of Part III. The typist, after all, is repetition personified, her task to repeat someone else’s words whether dictated aloud or transcribed in longhand; while the young man carbuncular is a paradigm of the stranger or intruder whose arrival sets in motion the mechanics of event and plot, sparks narrated activity. Their story is a narrative of repetition, in the sense that their loveless coupling is inferred to be but one in a protracted series of similar encounters; while it is also a repetition of narrative, in the sense that it elaborates topoi associated with representations of the typist in realist and naturalist fiction of the period 1910–

1922. (We shall examine those topoi shortly.) Moreover, a juxtaposition of narrative and repetition serves to structure the presentation of their encounter from beginning to end: a laconic narrative, divided into three scenes or tableaux, is punctuated by the stark repetition (three times) that demarcates the presence of the observing “I Tiresias.”

Little wonder that Eliot, in a note which he wrote as much as one year later, should assign this episode exemplary status: “What Tiresias *sees*, in fact, is the substance of the poem” (note to l. 218). True, that is “a declaration that critics have tended to view rather sceptically,” as Carol Christ has noted, and the rationale behind their scepticism has been voiced by another critic:

But it is doubtful . . . whether Tiresias attains within the poem as a whole the importance that Eliot attributes to him in his Note on this passage . . . The *persona* of Tiresias fails to control the tone of the whole passage and the result is a failure of proper impersonality.<sup>53</sup>

Still, we may harbor suspicions about the standard that is guiding such evaluations. For it assigns “Tradition and the Individual Talent” a normative function epitomized in the phrase “proper impersonality,” while that essay presents an aesthetics radically incommensurate with the sort articulated in the essays Eliot wrote while producing *The Waste Land*. We need, in short, to revisit a scene so casually dismissed by Eliot’s admirers, a scene which also brings us back—by what arcane logic?—to the subject we first began with, the typewriter. For in the period that ran from Eliot’s birth to roughly 1920, the typewriter and the typist were virtually one, designated by the same term, “typewriter.” *Confessions of a Type-Writer*, a sensational novel published in 1893, recounted the seduction of a young woman by a caddish swindler, not the fantastic avowals of a machine; just as *Confessions of a Typewriter, or Merciful Unto Me, a Sinner* (1903, 1910), recounted a similarly lurid tale but culminated in the heroine’s discovery of Christian Science. Or consider the play *Miss Robinson*, performed in 1918 and published in 1920: it shows us Lister, horrified by his mother’s plan to marry his brother to the young secretary who has been working for their father, exclaiming, “You can’t expect him to marry a typewriter.”<sup>54</sup>

It is difficult today to appreciate just how unprecedented it was to make a typist a key protagonist within a serious poem. Prior to *The Waste Land* typists had appeared only in light verse that was humorous or satirical in nature.<sup>55</sup> Fiction, instead, was the medium which most fully registered the growing presence of typists in offices after 1885, first in short stories and then, after 1893, in novels. Only quite recently have literary scholars and historians taken note of the typist in fiction, in three essays which together assay seven novels (all British) published between 1893 and 1936.<sup>56</sup> But in general the typist, as a subject of cultural representation, has been tacitly dismissed as unworthy of serious study, an object of misogynist scorn. For millions of women, however, clerical work offered the first occupational alternative to teaching or nursing and marked a massive change in their range of experience. The phenomenon was at once international, spreading from the U.S. to Britain, then France and Germany, and irreducibly local, with specific histories in different countries, even cities.



In 1921, when Eliot was writing *The Waste Land*, female office workers were still relatively new, more so in Britain than in the United States. Increasingly employed in nearly all kinds of business, typists were especially concentrated in the insurance and banking sectors, both centered in the City, or financial district, of London. Eliot began to work for Lloyds Bank in March, 1917, already a huge corporation and the second largest of the “Big Six” British clearing banks which had emerged after decades of merger and acquisition activity that straddled the turn of the century.<sup>57</sup> The process was just drawing to an end during Eliot’s early years at the bank, as Lloyds absorbed four last banks during the period 1918–1923. As a result of this horizontal integration process, Lloyds represented an immensely powerful concentration of capital which was now expanding into the international arena. (In 1911 it had purchased Armstrong & Co., with branches in Paris and Havre, and in 1917 it entered into a fifty-fifty partnership with National Provincial Bank to create the Lloyds and National Provincial Foreign Bank; by 1938 the firm would have twelve branches on the Continent, serving British companies operating in Europe and British nationals abroad.) Indirectly, it was this expansion which led to Eliot’s employment. For it was a friend of Vivien’s family, L. E. Thomas, then the chief general manager of National Provincial Bank, who gave Eliot his letter of introduction to Lloyds. Eliot was duly assigned to the Colonial and Foreign Department, with its offices at 17 Cornhill Street in the heart of the City, one of several abutting buildings owned by Lloyds.

After two years Eliot was transferred to the Information Department, a much smaller unit reporting directly to the bank’s Board of Directors. Eliot himself was in daily contact with typists. He was one of 7,400 employees engaged by Lloyds, and it was during World War I that women clerks had first appeared at the firm. By late 1918 they totalled 3,300, nearly 45% of the bank’s labor force. With the war’s end, they were soon being dismissed, and after 1920 women were engaged only for typing or filing. (By 1925 there were still 1,500 left, all of them single, for until 1949 women were obliged to resign upon marriage). “My typist is in a bad temper now because I gave a couple of letters to do to someone else who happened to have nothing to do at the moment,” Eliot laments to his father in 1917 (*LOTSE*, 204). “I have half of a room, two girls, and half of a typist,” he explains to his mother the next year, adding “I share a typist with someone else” (*LOTSE*, 232). In September 1919, after completing his move to the new Information Department, Eliot tells his mother that he is awaiting “a French typist for foreign correspondence”:

Next week I shall have an assistant and a typist to write my letters and do card indexing, but last week I have had to struggle through chaos myself, receiving hundreds of reports from Branches of the bank, classifying them, picking out the points that needed immediate attention, interviewing other banks and Government Departments, and trying to elucidate knotty points in that appalling document the Peace Treaty. (*LOTSE*, 369)

It may seem a small matter, but it’s worth noting that comment about doing “card indexing.” Card indexing was a relatively new office procedure, one of many which attended what business historians have increasingly recognized as “a veritable revolu-

tion in communication technology” which took place between roughly 1890 and 1910.<sup>58</sup> The epitome of that revolution was the typewriter, first manufactured in 1873, but only widely used in offices after 1890. Another was something as modest as the loose-leaf (ring or post bound) ledger system, first marketed in 1894 to replace the bound ledger books which had been used until then.<sup>59</sup> Whereas before a client’s growing account had to be continued on the next available page at the end of a bound book, with laborious cross-referencing to connect the two parts of the account, now it was possible to extend or add new accounts as needed. In effect the loose-leaf ledger introduced the idea of interchangeable parts to the office. It was soon followed by the card file ledger, and then by the vertical file such as we still know it today. By roughly 1910 vertical filing was universal among larger firms. The recording of outgoing correspondence was done through carbon copies, another novelty which had also become standard in large firms by 1910, while the reproduction of internal documents for large firms was facilitated by the invention of the rotary mimeograph in 1888, and the creation of new stencil papers. Eliot, in short, worked in a new office culture which had only recently taken form, an interlocking grid of new communications and storage-and-retrieval technologies—typewriters, telephones, dictaphones, adding machines, duplicators, loose-leaf ledgers, card indexes, and vertical filing systems. The typist was the epitome of that grid—capital concentrated into flesh, flesh turned into a nexus of formal communication flows under the impress of systematic management.

That was one aspect of the typist as a distinctively modern figure. Another was related to, yet also in contradiction with it. The typist was one of a family of figures who represented the promise of modern freedom: an allegedly new, autonomous subject whose appetites for pleasure and sensuous fulfilment were legitimated by modernity itself, by its promise that those new technologies, harnessed under systematic management, would ultimately enhance individual agency and create a richer life-world. (More exotic members of this family included the aviator and the automobile racer.) It was this belief which prompted early feminists to embrace the typewriter and its emancipatory potential for women, even as they swiftly noted mounting signs of betrayal (low wages, depressing workplace routines, raw exploitation). And it was this same thematic which obliquely informed novels about typists, which often explore the boundaries of legitimate desire through the blunt but pressing question of how far a young woman should go in sexual relations with men.

But novels about typists did not emerge in a social vacuum. Often they developed topoi first articulated in contemporary journalism. Consider what might be called the food or diet debate, a subject taken up in an essay by “Frances,” an otherwise anonymous journalist whose feature “Five O’Clock Tea Talk” appeared in the popular British newspaper *T. P.’s Weekly*. (The newspaper sold between 120,000 and 175,000 copies a week, reaching “an estimated half a million readers, chiefly among the culturally aspiring urban working- and lower-middle-classes.”)<sup>60</sup> Frances notes widespread agreement that the lunch food available to typists and secretaries is extremely poor:

Over the quality of that mid-day meal there need not be any contradictions. Goldsmith's inquiring citizen might pursue his way from Broad Street to St. Paul's . . . putting his head in at the glass door of every tea shop he met, yet have naught to report at his journey's end but "coffee or tea and roll," with the sometimes addendum of "sandwich," or "sausage," or "pastry," or "jam." Can the girl-worker thrive and be happy on such fare, and does it content her?<sup>61</sup>

Frances goes on to give a journalistic history of "the girl-worker of to-day." The invention of the typewriter has led to the proliferation of typists, "the crowds of girls who go hurrying through the city's big highways morning and mid-day and evening." These, in turn, have given rise to another institution: "And as the typewriter was responsible for the girl-worker as she is to-day, so may she be said to be responsible for the tea shop." But the proliferation of tea shops has only led to increasingly poor diets for female office workers. The root of the problem is low salaries, especially for "the homeless girl":

For the girl who lives in a comfortable home and goes out to business in order to have extra dress and pocket money, the tea-shop lunch is well enough—a substantial dinner awaits her when the day's work is done. But the girl who has to provide food, lodgings, and clothing out of a salary which does not always reach a pound a week, and rarely exceeds thirty shillings, more often than not has to make her tea-shop lunch her principal meal. She would die rather than confess it, and I have heard her talk quite bravely of not being able to eat meat or vegetables in the middle of the day, and pretend to look forward to dinner, whilst I knew that it was only by the most exquisite manipulation of her pence that cold meat supper could be managed.

Frances wistfully urges that "a woman's restaurant" be established to meet the needs of these workers, but holds out little prospect for immediate change:

. . . mark the tone of resignation with which they at last ask for the inevitable roll, or pastry, or sausage, or egg, or any of the other edibles which will not map out beyond the eightpence or tenpence which forms the lunch allowance . . . It does not require very strong powers of observation to see that all those girls who throng the tea shops would welcome any change which would give them a chance of getting varied and palatable food. Their sticking to the much-condemned rolls and coffees and pastries is purely and simply a matter of purse—nothing else.

The problem was indeed genuine, and larger firms soon addressed it by building "bars" on site to cater for their employees. One of the first to do so was the Prudential Assurance Company which, having completed its new headquarters on Holborn in the City in 1906, soon employed more than 400 young women as office workers.<sup>62</sup> One of them was Ivy Low, an aspiring writer who joined the firm in 1908 and later drew on her experience in creating the setting for *The Questing Beast* (1914), her novel about a typist named Rachel Cohen.<sup>63</sup> At one point in it the narrator describes the lunchtime routine:

Lunch time was a pleasant break in the day. The directors of the New Insurance Society were too careful of their female employees to allow them to go into the streets

and seek their lunch in crowded restaurants. . . . At any rate, whether they admitted it or not, it was a distinct advantage to the girls that they were able to get even an indifferent lunch in the office. Anyone, that is to say any woman, who has attempted to get lunch at city restaurants of the cheaper kind will realize the truth of this. . . . Besides, grumble as the clerks might and did at the quality of the food, it was not worse, and certainly far cheaper, than that provided by the surrounding restaurants. (*TQB*, 42–3)

These accounts of typists and food, though dating from 1903 and 1914, were by no means irrelevant in the immediate aftermath of World War I. When some 1,100 women who had been secretaries or typists in 1919 were asked to recall their work experiences, they stressed the subject of food again and again. They recalled eating at Lyons or ABC tea-shops and getting “a boiled egg, ginger pudding with treacle and a cup of tea for 1/3d.” Or, since even these cut into the weekly pay packet, “the large majority” brought sandwiches. Some companies even paid their women for overtime work with food: “Bread, jam and tea for one hour,” and “Scrambled eggs, scones and tea for two hours.” Summarizing their recollections, an unidentified writer commented: “it was not unknown for a girl to faint at her work from lack of adequate nourishment.”<sup>64</sup> And the topic persisted as a topos in contemporary fiction after the war. Consider the following scene from *Money Isn't Everything*, a novel published in 1923, which recounts a dialogue between Jim Rogers, who is a clerk at a City legal firm, and Elizabeth Tudor, a typist who lives alone and shares her daily lunch with him in the garden of St. Paul's:

This morning, however, as they sat on a bench watching the sparrows feed on crumbs thrown them by lunchers, he did venture to ask, when she offered him a chocolate, “Is that all you've had for lunch?”

“I had a cup of coffee and a bun at an A.B.C.”

“That's not enough.”

“I don't want more. I have dinner when I get home in the evening.”

He could give a pretty shrewd guess at the kind of dinner it was—not the substantial appetising meal which, thanks to [his sister] Letty's skill as a cook, he found awaiting him on his own return at night from the office.<sup>65</sup>

When novelists took up typists as fictional protagonists, they inherited the topics and topoi of contemporary journalism. Food was one. Lodgings were another, and the small room, scarcely large enough to house a young woman and her belongings, also became a fictional topos. “I had one small room, at the top of a dreary old house, in a small turning off the Tottenham Court Road,” says the first-person narrator of Tom Gallon's *The Girl Behind the Keys*.<sup>66</sup> The single small room also presented a practical problem for receiving visitors—the bed. When Fred Norman, a successful New York lawyer in David Graham Phillips' novel *The Grain of Dust* (1911), goes to visit the room of typist Dorothea Hallowell, he immediately notes this feature:

It was a small neat room, arranged comfortably and with some taste . . . The bed was folded away into a couch—for space and for respectability.<sup>67</sup>

The room of Rachel Cohen, the typist working in the London office of the New Insurance Society in Ivy Low's *The Questing Beast* (1914), is equally small and Spartan:

Besides the bed, the room contained a small enamelled wash-stand, six deal shelves holding a good many books, and a little table-crockery, a round table, two rush-bottomed "bedroom chairs," one fairly comfortable-looking upholstered arm-chair, and a large knee-hole desk, fitted with a great many small drawers and littered, not only with books and papers, but with various articles of clothing, a bunch of bananas and a glass jar half full of potted meat. (*TQB*, 8)

And whether adopting the voice of the narrator or a character, the novels often focus on female sleeping and undergarments, stressing their threadbare quality. In *The Questing Beast*, the narrator tells us: "Rachel Cohen, rising twenty, standing barefooted in her meagre cotton nightgown (they can only be got rather meagre for two and eleven three), looked like a very tired child of thirteen years" (*TQB*, 9). A more elaborate account appears in *The Grain of Dust*:

He went up with her [to her room] and helped her to pack—not a long process, as she had few belongings. He noted that the stockings and underclothes she took from the bureau drawers were in anything but good condition, that the half dozen dresses she took from the closet and folded on the couch were about done for. Presently she said, cheerfully and with no trace of shame: "You see, I'm pretty nearly in rags."<sup>68</sup>

*The Grain of Dust* is pertinent because Eliot evidently knew of its author, David Graham Phillips, damning him in an essay he wrote in late January 1921, just before beginning *The Waste Land*:

The conventional literature of America is either wretchedly imitative of European culture, or ignorant of it, or both; and by this standard one easily dispels . . . Mr. David Graham Phillips, with his exploitation of the Noble Fallen Woman who, in England, has vanished into the underworld of romance.<sup>69</sup>

Eliot was referring here to Phillips's most recent and posthumously published novel, *Susan Lenox: Her Fall and Rise* (New York: D. Appleton, 1917), which recounts the heroine's plunge to prostitution and her rise as a Broadway star. But at least he was familiar with Phillips, who enjoyed a considerable reputation in the period 1900–1920, and Eliot may well have known his earlier *A Grain of Dust*. Likewise, Ivy Low's novel, *The Questing Beast* could easily have come to Eliot's attention. Low was a good friend of Katherine Mansfield and John Middleton Murry, and Eliot was in frequent contact with Murry during the two years (1919–1920) when Murry edited the *Athenaeum* and published thirty-three essays and reviews by Eliot.<sup>70</sup> *The Questing Beast* is doubly suggestive because Low uses the disarray of Rachel Cohen's room to index her character's moral confusion, the trait that lets her be seduced by a caddish young clerk

named Giles Goodey—treatment which has striking similarities to the narrative trajectory which, it has been urged, Eliot adopts for the typist in *The Waste Land*.

These, then, were topoi of contemporary journalism and realistic fiction which treated typists: a single room with cramped conditions, poor food, a bed that doubles as a couch or divan, references to female garments and undergarments. *The Waste Land* evokes them all in the eight lines of its opening tableau:

At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives	220
Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,	
The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, lights	
Her stove, and lays out food in tins.	
Out of the window perilously spread	
Her drying combinations touched by the sun's last rays,	225
On the divan are piled (at night her bed)	
Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays.	

Subject matter is being stressed here: details of setting, the props of the realist and naturalist novel, are being summoned. And the voice of the poem itself, Tiresias, directs our attention to this fact: "I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs / Perceived *the scene . . .*" (emphasis added). We are, in short, in a play or novel about a typist, and the plot line is predictable ("and foretold the rest").

But that is not all. For our novel or play about a typist also does something else here: it invokes poetry. Beginning at the midpoint of this passage a quatrain slowly emerges into view, and by its end it lies spread before us as neatly as "Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays." Well, perhaps not quite so neatly: for the meter of this passage is marked by deep uncertainty, shifting uneasily between four and five stresses per line, ranging from nine to thirteen syllables, uncertainty that turns it into a sign of poetry's flimsiness, its fragility in the face of the modern world, or that tacitly asks a question about whether poetry's traditional resources, rhythm and rhyme, suffice for what the modern world can throw in its path—a typist, her room, a scene of urban squalor. But at least now we have the rudiments of our story laid out before us: we have a typist, subject matter of the contemporary novel; we have a "scene" set with the props of realism and naturalism; we have signs of poetry's resources, or resourcefulness, to be tested against the matter of modernity; and we have our more or less predictable plot line ("and foretold the rest").

But "predictable" in what sense? What expectations about plot or genre conventions would contemporary readers have brought to a scene that turns on a typist? The answer to that question is more complicated than we might expect, chiefly because of changes in the constellation of popular genres that took up the typist as subject matter over the long period that extends from 1890 to roughly 1925.<sup>71</sup> In the earlier decades, 1890 to 1910, typists were chiefly depicted in two kinds of novel. One was overtly melodramatic, drawing on conventions and plot lines derived from late Victorian melodrama. In these the heroine was typically threatened by the predatory desires of an unscrupulous employer, a villain who resorted to deception and violence to attain his



end, and she was invariably saved from danger by her beloved, the hero whom she would eventually marry.<sup>72</sup> The other kind of novel was broadly realistic, and was written by British authors such as George Gissing, whose *The Odd Women* (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1893) is one of the earliest explorations of the “New Woman,” or Méné Muriel Dowie, a “New Woman” writer whose novel *The Crook of the Bough* (London: Methuen, 1898) probes the contradictory expectations faced by women entering the new world of work. Their American counterpart was Henry Blake Fuller, whose novel *The Cliff Dwellers* (New York: Harper, 1893) addressed the life-forms in the new skyscrapers being built in Chicago.

But in subsequent years, a period running from roughly 1910 to 1925, the melodramatic novel completely vanished from view, its place gradually assumed by a new, still-emerging genre, women’s romance, the genre that would later produce Barbara Cartland and Catherine Cookson. In such novels the heroine typically experienced a series of temptations and tribulations, often precipitated by an older and wealthier man, and ended by marrying another man of considerable wealth or, what comes to the same thing, her employer.<sup>73</sup> Realism, meanwhile, continued to serve as a counterweight. Less driven by plot conventions than protocols of treatment, it was an elastic mode perpetually in search of subject matter which could not be represented within the conventions of other genres, and increasingly it was turning to that controversial topic, sexual activity outside or prior to marriage. It was epitomized by British authors such as Arnold Bennett, Rebecca West, and Ivy Low; or by American authors following in the tracks of Theodore Dreiser and Upton Sinclair, writers such as Sinclair Lewis, or the muckraking journalist David Graham Philips, or Winston Churchill, now-forgotten but from 1900 to 1920 “the author most widely read by the American middle class.”<sup>74</sup> Between 1911 and 1922 all six authors published a novel about a typist or stenographer, and four portray a heroine who engages in consensual sex before marriage—depictions which explicitly transgress the convention which had made the preservation of the heroine’s chastity a governing device of melodrama and romance.<sup>75</sup> (One of the novels, Ivy Low’s *The Questing Beast*, was banned by W. H. Smith and Son, which refused to handle it.)<sup>76</sup> Yet it is precisely at this point that all four novels also encounter serious difficulties with plotting. For in the real world an unmarried and pregnant woman of limited financial resources faced only one prospect, the certainty of social ostracism, and most likely the necessity of putting an illegitimate child up for adoption. But for novelists bent on affirming the dignity of protagonists who engaged in a consensual sex before marriage, that outcome could only validate the social prejudice they hoped to question. The result was an impasse. Consider Ivy Low, whose novel *The Questing Beast* we discussed earlier. The heroine Rachel Cohen is first seduced by a caddish clerk named Giles Goodey, then engages in consensual sex with a young actuary named Noel Young and becomes pregnant. Low resolves the impasse by resorting to what can only be called a fairy-tale ending: the heroine’s landlady miraculously possesses enough money to support her throughout her pregnancy, and meanwhile her former colleagues at the office type up the novel she has been working on, which is soon published to critical acclaim and commercial success. The

final chapter jumps forward, leaping over seven years and several more novels: Rachel is now living in an isolated village by the sea, still accompanied by the benevolent landlady, where she is successfully raising her child by herself. Winston Churchill resolves the dilemma by having the pregnant heroine, Janet Bumpus, be taken in by two friends; the child's father is soon murdered, and when the heroine-mother dies only a few months after childbirth the child is adopted by her benevolent friends. Rebecca West, in a very daring strategy, leaves the future of the mother and child radically open and unresolved: the novel ends just at the moment when the heroine reaches her decision to sleep with the protagonist, even though she knows that he has killed his mother only a few hours earlier, that he will soon be apprehended by the police, and that she and he will never have a life together. Arnold Bennett, instead, depicts a heroine who frankly acknowledges her innate propensity to give pleasure to a man (a woman's true nature, it is implied): she freely accepts her employer's offer to lead a life of pleasure on the Continent; but when it is learned that he is gravely ill, he hastily organizes a wedding, carefully arranges his will in her favor, and conveniently dies within days, leaving her the proprietor of the typing agency in London where she had been employed. After childbirth she returns to London, admired and envied by all her former colleagues. Bennett is out to subvert the melodramatic and romance convention which makes the seductive employer into a villainous cad; but to do so he resorts to turns of plot as improbable and unmotivated as those of the genres he is subverting. Yet his dilemma was highly representative, shared by all the realistic novelists who wanted to shape a sympathetic account of a young woman who, having engaged in consensual sex before marriage, became pregnant: the consequences in the real world were unspeakable, ineffable in the most literal sense, and could be evaded only through recourse to a *deus ex machina*, a magical or fairy-tale ending. In effect the contradictory impulses at work in the realist novel's depiction of the typist turned her into something strange and paradoxical: a figure for what was resistant to figuration, a sign of what could not be signified, but had to be circumvented.

Which brings us back to the typist in *The Waste Land*, whose appearance in the first tableau has been accompanied by a "scene," set with the props of realism and naturalism; signs of poetry's resources or resourcefulness; and the promise of a fairly predictable plot ("and foretold the rest"). These elements, in turn, have been juxtaposed with two others. One is the way in which the poem takes pains to assert an identity between the typist and the figure for its own activity: "I *too* awaited the expected guest," says Tiresias in the brief interlude that separates the first tableau from the second (emphasis added); "And I Tiresias have foresuffered all" (243; emphasis added), he will reiterate at the next interlude. Both comments merely reinforce an earlier identification drawn between the typist, Tiresias, and the modern machine, all three connected through reiteration of the word "throbbing" in the passage which brings the typist onstage:

At the violet hour when the eyes and back  
Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits

Like a taxi throbbing waiting,  
 I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives  
 (215–8)

But that identification is further complicated by another element, the poem's oblique recognition that the typist exceeds the capacity of conventional representation.<sup>77</sup> For which perspective is it that enables us to see, at the same time, "the eyes and back" of that "human engine"?

All these elements make what happens next only the more startling. For when the curtain next opens on the scene, the principal actress is abruptly whisked off the stage:

He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,  
 A small house agent's clerk, with one bold stare,  
 One of the low on whom assurance sits  
 As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.  
 The time is now propitious, as he guesses, 235  
 The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,  
 Endeavours to engage her in caresses  
 Which still are unreproved if undesired.  
 Flushed and decided, he assaults at once;  
 Exploring hands encounter no defence; 240  
 His vanity requires no response,  
 And makes a welcome of indifference.  
 [. . .]  
 Bestows one final patronising kiss,  
 And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit . . . 248

In the second tableau the typist vanishes entirely as an autonomous agent. She exists only through the thoughts of the young man carbuncular, a present-tense variant of free indirect discourse ("as he guesses, / . . . she is bored and tired"), or as a pronominal object of his gropings ("Endeavours to engage her . . ."). And as the passage goes on, she dissolves into a ghastly/ghostly series of negations: "unreproved," "undesired," "no defence," "no response," "indifference," their horror amplified because four of them are placed in the emphatic position of ending a line of verse, reverberating with each other ("no defence"/"indifference") and other rhyme words ("tired"/"undesired" and "at once"/"no response"). The privative prefixes ("un-", "in-", "no") throbbing across the desolate syntax sequester the typist in a region of inexplicable, unbearable privation.

Nor is it just the typist who disappears in the course of the central tableau. The young man carbuncular, as soon as he "assaults at once," is displaced with synecdoche ("Exploring hands encounter . . .") and then vanishes under personification ("His vanity requires . . ."). Even his "final patronising kiss" has nobody and nothing that serves as a grammatical subject to bestow it; we must infer that "bestows" is governed—but is anything being "governed" here?—by the subject of the preceding clause, "His vanity." Vanishing and vanity, both stemming from the Latin *vanus*, meaning "empty," or to cite a fuller definition: "1, *that contains nothing, empty, void, vacant*; 2, *empty* as to

purport or result, *idle, null, groundless, unmeaning, fruitless, vain*.”<sup>78</sup> Void and vacant; groundless and unmeaning: stark terms, but they seem to be all that this conjuncture of repetition and narrative leaves us. Yet is that all there is to “the substance of the poem,” if we may borrow the language of the much-discussed note which Eliot later provided for this passage?

That withering final kiss is horrific. It toys with a convention, of course, one in which the novel makes a kiss into the climax of a scene, a chapter, or even a whole work. And lodged within that convention is another, those martial metaphors which crop up in the central tableau: “Flushed and decided, he *assaults* at once; / Exploring hands encounter *no defence*” (emphasis added). No doubt the lover as soldier has a venerable pedigree in lyric poetry, one that reaches back to Propertius and Ovid and flourishes anew in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poetry.<sup>79</sup> But by the early twentieth century it has become fossilized language in the novel. Ivy Low adopts it at the moment when Giles Goodey begins to seduce Rachel, a climactic moment in the book. He has been reading aloud a manuscript in her room, which she is typing up as extra work on a free-lance basis, and during a pause they both step to the room’s window:

Then Rachel turned and faced him, her eyes a little ghastly, her cheeks suddenly flushed, her mouth almost imperceptibly trembling. The little bells over their heads chimed ever so faintly. Giles took a step towards her, and she suddenly shrank back against the window, never taking her eyes off his face. The sudden movement touched Giles. He stooped and kissed her wrist.

“Are you afraid of me, little girl?” he said.

“Oh, no, Giles, not of *you*,” said Rachel, looking at her wrist with a quaint air of surprise. “*Of me!*” she continued, and looked up at him with a crooked smile.

The appeal was double-edged. There was an invitation to his chivalry and subtler invitation to his desire in it. “Poor little girl, I must help her,” suggested one voice, and “The fortress is not impregnable. It *wants* to be stormed!” clamoured another.

Another short step forward and Rachel was in his arms, timid, unresponsive, but submissive. He kissed her dark head several times, then bent it back and tried to quench a long thirst at that traitorous mouth of hers. She remained cold and bewildered—a girl under her first kiss. . . . Her acquiescence, coupled with such a truly virginal quality of coldness, was maddening, intolerable, adorable! (*TQB*, 150–1; ellipsis in original)

Eliot’s use of the kiss could hardly be more different. It comes not as a climax, but as wilfully gratuitous anti-climax. What had promised to be a narrative has given way to a world in which characters vanish, actions are reduced to random flailings (“exploring hands”), and the conventions of a seduction scene only evoke a grisly pantomime of non-relationship.

The final tableau concludes with a ferocious coda, a savage travesty of the novelistic scene where the typist, in the aftermath of her sexual encounter, finds herself alone and reflects on her deed. When Rachel Cohen wakes up the next morning:

She wondered if she had not plumbed the limits of disgust. She could not believe that life would ever hold zest for her again. A very plain person, who had never seen his face

in a glass and had had to form an opinion of his features from his natural vanity and the features of other people, might have felt, on being suddenly presented with a mirror, something of the shock and horror that Rachel now felt. Exactly the question that this person would most naturally ask was constantly in Rachel's mind: "Am I like *that*? I?" . . . Rachel, hitherto triumphant over other people's weakness, now thought, in her bitter humiliation, that none was so fallen that she was not sister to. Again and again the memory of her pride in being "not that sort of girl" stung her to fresh writhings. (*TQB*, 157)

A similar moment occurs in *Chickie*, a popular novel by Elenore Meherin that was serialized in newspapers in 1923 and turned into a successful film in 1925. Here the protagonist Helen Bryce, or "Chickie" (age, twenty) has not been seduced by a cad-dish villain, but has simply made love with her fiancé, a twenty-five year old lawyer named Barry Dunne:

In her mind was a black spot of terror. It grew large—a stark live thing, shaking her pulse with dread. It was the memory of the night.

She shrank from it. It pressed down and seized her heart. It was a dark, heavy beast crouching on her chest. She tried to beat it off. It came nearer and blew warm, sickening breaths in her nostrils. Fighting, she had to draw them down. Again and again . . . She hid from it—oh she would get away—push off this thing of horror weighing so heavily on her breast. Be free—be light again . . .

She hated herself. Turning on the pillow, her hair fell across her face. With a violent revulsion she flung it back. Oh, this sickening contact with herself. If she could only get away from her breath, from her own hands, from her feet that were so cold they ached! If she could fly out of this body that held her fast to the immutable yesterday.<sup>80</sup>

Disgust, shock, horror, bitter humiliation, terror, dread, memories that sting, seize the heart, or weigh heavily . . . here is the lexicon of the contemporary novel when treating a post-seduction or post-coital scene. And here is *The Waste Land*:

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,	
Hardly aware of her departed lover;	250
Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:	
'Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over.'	
When lovely woman stoops to folly and	
Paces about her room again, alone,	
She smooths her hair with automatic hand,	255
And puts a record on the gramophone.	

Horror and terror: they are the more powerfully present for being inscribed in silence.

But it is the "automatic hand" that is most arresting here, riveting the reader's attention. For in Western philosophy from Aristotle to Heidegger, the hand has been invoked to signal the critical difference between the human and the animal, at once the instrument of reason and its material counterpart.<sup>81</sup> Yet the typist's gesture erases precisely that boundary between wilful human action and the helplessness of automatism. Paradoxically, at the same time it also invokes what might be called a lyrical

temporality and effect: for it interrupts, shocks, and freezes the scene. Gesture, here, is being summoned to substitute for speech, assigned a total expressivity that rests upon the ineffability of what is to be expressed. It becomes the consummate figure for what cannot be figured, a sign of what resists, exceeds, or dwarfs signification. Connoisseurs of art history will inevitably be reminded of how the hand was used in early Byzantine churches to substitute for a representation of God at a time when it was deemed blasphemous to depict Him on the assumption that divine form exceeded the limits of human representation.<sup>82</sup> Tellingly, Eliot himself urges that the hand performs an analogous function in the Jacobean play *The Duchess of Malfi*. Reviewing a recent performance of it in 1920, he singles out the notorious scene in which the Duchess, trapped in a darkened chamber, is deceived into kissing a dismembered hand, one which she is told is that of her lover Antonio. It was “extraordinarily fine,” Eliot says, for “here the actors were held in check by violent situations which nothing in their previous repertory could teach them to distort.” “The scene of the severed hand,” as Eliot calls it, has an uncanny effect: it prevents the actors from acting, prohibits the presenters from representing. Frozen and contracted in the clutch of rigor mortis, the dead hand dispenses with all mediation, which can only “distort,” and is transformed into an eerie paradox: it is a trope of not troping and, at the same time, is pure, unmediated communication. “Here,” writes Eliot in summarizing his view of the scene, “the play itself got through, magnificently, unique.”<sup>83</sup>

What is it, then, that “gets through” the typist’s “automatic hand,” that hand momentarily and yet forever contracted in a gesture charged with communicating what is otherwise ineffable, unspeakable? Doubtless there are many answers to that question, and ours can only be a tentative one, a provisional extrapolation from two phrases perhaps insignificant in themselves. One is a note that Eliot most likely wrote in December 1921, when in Lausanne under the care of the Swiss psychiatrist Dr. Roger Vittoz. It is found in the margin of Eliot’s own copy of Vittoz’s book, *The Treatment of Neurasthenia by Means of Brain Control*. Opposite a sentence by Vittoz which reads, “The muscles are at first more or less contracted and sometimes painful,” Eliot has penciled a single word: “handwriting” (LOTSE, 480, n. 1). The other, somewhat strangely, is found in the final words of *The Waste Land*. By that I do not mean the famous “Shantih shantih shantih” which closes the published poem of 1922, but rather the last passage of text proper which Eliot composed, the passage that he wrote in Paris in January 1922, after Pound had deleted the entire passage about Fresca which had originally opened Part III, leaving Eliot no choice but to find a new beginning. Oddly, it too begins with the image of a hand contracted:

The rivers tent is broken and the last fingers of leaf  
Clutch and sink into the wet bank. . . .

Yet it ends not with a phrase or even an image intended to suggest the ineffable, but with ineffability itself, with speechlessness:

By the waters



What is unbearable, what cannot be written even when concluding the poem, is the rest of that line: "I sat down and wept." The ineffable is that sense of immense commiseration, at once a profound pity at the lacerating horrors of modernity and an unspeakable sorrow that there is no language, whether in narrative or lyric (epitomized by repetition), adequate to the terror which the poem wishes to account for. Fictively situated beside the heart of modernity which is the financial district of London, the poem offers only speechless weeping, a wild pathos at once unutterable and irredeemable, over the conditions that have governed its production. Perhaps that truly is "the substance of the poem."

## Notes

I am grateful to many people and institutions for their assistance in the course of researching and writing this essay.

My first debt is registered in the dedication at the beginning of this essay. Donald Gallup kindly allowed me to consult his collection of letters by Eliot, which were indispensable to the project. I am also grateful to Craig Simmons, a former student of mine, who examined Eliot's letters at Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, the Lilly Library at Indiana University, the University of Virginia, Princeton University, the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia, the McKeldin Library at the University of Maryland, the University of Bonn Library, the Schiller Nationalmuseum in Marbach am Neckar, Germany, and the Schweizerische Literaturarchiv in Bern. His help was invaluable. His travels were funded by an NEH Junior Scholars Grant, for which I am also thankful. I also wish to thank the Bibliographical Society of America for a grant which enabled me to travel to a number of libraries; and the Harry Ransom Centre for the Humanities at the University of Texas, Austin, which permitted me to survey their holdings of letters by Eliot. I am deeply grateful to private owners who made their collections available for consultation: Prof. David G. Williams, Prof. John Waterlow, and Herbert T. Greene. Several scholars were also kind enough to read and comment on early drafts of the essay. I wish to thank Ronald Bush, John Roe, Ronald Schuchard, and John Whitter-Ferguson for their helpful suggestions. Finally, my further thanks to Professor Hidehiko Shindo and Professor Nakai for their invitation to speak at the joint conference of the T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound Societies of Japan, the occasion that sparked this essay.

1. Valerie Eliot, ed., *T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land. A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1971), hereafter cited as *TWL:AF*.

2. Hugh Kenner, "The Urban Apocalypse," in *Eliot in His Time: Essays on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the THE WASTE LAND*, ed. A. Walton Litz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 23–49, hereafter cited as "UA"; Grover Smith, "The Making of *The Waste Land*," *Mosaic* 6.1 (1972), 127–41, hereafter cited as "MOTWL."

3. Lyndall Gordon, *Eliot's Early Years* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1977), Appendix II, "Dating *The Waste Land* Fragments," 143–6; hereafter cited as "DTWLF."

4. Peter Barry, "The *Waste Land* Manuscript: Picking Up the Pieces—In Order," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 15 (1979), 237–248. David Moody, in his contemporary study of *Thomas Stearns Eliot: Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 310–8, largely assumed that the poem was written in a straightforward sequence from Part I to Part V.

5. Ronald Bush, *T. S. Eliot: A Study in Character and Style* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), Chapter 5, "'Unknown Terror and Mystery': *The Waste Land*," 53–78.

6. Christine Froula, "Corpse, Monument, *Hypocrite Lecteur*: Text and Transference in the Reception of *The Waste Land*," *Text: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Textual Studies* 6 (1996), 297–314, here 313.

7. "I am not anxious to produce another [book of criticism] for a year or two; and meanwhile have a long poem in mind and partly on paper which I am wishful to finish." T. S. Eliot to John Quinn, 9

May 1921, in Valerie Eliot, ed. *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, vol. 1, 1898–1922, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1988), 451; hereafter cited as *LOTSE* within the text, followed by the page reference.

8. Smith furnishes no reference for this claim allegedly made by Pound, and I can think of no occasion when Pound said anything of the sort.

9. Smith offers several overlapping chronologies for Part III's composition. He suggests that Eliot's reference to a "long poem . . . partly on paper," advanced in his letter of 9 May to John Quinn (see note 71), "probably . . . included . . . Part III or the outlines of Part IV" ("MOTWL," 133). But later he observes: "Part III, or some prototype of it, existed by the time Eliot and Vivienne, went to Margate about the middle of October" ("MOTWL," 133). And elsewhere he remarks: "the fair copy of Part III was made before Eliot left England on November 18" ("MOTWL," 133). But in yet a fourth comment he writes: "the dates of composition of Parts III and IV are, at best, highly conjectural" ("MOTWL," 132).

10. Readers are encouraged to see Table I and its introductory note for the numbering system used here. The sixteen letters for which no original is extant are:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Recipient</u>	<u>LOTSE, pp.</u>	<u>No.</u>
23 August 1914	Mother	51–4	T.13
December 1917	Editor of the <i>Egoist</i>	211–2	T.119
March 1918	Editor of the <i>Egoist</i>	225	T.130
4 Sept. 1918	Robert Ross	243	T.148
1 June 1919	Lytton Strachey	298–9	T.200
3 Oct. 1919	John Rodker	338	T.231
[24 Oct. 1919]	Editor of the <i>Athenaeum</i>	341–2	T.235
[7 Nov. 1919]	Editor of the <i>Athenaeum</i>	344	T.238
[7 Feb. 1920]	Editor of the <i>Athenaeum</i>	369–70	T.264
[22 Apr. 1920]	Editor of the <i>TLS</i>	380–1	T.275
[25 June 1920]	Editor of the <i>Athenaeum</i>	387	T.282
[6 Aug. 1920]	Editor of the <i>Athenaeum</i>	396	T.292
[28 Oct. 1920]	Editor of the <i>TLS</i>	415–7	T.312
[3 Nov. 1920]	Editor of the <i>TLS</i>	483	T.377
[24 Nov. 1920]	Editor of the <i>TLS</i>	489	T.384
[30 Nov. 1922]	Editor of the <i>Liverpool Daily Post</i>	602–3	T.495

The six letters for which the originals have been lost since they were located by Mrs. Eliot are:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Recipient</u>	<u>LOTSE</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Institution</u>
5 Aug. [1915]	Conrad Aiken	11	T.45	Huntington
15 Aug. [1915]	J. H. Woods	112–3	T.47	Harvard Archive
[25 <sup>p</sup> Aug. 1919]	Lytton Strachey	327	T.220	British Library
[24 Aug. 1920]	Mother	403–4	T.299	Houghton Libr.
15 Aug. 1922	Sydney Schiff	561	T.454	British Library
17 Aug. 1922	Paul Valéry	562	T.456	Bib. Nat. Paris

The thirteen letters for which the originals are in private collections that could not be consulted:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Recipient</u>	<u>LOTSE</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Owner</u>
4 Aug. 1917	Robert Nichols	190	T.101	Mrs. Charlton
10 Nov. 1918	Hugh Walpole	253–4	T.156	Valerie Eliot
[20 Oct. 1919]	Sydney Schiff	340–1	T.234	Valerie Eliot
5 Nov. 1920	Walter de la Mare	420–1	T.314	De la Mare Est.
8 Nov. 1920	Walter de la Mare	421	T.315	De la Mare Est.
2 Jan. 1921	Maxwell Bodenheim	431–2	T.323	E. Goldsmith Estate
14 Dec. 1921	André Gide	494	T.388	Mme. C. Gide
24 Jan. 1921	André Gide	502	T.392	Mme. C. Gide

[21 Feb. 1922]	J. M. Murry	506	T.396	Valerie Eliot
2 Aug. 1922	Sydney Schiff	555	T.446	Valerie Eliot
9 Aug. 1922	Sydney Schiff	557	T.449	Valerie Eliot
7 Nov. 1922	Ezra Pound	592	T.483	Valerie Eliot
1 Dec. 1922	Gilbert Seldes	604	T.497	Valerie Eliot

The two letters for which I could not obtain permission to see the originals are:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Recipient</u>	<u>LOTSE</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Institution</u>
8 Dec. 1922	Henry Eliot	608–10	T.500	Houghton
31 Dec. 1922	Henry Eliot	616–8	T.509	Houghton

11. The myth that the name Madame Sosostriis was derived from “Sesotris, the Sorceress of Ecbatana” in Huxley’s *Crome Yellow* was first promulgated by Grover Smith, “The Fortuneteller in Eliot’s *Waste Land*,” *American Literature* 25 (1954), 490–2. In support of his claim Smith cited a letter he had received from Eliot, dated 10 March 1952, in which Eliot had said it was “almost certain” that he had borrowed the name from *Crome Yellow* (“almost certain” are the only words of the letter which are directly quoted by Smith). Smith then paraphrased the rest of the letter: “he has also said that, being unconscious of the borrowing, he was unaware of any connection between the name of the clairvoyant and that assumed by Mr. Scogan.” Eliot had better reason than he knew for being “unaware of any connection” between the two characters. As we shall see below, Eliot had probably completed the scene with Madame Sosostriis by early February, if we accept the evidence of a letter by Wyndham Lewis; and at the very latest he completed the typescript of Parts I and II sometime in mid-May 1921. Aldous Huxley, then living in Italy, did not even begin to write his novel until the beginning of June that same year, “pledging himself to finish it within two months,” according to his biographer. It took just a bit longer, and he finished it in the second week of August, the same biographer says (see Sybille Bedford, *Aldous Huxley: A Biography*, vol. 1 1894–1939 [London: Chatto and Windus, 1973], 117 and 119). Eliot and Huxley did not correspond during this period, as the two men were not close; Eliot, writing late in January 1921, had damned Huxley’s recent poem “Leda” as “a concession to the creamy top of the General Reading Public.” (See T. S. Eliot, “London Letter: March 1921,” in *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot’s Contemporary Prose*, ed. Lawrence Rainey [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005], 139.) Smith went on to diffuse the claim in his subsequent monographs on Eliot: *T. S. Eliot’s Poetry and Plays: a Study in Sources and Influence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 76, a work that went through numerous impressions and a second edition in 1974; and *The Waste Land* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983), 47, 67–8. Through these it has become a standard note in all commentaries on the poem. See, for example: B. C. Southam, *A Guide to the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot* (New York: Harcourt, 1968), 74–75, note to line 43; and *The Waste Land: A Norton Critical Edition*, ed. Michael North (New York: Norton, 2001), 6 n. 4, which also reprints the entire passage from *Crome Yellow*, 40–2.

12. Wyndham Lewis, “Early London Environment,” in *T. S. Eliot: A Symposium*, [1948] ed. Tambimuttu and Richard Marsh (London: Frank and Cass, 1965 [1948]), 24–32, here 30.

13. “Mr. Apollinax” is assigned to 1916 by Christopher Ricks in his edition of T. S. Eliot, *Inventions of the March Hare* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1996), xli, evidently on the basis of its first publication in *Poetry* 8.6 (September, 1916), 294. For the text of both the autograph draft and the fair copy versions of the poem see Ricks, 344, 345. Lyndall Gordon urges that both “The Death of St. Narcissus” and “Mr. Apollinax” were “written by January 1915 for, on 2 February, Eliot alluded to them in a letter to Pound (‘I understand that Priapism, Narcissism etc. are not approved of . . .’)” (“DTWLF,” 143). But Gordon misunderstands Eliot’s comment to Pound. He is referring to the notorious King Bolo poems that Wyndham Lewis chose not to publish in *Blast* II, not to “The Death of St. Narcissus” or “Mr. Apollinax.”

14. Lyndall Gordon claims that the paper “matches that of an unpublished 1916 review of H.D.’s translation of choruses from *Iphigenia in Aulis*” (“DTWLF,” 43). I have been unable to locate this unpublished review of H.D., *Choruses from Iphigeneia in Aulis* (London: the Egoist, 1916), no. 3 in the Poets’ Translation series.

15. Lewis held a private viewing of his exhibition, "Tyros and Portraits," at the Leicester Galleries on 9 April, where he distributed the first copies of the journal to visitors; see Paul O'Keefe, *Some Sort of Genius: A Life of Wyndham Lewis* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000), 229–30.

16. The British Bond [A] paper appears in only a single letter, from Eliot to Wyndham Lewis, dated [Nov.? 1915], T.55, in *LOTSE*, 122. Between the British Bond [B] and the British Bond [C] papers there is also a small distinction in color: the British Bond [B] used for "Song" is yellow white (Centroid 92), while British Bond [C], used in other *Waste Land* manuscripts described below, is white. Lyndall Gordon confuses the two papers because, although she notes their distinct colors, she fails to note that [B] has chainlines, while [C] does not: "Eliot used . . . British Bond paper for the *Waste Land* copy. Parts I and II of *The Waste Land* use the same typewriter and paper [as "Song"], though the paper of 'Song' is slightly yellower, perhaps a different batch" ("DTWLF," 144).

17. The sixteen letters written on British Bond [B] are:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Recipient</u>	<u>LOTSE PG.</u>	<u>Letter No.</u>
13 Sept. 1920	Henry Eliot	406	T.303
20 Sept. 1920	Mother	408	T.304
17 Oct. 1920	Scofield Thayer	413	T.310
23 Oct. 1920	Leonard Woolf	415	T.311
31 Oct. 1920	Mother	417	T.313
2 Dec. 1920	Mother	423	T.317
8 Dec. 1920	Edgar Jepson		U.75
10 Dec. 1920	R. C. Trevelyan	426	T.319
[22 Dec. 1920]	Ezra Pound	426	T.320
26 Dec. 1920	Leonard Woolf	427	T.321
1 Jan. 1921	Scofield Thayer	428	T.322
16 Jan. 1921	Mother	432	T.324
18 Jan. 1921	Leonard Woolf		U.77
22 Jan. 1921	Mother	432	T.325
30 Jan. 1921	Scofield Thayer	434	T.326
30 Jan. 1921	Scofield Thayer	435	T.327

18. That Eliot did not begin working on *The Waste Land* sometime during 1920 is abundantly evident from his own comments in various letters written throughout that year. True, already on 5 November 1919 he made a statement widely interpreted as his earliest reference to *The Waste Land* when, writing to the New York lawyer and cultural patron John Quinn, he enumerated his current projects: "I am at work now on an article ordered by *The Times*, and when that is off I hope to get started on a poem that I have in mind" (*LOTSE*, 344). But throughout 1920 Eliot was prevented from working on the "poem I have in mind" by a combination of events. First, writing *The Sacred Wood* proved far more difficult than he had anticipated: Eliot had originally hoped to complete it by the end of May, but the final manuscript was not posted to the publisher until 9 August 1920 more than two months late. Second, there was the flat, or apartment, at Crawford Mansions, which he and Vivien had "come to loathe on account of the noise and sordidness." In June he began searching for another one, horrified to learn that many were priced at "two to four times what we pay now" (*LOTSE*, 390). Only at the end of October did Eliot finally agree on rental terms for a new flat at 9, Clarence Gate Gardens, and only at the end of November did he move in. But there was a third event which further consumed his time, an enormous stomach abscess which nearly killed Vivien's father, requiring an emergency operation and weeks of painful recovery attended by Vivien. Finally, throughout 1920 Eliot complained of poor health, tiredness, and exhaustion—sometimes his own, sometimes Vivien's, often that of both. Eliot's regrets over not working on his projected poem recur throughout the year. To a novelist who was finding it difficult to concentrate he wrote in January 1920: "I have been trying to start work myself, and it is very difficult when *both* people in a household are run down" (*LOTSE*, 355). To his brother he wrote in September: "I have not done any writing for months, and now we are both sleeping very badly . . . I feel maddened now because I want to get settled quietly and write some poetry" (*LOTSE*, 407). A week later he wrote to his mother: "I do not suppose that I shall be properly

settled at work again till November; I have several things I want to do; and I want a period of tranquility to do a poem that I have in mind" (LOTSE, 408). "Am I writing much?" he asked himself in another letter, echoing his correspondent's question. "Only signing my name to leases and agreements" (LOTSE, 409). In October he advised his mother regretfully: "I have of course been unable to write, or even read and think, for some weeks" (LOTSE, 412). "You see," he explained to one correspondent, "we began looking for a flat in June, and since then I have simply not had the time to do a single piece of work . . . But I want to get to work on a poem I have in mind" (LOTSE, 419). By December, even the success of *The Sacred Wood* was beginning to irritate him: "I am rather tired of the book now, as I am so anxious to get on to new work, and I should more enjoy being praised if I were engaged on something which I thought better or more important. I think I shall be able to do so soon" (LOTSE, 424).

19. That Eliot sent off the manuscript of his "London Letter: May 1921" by around 1 May can be inferred from his comment, made on 21 May, 1921, to Scofield Thayer, the *Dial's* editor who was then in Berlin, Eliot noted: "I am glad to hear that my letter was received in time." Given how long it would take for Eliot to send his essay to the *Dial's* office in New York (nine days), for the office then to notify Thayer in Berlin (another nine days), and for Thayer to acknowledge receipt to Eliot, the essay must have been posted by early May.

20. Ezra Pound to Agnes Bedford, 20 April 1921, Indiana University, Lilly Library, Pound Mss. II.

21. Ezra Pound to Isabel Pound 24 April [1921], Yale University, Beinecke Library, YCAL Mss. 43.

22. That the manuscript reached Eliot after 9 May can be inferred from Eliot's comment to John Quinn in his letter of 9 May: "I have had no news whatever from Pound, beyond two postcards with no address, since he left this country" (LOTSE, 451).

23. Wyndham Lewis to Sidney Schiff, 7 February 1921; British Library, Ms. Add. 52919. The existence of this letter was first noted by Peter Ackroyd, *T. S. Eliot: A Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 110 and 345 n. 6.

24. Unpublished letter (U.82) from T. S. Eliot to Mary Hutchinson, [15 June 1921; postmark 16 June 1921], University of Texas, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center.

25. T. S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets," *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 1031 (20 October 1921): [669]–70; now in *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot's Contemporary Prose*, ed. Lawrence Rainey (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 192–201.

26. Unpublished letter from Ezra Pound to Dorothy Pound, 14 [October 1921], Indiana University, Lilly Library, Pound Mss. III.

27. Valerie Eliot assigns Eliot's departure from Paris to "22? November" (LOTSE, xxxvi). But a difficulty for this date is posed by Eliot's letter to the editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*, which was datelined "Lausanne" and published on 24 November. Surely it had to be set in type by at least 23 November, and surely it must have been posted at least one day earlier, on 22 November. It seems to ask too much to suppose that Eliot could have taken the train from Paris to Lausanne, arrived, and then written and posted a letter the same afternoon. It seems more likely that he left Paris on 21 November, perhaps even 20 November. Pound's letter to Scofield Thayer (quoted further below in the text) indicates that Eliot was simply "on his way through Paris," not staying for a more extended period.

28. Unpublished letters from Ezra Pound to his father, Homer Pound, 3 December [1921] and 25[–6] December, 1921; Beinecke Library, YCAL Mss. 43.

29. Unpublished letter from Ezra Pound to Scofield Thayer, 5 December 1921; Beinecke Library, *Dial Papers*.

30. The Hieratica Bond [A] paper is used in Eliot's letters of 14 October 1914 to William Greene (T.18, LOTSE, 60) and 21 November [1914] to Conrad Aiken (T.23, LOTSE, 69).

31. The Hieratica Bond [B] paper appears in a letter from Eliot to Wyndham Lewis, 5 August 1918 (T.143, LOTSE, 240).

32. The "Hieratica Bond [C]" paper appears in two letters, one dated 5 August 1919 to Harold Monro (T.218, LOTSE, 325), the other dated 3 September 1919 to Eliot's mother (T.222, LOTSE, 328).

33. This dating differs sharply from that of Lyndall Gordon, "DTWLF," 144, who urges: "It is impossible, so far to date the Hieratica cluster exactly, but 1918 seems a reasonable guess." The guess is just that, a guess, and it is by no means a reasonable one. Her arguments are followed by Ronald Bush, *T. S. Eliot: A study in Character and Style* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 53–78, in particular 56–7 and 248, nn. 14–5, who then uses this early dating of the passage of "London, the swarming life" to argue that Eliot began *The Waste Land* in 1918 with programmatic intentions that later "fell away" (57).

34. The letter to Pound is misdated by Valerie Eliot, who assigns it to [24? January 1922]. The mistake results from her error in dating an earlier letter by Pound, one which he had dated "24 Saturnus" according to an arcane calendar ("The Little Review Calendar") that he published in the *Little Review* 7.2 (Spring 1922), 2. The month "Saturnus" was to corresponded with January. Mrs. Eliot, in her edition of *LOTSE*, mistakenly assigned the letter to December, following D. D. Paige, the editor of Ezra Pound, *Selected Letters 1907–1941* (New York: New Directions, 1971), 169. Though Paige's error was first noticed back in 1972 by Hugh Kenner, "UA," 44, n. 7, it had not come to Mrs. Eliot's attention before she published her edition of the letters in 1988.

35. On these discussions over publishing the poem see Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), Ch. 3, "The Price of Modernism: Publishing *The Waste Land*," 77–106, here 82.

36. *Ibid.*, 102–3.

37. On the various publication dates see Rainey, 195 n. 3.

38. Much of the discussion has focussed on Eliot and Wagner. See Sarah Wintle, "Wagner and *The Waste Land*—Again," *English: The Journal of the English Association* 38.162 (Autumn 1989), 227–50; Philip Waldron, "The Music of Poetry: Wagner in *The Waste Land*," *Journal of Modern Literature* 18.4 (Fall 1993), 421–34; and Margaret Dana, "Orchestrating *The Waste Land*: Wagner, Leitmotiv, and the Play of Passion," in *T. S. Eliot's Orchestra: Critical Essays on Poetry and Music*, ed. John Xiros Cooper (New York: Garland, 2000), 267–94.

39. *TWL:AF*, 36–7; my transcription departs from Valerie Eliot's at line 5. She seems to think that the word "there" replaces "where"; but exactly the opposite is true, as a glance at the facsimile reproduction of the manuscript (*TWL:AF*, 36) suffices to indicate. My reading is also confirmed by the published text of the poem, which in all versions has always read "where" as a final reading.

40. Indeed, the form which these lines will assume in the published poem only accentuates both their relatedness and their difference:

But at my back in a cold blast I hear (line 185)

But at my back from time to time I hear (line 196)

O City City, I can sometimes hear (line 259)

41. Readers will recognize that I am drawing here on Michael Levenson's excellent discussion of the opening passage in his *A Genealogy of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 165–73.

42. Calvin Bedient, *He Do the Police in Different Voices: The Waste Land and Its Protagonist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 56.

43. Michael Levenson, "Does *The Waste Land* Have a Politics?," *Modernism/Modernity* 6.3 (September, 1999), 1–13, here 1.

44. The ten essays which Eliot published while writing *The Waste Land* are conveniently collected in *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot's Contemporary Prose*, ed. Lawrence Rainey (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), hereafter cited as *TAWL*. The first note to each essay provides the rationale used to assign it a date of composition, and those dates of composition (as opposed to publication) are followed in the discussion below.

45. T. S. Eliot, "Andrew Marvell," *Times Literary Supplement*, 1002 (31 March 1921), [201]–2; now in *TAWL*, 149, 150.

46. T. S. Eliot, "John Dryden," *Times Literary Supplement*, 1012 (9 June 1921), [361]–2; now in *TAWL*, 174, 175.

47. T. S. Eliot, "London Letter: July 1921," the *Dial*, 71.2 (August, 1921), [213]–7; now in *TAWL*, 186.



48. T. S. Eliot, "London Letter: May 1921," the *Dial*, 70.6 (June, 1921), [448]–53; now in *TAWL*, 68.

49. *Ibid.*, now in *TAWL*, 169.

50. T. S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets," *Times Literary Supplement*, 1031 (20 October 1921), [669]–70; now in *TAWL*, 194.

51. Eliot, "John Dryden," now in *TAWL*, 180.

52. Eliot, "London Letter: May 1921," now in *TAWL*, 169.

53. Carol Christ, "Gender, Voice, and Figuration in Eliot's Early Poetry," in *T. S. Eliot: The Modernist in History*, ed. Ronald Bush (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 33; Martin Scofield, *T. S. Eliot: The Poems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 118.

54. See Clara del Rio, *Confessions of a Type-Writer* (Chicago: Del Rio Publishing, 1893) and Elinor Dawson, *Confessions of a Typewriter, or Merciful Unto Me, a Sinner* (Chicago: Charles Thompson, 1903). The Library of Congress catalogues the latter under the title *Merciful Unto Me, a Sinner*, and dates it to 1905; but the copy of the novel I own, a 1912 reprint, has the title as I've given it here and dates the copyright to 1903. See also Elizabeth Baker, *Miss Robinson: A Play in Three Acts* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1920), 58.

55. Examples include T. W. H. (Thomas William Hodgson) Crosland (1865–1924), "To the American Invader," in his *Outlook Odes* (London: At the Unicorn, 1902), 30–2; Enoch Miner [pseud.: Topsy Typist], *Our Phonographic Poets. Written by Stenographers and Typists upon Subjects Pertaining to their Arts. Compiled by "Topsy Typist"* (New York: Popular Publishing, 1904); Samuel Ellsworth Kiser, *Love Sonnets of an Office Boy* (Chicago: Forbes and Co., 1907), twenty-eight sonnets addressed to the office typewriter girl; Andrew Lang, "Matrimony," in *The Poetical Works of Andrew Lang*, ed. Leonora Blanche Lang (London: Longmans and Co., 1923), vol. 3, 179–80. A serious and hence rare poem about a typist is "Interlude—Eurydice," by Arthur Henry Adams, in his *London Streets* (London and Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1906), 34–6.

56. See Christopher Keep, "The Cultural Work of the Type-Writer Girl" *Victorian Studies* 40 (1997), 401–26; Morag Shiach, "Modernity, Labour and the Typewriter," in *Modernist Sexualities*, ed. Hugh Stevens and Caroline Howlett (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 114–29; and Pamela Thurschwell, "Supple Minds and Automatic Hands: Secretarial Agency in Early Twentieth-Century Literature," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 37 (2001), 155–68.

57. The discussion which follows draws on J. R. Winton, *Lloyds Bank, 1918–1969* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 1–43.

58. JoAnne Yates, *Control through Communication: The Rise of System in American Management* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 37.

59. On the changes detailed here and below see Elyce J. Rotella, "The Transformation of the American Office: Changes in Employment and Technology," *Journal of Economic History* 41 (1981), 51–7; Thomas Whalen, "Office Technology and Socio-Economic Change, 1870–1955," *IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers) Technology and Society Magazine* 2.2 (June, 1983), 12–8; and JoAnne Yates (see preceding note), Ch. 2, "Communication Technology and the Growth of Internal Communication," 21–64.

60. Peter D. McDonald, *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice 1880–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 96.

61. Frances, "Five O'Clock Tea Talk: A Woman's Restaurant," *T. P.'s Weekly*, 11 December 1903: 918. All subsequent citations are from this page. My thanks to Tom Holland for drawing attention to this essay.

62. The Prudential Assurance headquarters, Holborn Bars, was constructed between 1899 and 1906, designed by Alfred Waterhouse (1830–1905). The neo-Gothic edifice was one of fifteen office buildings which Waterhouse designed for Prudential. See Alastair Service, *London 1900* (New York: Rizzoli, 1979), 97–8.

63. Ivy Low, *The Questing Beast* (London: Martin Secker, 1914), hereafter cited as *TQB*. In 1916 Ivy Low married Maxim Litvinov and changed her name; she moved with him to the new Soviet Union after 1917, where ultimately he became Foreign Minister under Stalin. After his death she returned to England. *The Questing Beast* was her second novel. Her first, *Growing Pains* (London:



William Heinemann), was published in 1913; while her next, *His Master's Voice* (London: William Heinemann), appeared in 1930. Low/Litvinov also translated many works from Russian literature. See John Carswell, *Exile: The Life of Ivy Litvinov* (London: Faber, 1983).

64. Anonymous, "Suffragette Secretaries: A Report on Office Life 60 Years Ago," *Survey of Secretarial and Clerical Salaries: Alfred Marks Bureau, Statistical Services Division* (October 1979), 19–29.

65. Sophie Cole, *Money Isn't Everything* (London: Mills and Boon, 1923), 24–5.

66. Tom Gallon, *The Girl Behind the Keys* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1903), 5.

67. David Graham Phillips, *The Grain of Dust* (New York: D. Appleton, 1911), 300.

68. *Ibid.*, 326.

69. T. S. Eliot, "London Letter: March 1921," *The Dial* 70.4 (April 1921), [448]–53, here 450; now in *TAWL*, 125–40, here 137.

70. For Low's rapport with Mansfield and Murry, see Carswell (n. 60), *Exile*, 74, 96–7, 165. Eliot's publications in the *Athenaeum* are catalogued by Donald Gallup, *T. S. Eliot: A Bibliography*, revised ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1963), 203–7.

71. The following discussion on novels about typist, secretaries, and stenographers in fiction is based on a book which I'm currently at work on, provisionally titled *Office Bombshell: The Typist in Fiction and Film, 1890 to the Present*.

72. See, for example, Grace Miller White, *Edna, the Pretty Typewriter* (New York: J. S. Ogilvie, 1907), and Eliza Margaret J. Humphreys (pseud. Rita), *Betty Brent, Typist* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1908).

73. See, for example, Sophie Cole, *A Plain Woman's Portrait* (London: Mills and Boon, 1912); Ruby M. Ayre, *The Winds of the World* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1918); Elinor Glynn, *Man and Maid* (London: Duckworth, 1922); Sophie Cole, *Money Isn't Everything* (London: Mills and Boon, 1923; and the novel cited below, n. 80).

74. Warren Titus, *Winston Churchill* (New York: Twayne, 1963), 7.

75. The four novels which portray a heroine having consensual sex before marriage are Ivy Low, *The Questing Beast* (see n. 55); Winston Churchill, *The Dwelling-Place of Light* (New York: Macmillan, 1917); Arnold Bennett, *Lilian* (London: Cassell and Co., 1922); Rebecca West, *The Judge* (London: Hutchinson, 1922; reprinted London: Virago, 1980). The other two realistic novels about a typist or stenographer are by David Graham Phillips, *The Grain of Dust* (see n. 64) and Sinclair Lewis, *The Job; an American Novel* (New York: Harper, 1917; reprinted Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1994).

76. Carswell (n. 60), *Exile*, 72. The offending passage was the seduction of Rachel by Giles Goodey, quoted further below (ms. pp. 91–2).

77. The identification of the typist and Tiresias is noted by Christ (see n. 50), 33; that of machine, typist, and Tiresias by Michael North, *The Political Aesthetic of Yeats, Eliot and Pound* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 99.

78. Charlton Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), s.v. *vanus*.

79. Propertius compares his relation to Cynthia to military service at 1.6.40 and 4.1.135–8. Ovid extends the conceit with comic hyperbole in *Amores* 1.9. For the view that this conceit has no history but is a timeless propensity of the human mind, see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 49.

80. Elenore Meherin, "Chickie": *A Hidden, Tragic Chapter from the Life of a Girl of this Strange "Today"* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1925), 272–3.

81. See Jonathan Barnes, ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), vol. 1, "Parts of Animals," 1071–2; for Heidegger, see the terms "presence-at-hand" and "ready-to-hand" which recur throughout his *Being and Time*, transl. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1961). For a view of the hand in English and American literature, see Katherine Rowe, *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

82. See Martin Kirigin, *La mano divina nell'iconografia cristiana* (Città del Vaticano: Istituto pontefice di archeologia cristiana, 1976); for a discussion of the hand in Byzantine churches and its development from Jewish tradition, see André Grabar, *L'Art de la fin de l'antiquité et du moyen âge*, vol. 2 (Paris: Collège de France, 1968), 791–4.

83. T. S. Eliot, “‘The Duchess of Malfi’ at the Lyric; and Poetic Drama,” *Art and Letters* 3.1 (Winter [1919]/1920), 36–9, here 37.