

T. S. Eliot: Critic Of Our Time

By ROGER EMERT
From The Daily Heel

"Never commit yourself to a cheese without having first examined it."

—T. S. Eliot, 1956

After it is admitted that "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is the most famous poem of our time, "The Waste Land" the most influential, and "Four Quartets" probably the best, it is necessary to go ahead and admit, too, that Thomas Stearns Eliot, dead at 76, was in his fashion the most destructive force in our intellectual world.

But this is a judgment that will not be made, and Eliot more than anyone else is responsible for the fact that such judgments are no longer fashionable. Although his poetry made him famous, it was probably his criticism that did most to change the academic landscape during his lifetime, and it was an analytical criticism which rarely asked the final embarrassing question: Is this work good or bad? And so the obituaries will attest that Eliot was important, and that his poetry was the most influential

body of work in this century, but they will not attempt to assign, even temporarily, Eliot's place in the continuing struggle of men to envision and create a more decent society.

This will not do. T. S. Eliot's importance to most of us rests, finally, in what he did to our world rather than in what he did in his poems and plays and criticism.

We must begin by separating the important Eliot of the essential poems from the public Eliot of more recent years. It will be important to his biographers that Eliot converted to the Church of England, that he became monarchist in his social and reactionary in his social criticism, but that does not concern us because it has simply not been important in our world. Eliot took countless thousands more into the waste land than he ever subsequently delivered to the church.

Eliot gave us an idiom of despair that was so persuasive we have never learned a different vocabulary. He gave us a view of the disintegrating modern personality that, like Humpty-Dumpty, we have never been able to fit back together again.

He fixed the currents of the London philosophical milieu of 1908 to 1917 so firmly in his criticism that critics have never since been able to counter T. E. Hulme's revolutionary dictum: "It is essential to prove that beauty may be in small, dry things." He caused both poetry and criticism to retrench, to fall back on what was certain and could be known. He

dissolved the romantic conventions of the 19th century into their inadequate parts and demonstrated that dreams are not the stuff we are made of any more, not since the trenches in France in that most terrible winter of the war. He took away our illusions and left us with none of his own.

As a result, Eliot, student of Ezra Pound and influence to nearly every poet since, is still the most "modern" poet that we have. The Imagist movement which began with Hulme's Poets' Club in London in 1908, and was carried forward by Pound, Richard Aldington, Wilfred Owen, Herbert Read, H. D., and others, then modified and reinforced by Amy Lowell, James Joyce and Wyndham Lewis, and finally contained and controlled by Eliot in "Preludes" (1917) and shaped into a new voice altogether in "The Waste Land" (1922) is the only real avant-garde we have in poetry today. There is nothing newer.

So do not say that poetry is dying in these hard times, that no one reads it any more, or that poets have lost their influence. That may be true in general, but it is not true of T. S. Eliot. The remarkable fashion of disillusionment, which has taught almost all the "in" members of contemporary writing and criticism the methods of contemptuous coolness in their public stance, was born in Eliot and has never been defeated since, not even by the naive Marxist idealism of the 1930s. His was a world of sexless-

ness and drought, a world in which there is nothing outside time and space, in which persons themselves are objects, in which "I will show you fear in a handful of dust," and it set the tone we hear in every academy and in the "new criticism" ever since.

The "Lost Generation" of the 1920s, which did not really take Eliot for their spokesman despite what the Associated Press rewritemen may believe, nevertheless had its intellectual position made plausible by "The Waste Land," and in the Existentialists and the Beats, we can reap the two alternatives that have grown from that heritage: a cool coping with an impossible world for those with imagination, or an adolescent nihilism for those who either lack imagination or are too lazy or gutless to sustain it. That is Eliot's legacy, and it is alive today, and at work, and important to the world we all have to live in.

Eliot has not simply provided us with a particular world view; his criticism has tended to block the approaches to alternative concepts of what human life should be about. In his early critical essays—which represent a sustained intellectual effort without equal in our time—he established almost single-handedly a new canon of what should be read and regarded as important. He resurrected the Metaphysical Poets, restoring Donne to Milton's expense, and he laid the 19th century to rest so finally that decent courses in its authors are only now trick-

ling back into the universities. Most importantly, he replaced "romanticism" with a "classicism" he outlined with Hulme and Pound, and it is essentially this view of art which has prevailed in the "new criticism" ever since.

More than most men, Eliot has been judged by standards he himself helped to set up, and by those standards his poetry was very good. His vast influence on modern criticism is, indeed, one of the many reasons his own critical stature is so high. But there has been a weakness among Eliot's critics to sidestep the philosophical importance of his poetry and to attempt instead to his remarkable complexity and difficulty. There are a dozen articles and books on his constructions, imagery, myth patterns and vocabulary for every essay on his values, thought and meanings. There has been a tendency to believe, perhaps subconsciously, that "The Waste Land" having been written, there is nothing more to be said.

But the game is not over, and I refuse to accept Eliot's voice as the final one. The poetry and philosophy of affirmation is not in style now, and somehow Eliot will have to be answered, will have to be defeated, before modern literature as a whole can escape from its tendencies toward introspection, self-pity, suicide and despair.

He left a big hole when he died. I suppose he had to say what he said in order for us to answer him in ideas heavy enough to handle the size of the problems he left us with.

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For A Nearer Watering Hole

Our University administrators, who have shown many, many signs of being progressive in the past, have recently taken a turn for the worse with their all-out opposition to the establishment of a liquor store in the western section of Chapel Hill.

Led by Dr. Dudley DeWitt Carroll, they are determined to block the building of another store, claiming the one in Eastgate is sufficient and another would only bring all sorts of problems to our wooded glen.

To be sure, there is a strong argument against the proposed location for the new store.

But there is very little argument against a new store.

The proposed location behind Fowler's has only convenience to speak for it.

The site is on a street that is already too congested, and could produce chaos with a new traffic problem.

The site is too near Chapel Hill High School, and although students there would not be able to purchase liquor it would not be a good idea for them to see their respected elders picking up the weekly supply.

The site is too near establishments frequented by minors, notably Hardee's and Burger Chef.

The site is directly across the street from a residential area.

We propose the State Alcoholic Board, in its meeting Thursday, instead approve

a store located at least a half-mile west of Fowler's. This would put it near the Chapel Hill-Carrboro division line, thus being convenient to both towns.

Another store would certainly do a great deal to stem the sale of bootleg liquor in Carrboro, whose residents face a five-mile drive to acquire their fire-water.

It would relieve pressure on the Eastgate store, which last year did \$1.5 million in total sales and where customers often have to wait in line for 10-15 minutes.

It would be close enough for students to purchase their goods without having to fight the traffic jam which seems to be a constant occurrence between Chapel Hill and Eastgate.

It would be out from under the noses (and the temptation) of high school students, and could easily be located in a place where traffic would be no problem.

It is time for our administrators to face the fact that UNC students are going to have a drink every now and then, even if they have to go to Durham to get it.

Chapel Hill is a cosmopolitan little place, but the famed liberality of its citizens does not mean they will seize upon a convenient place to get liquor and become a pack of drunks.

If the state is going to regulate, and profit from, our desire to have a drink from time to time, at least let us have the privilege of getting it without having to fight traffic jams and long lines.

Inauguration Day Parade

By BOB PAGE III

I was one-five thousandth of the military honor accorded to the new governor Friday. If it weren't for the vision, one would be inclined to skip the whole thing.

The vision? It comes from those paraphrases of "God, country and motherhood." The idea is to make your unit look good. There's also the thrill of taking part in the parade and trooping past the reviewing stand.

Big deal. Getting out of class just in time to don the uniform and scurry over to Raleigh's Dorton Arena, you arrive just in time to have lunch. Barbecue. Great. The perfect diet to march on. More of that famed military planning.

Load into the buses and join the convoy. The bus stops some nine blocks from the beginning of the parade route after three 20-minute intervals of waiting, a military institution in itself.

The wise guys: "We don't get off here. We're at least two miles away. They can't be serious." They were.

Dismount. Fall into formation. Wait. Not just 15 minutes, not 30, but almost an hour. Then we begin to move. Five blocks in 45 minutes.

Finally you can begin to hear drum beats. The vision returns. Just picture our snappy unit passing the stand. Don't be disillusioned by the fact that we haven't ever marched together as a unit. We were well trained in basic training - three years ago.

Still waiting. Someone mentions that his good old barbecue lunch must want to see the parade.

We're at parade rest in one of Raleigh's slum areas. An elderly man, bearded and crooked in posture, crosses the street. Right through the middle of the ranks. He's huddled over and the look on his face doesn't tell you whether he's unimpressed with weekend warriors or is scared, like we might really be going to fight a war.

A hundred and five minutes gone by. The commanding officer reminds you at the last minute: "Don't forget to snap those heads at the 'eyes right' command. And keep your dress to the right. And the left foot hits the ground on the heavy beat of the drum."

Onto Fayetteville Street. Starting down to the moment of the parade. Other people line the streets, giving you the once over. The noise picks up. Band music comes from both sides.

Oh, no. Nobody told us which band's cadence to follow. The one in front or the one behind? You do several quick half-steps to get in rhythm with everyone else. But do you follow the man in front, the one to the left, or on the right?

One band starts up, the other one stops. Change steps. Then they both play. Of course they aren't in the same rhythm. Oh well. Do the best you can. At worst you'll probably be in step with half and out with half the men in your unit.

Now for the moment of the vision.

What? We've passed the stand already? It can't be. We didn't even hear "eyes right." We didn't get to pay full respects to those dignitaries.

What's the use? Now. Why do I laugh about all this and look forward to the next parade.

Because our commanding officer, at the end of the route, said: "It really looked great to me." And, friends, he was serious.

That makes it all worthwhile. Ahh. The vision.

A Dark Hour For Section 14(b)

From The Charlotte Observer

The AFL-CIO's campaign to repeal Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act will go barreling down the corridors of Washington next week with an enthusiasm sparked by a passage in the President's State of the Union message.

This is the year AFL-CIO leaders believe they have the votes to do away with state right-to-work laws. President Johnson is caught in the middle on this one. Although he attributed it to the Democratic platforms of 1960 and 1964, the President fulfilled a minimum per-

sonal obligation to the union when he said he "would propose to Congress" the extermination of 14(b).

The AFL-CIO is not going to waste much time arguing the merits of the repealer. It's not a matter of what there is to recommend right-to-work laws to the American people. The issue turns on whether the union has the votes in the showdown.

It claims at least 221 in the House, with only 218 needed for repeal. It does not appear worried about opposition in the Senate. The extent of presidential assistance may still be a factor, but union officials believe they can win with no more than Johnson's "benevolent neutrality."

Repeal of Section 14(b) would not represent the will of a majority of Americans. Sixty-seven per cent of those polled by the Opinion Research Corporation opposed compulsory unionism. There are 58 million Americans whose state right-to-work laws would be nullified.

We in North Carolina have a special stake in this fight. The state was among the first to support the principle of voluntary unionism, passing a right-to-work law on March 18, 1947. The United States Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of this law and those of Arizona and Nebraska in 1949.

Are there enough congressmen with the strength to hold with a study group of the Committee for Economic Development that... "the controlling principle should be the right of an individual to belong to a union?"

Segments of organized labor have sought this repeal ever since Congress overrode President Truman's veto to pass Taft-Hartley in 1947. The effort accelerated in the 1964 elections because some unions resented the effort, time and money spent in getting and holding members. They want membership dues and contracts to fall like overripe cherries at a shake of the tree.

This is a test of power—unions led by the AFL-CIO against the will of most of the people.

Can Congress say, "The people — no"?

Spot The Spot

We approached our "Spot the Spot" contest with some hesitation. Would the campus like it? Could we find a fair sampling of obscure and not-so-obscure campus points? Would we have too many winners?

Well, it appears we have been successful. In fact, we're sorry to say that our supply of back issues has been exhausted thus necessitating a small rules change.

On deadline day (Thursday, 7:30 a.m.), it will only be necessary for an entrant to bring the last eight photos. If you have the first two, okay. But only the last eight will be required.

And remember, there will be two photos the final day, as we previously announced. And both are difficult.

The official answers are in the possession of our photographer, Jock Lauterer, and only he knows the exact locations.

When entries are received, they will be marked with the exact time they arrived at the office. In case of a tie between two entrants, the award will be split. If there are more than two standing outside the DTH offices at 7:30 a.m. with the correct answer, then a tie-breaker will be published.

Needless to say, that will be the hardest yet.

So onward and upward, fellow goof-offs! Spot those spots!



Letters To The Editors

Curtis Concedes To Hays

Phantom Chief Resigns UP Post

Editors, The Tar Heel:

For some time I have felt the need for a confession of the fact, now seemingly common knowledge, that I am, indeed, the REAL chairman of the University Party, and have held this position for the last four years. I had hoped to keep this fact a secret, but the REAL perceptive qualities of the loyal opposition finally gained insight into our little secret.

Much of the credit for exposing me as REAL chairman should go, and rightly so, to the REAL SP chairman, Arthur Hays, the Franklin Flash.

It had not been my goal to outlast Arthur, and this had driven me to remain as REAL chairman in absentia. But the news has reached me that Arthur will be at Chapel Hill for an additional twenty years. After law school, I understand Arthur will enter med school, then dental school, then he will obtain his doctorate in library science, then the School of Pharmacy, and finally, when no more graduate degrees are available, Arthur will enter the School of Nursing. (I understand Arthur wanted to finish nursing school before entering the School of Medicine, but since this would require moving from 308 Ruffin into the Nurses Dorm, and hence, changing legislative districts, he has reversed this procedure.)

Now at last I find it necessary to submit my resignation as REAL chairman of the Uni-

versity Party. I regret doing this, not because of all the fond memories that linger concerning past associations and events, but because now I must accept the fact that Arthur Hays, the Franklin Flash, has indeed outlasted me.

Donald W. Curtis
REAL University
Party Chairman
Cherryville, N. C.

The creation of a National Seashore is step in the right direction. Cape Lookout and Shackleford Banks are some of the few remaining seashores in the United States that have been untouched by the destructive hand of man. It was a unique experience for me when I was at Shackleford. It was the first time that I was the only person on the beach. It is a far cry from Brighton Beach and Coney Island in Brooklyn.

It is a wonderful place — the sound of the clear blue surf, the cries of the soaring sea birds and no garbage strewn all over the sand!

I urge all students at the University of North Carolina to write to their Senators, Congressmen and any other public officials to ask them to support the formation of this National Seashore. I am going to do the same.

Jeffrey Wolff
New York City

Editors' Note: The area from Kitty Hawk south to Ocracoke is presently a national seashore area. The proposal now is to extend the protected area south from Ocracoke to Cape Lookout.

Trunk Travel Far Superior

By ART BUCHWALD
The New York Herald Tribune

When the Egyptians decided to ship an Israeli citizen a few weeks ago, many people were shocked. But a friend of mine, from Grosse Point, Michigan, saw nothing cruel about the incident at all.

The day after the story broke he called me long distance and said, "Did you see a photo of the trunk they tried to send that fellow in?"

"Yes, it was ghastly, wasn't it?"

"What do you mean, ghastly? Study the picture closely. Does not it remind you of anything? Don't you feel you've been there before?"

I studied the picture, but nothing came to mind. "Nope, I can't see it."

"The whole contrivance has been patterned after the three-abreast tourist flights on — Airlines. I didn't realize it until I took a flight last week and then it dawned on me where the Egyptians got the idea. Of course the trunk is much more comfortable than the seat on the airline, but that's because the Egyptians take care of their people."

I looked at the picture again. "There is a place to put your head and your feet in the trunk," I said, "which is more than you can say for — Airlines."

"Exactly. And there are tiny air holes drilled in the side so the person can breathe."

"You don't get that in tourist class," I had to admit.

"The Egyptians also added another refinement. They administered a drug to the passenger before they sent him off."

"Leave it to the Egyptians to improve air travel."

"You can say that again. Many times just before taking off I've asked the stewardess to shoot something in my arm, but she's always refused."

"Is it against regulations?"

"No, but if they give a shot to one passenger, they have to give it to all the passengers, and they claim they lose money on the route as it is."

"I guess the Egyptians don't care if they make money on their flights or not."

"Just as long as they get you there," he said. "But listen, this is what I called you about. I have a friend in the luggage business and I thought we could make up some trunks like the one in the photo for people who can't afford to fly first class but can't stand to sit three abreast in tourist."

"That's a great idea, but would it sell?"

"We won't sell them; we'll rent them. We could tie up with Hertz or Avis."

"But don't the Egyptians have a patent on the trunk?"

"We'll pay them a royalty and let them use our trunks free of charge in case they want to send anybody else to Cairo."

"It's a very fair offer. What about the drugs?"

"Haven't you ever heard of vending machines?" he said. "You've thought of everything, I had to admit."

"From now on there will be three types of travel on a plane — 'First Class,' 'Tourist Class,' and 'Egyptian Class.'"

"Manny," I said, "you've done it again."