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Review of T. S. Eliot and the Christian Tradition

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is attributed to Phyllis Jones' desire to get rid of the character, a decision that Williams later regretted. Both Peter Stanhope and, more surprisingly, Laurence Wentworth are presented as polarized self-portraits of Williams' himself (277).

There are occasional errors. For example, there appears to be a line missing towards the end of page 165. However, the slips are remarkably few for such a long work. In addition, the text is clear and well-spaced, and the cover design attractive.

All in all, this is a valuable work. For those who do not know Williams well, *Charles Williams: The Third Inking* provides an excellent introduction to his life and work. For those who do, it fills in many gaps in what was known about the poet before this biography.

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Benjamin G. Lockerd, ed., *T. S. Eliot and the Christian Tradition* (Lanham, Maryland, 2014). viii + 358 pages. \$49.99. ISBN: 9781611477139.

In the enormous body of material that has been written about T. S. Eliot there has been, until recently, comparatively little about his Christian faith and its bearing on his literary work. Many literary scholars who admire Eliot's poetry and criticism are agnostics and atheists and understandably feel ill-equipped to deal with matters of faith, even though this was a central concern of their subject. Happily, things are beginning to change, and this new collection supplements and extends the consideration which has already been given by Barry Spurr in his 2010 study *Anglo-Catholic in Religion: T. S. Eliot and Christianity*. The eighteen essays in this collection are divided into five groups, headed respectively Eliot and Anglo-Catholicism, French Catholic Influence, Christian Tradition, Culture and Religion, and Contemporaries. Readers of this work will be particularly interested in Charles Huttar's essay on "C. S. Lewis's Appreciation of T. S. Eliot," Dominic Manganiello's contribution titled "T. S. Eliot, Charles Williams and Dante's Way of Love," and Thomas Dilworth's "Eliot for David Jones," among others.

In his introduction, Benjamin Lockerd begins by recalling that Eliot's

conversion to Catholic Christianity and his reception into the Church of England in June 1927 seemed sudden to his contemporaries and “not only incredible but treacherous.” All sorts of unworthy motives were ascribed to him. Yet Eliot’s Christian commitment was genuine and whole-hearted; William Blissett describes and analyzes Eliot’s involvement in the 1947 report *Catholicity*, subtitled *A Study in the Conflict of Christian Traditions in the West*, in which he is one of fourteen credited authors, as well as the only layman in the group (it is interesting that neither C. S. Lewis nor Dorothy Sayers, by then also both well-known lay apologists, were invited to contribute). This report, important in the life both of the Church of England and of Eliot, is still well worth reading and is curiously little-known by Eliot scholars, so Blissett is right to draw attention to it.

In the several essays devoted to French Catholic influences, Charles Maurras and his *Action Française* movement necessarily take up a good deal of space. Maurras was an important early influence on Eliot, particularly on his public embracing of classicism and royalism in 1927. Maurras with his monarchical nationalism, his anti-semitism, his advocacy of Catholicism for instrumental reasons while remaining an atheist, and his later alignment with Vichy France for which he was afterwards condemned, is not an attractive figure, to put it mildly. Indeed, Eliot, although accepting some of his ideas, early abjured his “intemperate and fanatical spirit.” However, Jacques Maritain, with whom Eliot maintained a continuous dialogue in the pages of his journal *The Criterion*, is much more sympathetic. Eliot hoped he would provide an “exact” theology; he never quite managed to do that, but his *Art and Scholasticism* with its objective view of art became widely influential and indeed is still in print. French influence is also explored by Christopher McVey in writing about the background to Eliot’s *The Idea of a Christian Society*, though there is also an influence from the English Roman Catholic historian Christopher Dawson. Paul Robichaud and Lockerd also stress the importance of Dawson to Eliot, arguing that his influence came to replace that of Maurras and highlighting that he became a frequent contributor to the *Criterion*, Eliot’s literary magazine. Dawson emphasized that every culture has some kind of religion, which in a godless society would be the kind of totalitarian ideology then prevalent in the fascist and communist dictatorships of the 1930s. These ideas are also examined by Anderson Araujo writing on Eliot’s

understanding of hierarchy, where it is pleasant to read that Eliot owed a direct debt to Dante on world order. As a result of these influences, Eliot argued that a Christian society should have “a hierarchical organization in direct and official relation to the state,” remain “in direct contact with the smallest units of the community and their individual members,” and have “an elite clerisy, or scholarly and devout officers, its masters of ascetic theology and its men of wider interests,” ideas derived respectively from Maurras, Maritain, and Dawson.

The section on the Christian tradition opens with a superb article by William Charron, a philosopher, on Eliot’s use of a phrase from Aristotle’s *De anima* as the epigraph for the third part of his seminal essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent*. In English this reads, “The mind is certainly a thing more divine and cannot be affected or suffer.” Charron traces the interpretation of this through Averroes, Aquinas, and Dante and demonstrates firstly, Eliot’s knowledge of this history, and then his use of it in developing his concept of the “mind of Europe.” There is a suggestive piece by Lee Oser on Eliot’s comparative silence on Newman, whom he might have seen as a traitor to the Church of England. Hazel Atkins’ piece on Eliot’s admiration for the architectural historian W. R. Lethaby is rather inconclusive, though it is helpful of her to draw attention to the importance of sacred space for Eliot.

James Seaton analyzes Eliot’s uneasy relationship with a former teacher at Harvard, the philosopher George Santayana. He has convinced me that Santayana’s 1900 *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* was an important influence on Eliot. Santayana’s formulation of “correlative objects” exactly anticipates Eliot’s more famous “objective correlative,” and he similarly anticipated Eliot’s “dissociation of sensibility.” Eliot never acknowledged this debt—if he was aware of it—though he did praise Santayana’s *Three Philosophical Poets*. David Huisman attempts a similar task in relation to Paul Elmer More with whom Eliot had a more explicit and direct dialogue. More almost became an Anglican but never made the definite commitment Eliot did.

Thomas Dilworth’s article on Eliot and David Jones demonstrates the considerable sympathy between them. Dilworth is the world authority on Jones; he starts by describing the friendship between Eliot and Jones and explores how similar their views on religion and culture were, despite

having been formed independently. It is amusing to read that Jones adhered to Eliot's earlier rejection of Milton even when Eliot changed his mind.

Dominic Manganiello begins by contrasting Eliot with Charles Williams as being known to champion, respectively, the negative and the affirmative way—the distinction is one made by Williams, who however, goes on the stress the links between the two ways. Manganiello points to a common debt to Dante, and it may be that it was Williams who influenced Eliot here. Manganiello develops this through detailed considerations of *Descent into Hell* and *All Hallows Eve* for Williams and the plays, particularly *The Cocktail Party*, for Eliot. This is a dense and rewarding piece, full of references not only to Dante but to Williams' theology, the way of exchange, the Beatrician state, and other ideas characteristic of him.

Charles Huttar opposes the common idea that Lewis' attitude toward Eliot can be characterized by such words as antipathy, *bête noire*, and arch enemy. It is well known that when they worked together late in their lives on a committee revising the psalter, Eliot and Lewis got on well. However, Huttar argues that a respectful relationship began a good deal earlier. In the 1920s it seems clear that Lewis, ten years younger, was frankly envious of the position Eliot had made for himself, as the leading poet of his generation and also a critical arbiter, and this without the support of an academic post and with the disadvantage, as it seemed to some, of being American by birth. The resulting antipathy is still evident in Lewis' *The Pilgrim's Regress* (1933), though Huttar points out that ten years later he apologized for what he then saw as its "uncharitable temper." He suggests that the difference seems to have been the conversion of each of them to Anglican Christianity, in Eliot's case from the lapsed Unitarianism of his youth and in Lewis' from atheism. After this, Lewis' disagreements were mainly scholarly ones, which include the relative merits of Dryden and Shelley, the success of *Hamlet* as a work of art, and the importance of a critic being also a poet. Eliot was notoriously critical of Milton but later seems to have accepted Lewis' careful analysis of his earlier views. It is also important to note that both Lewis and Eliot were courteous in these exchanges, and both were in marked contrast to Leavis, whose public rudeness toward those with whom he disagreed set a bad example. Huttar interestingly suggests that Lewis' poem "The Turn of the Tide," a reworking of Milton's Nativity Ode, represents a riposte to Eliot's view that Milton was

a bad influence. One can't resist pointing out that, with its interior rhymes and astronomical imagery, it seems to owe as much to Williams' poems as to Milton. Huttar also argues that Lewis' occasional critical remarks on Eliot's poetry were based on a proper reading and understanding and were, in any case, related only to Eliot's earlier work. Huttar slightly overstates his case—for example, the reference to Eliot concerning Lewis' *The Allegory of Love*, published in 1936, is mildly derogatory in not naming him. Referring to Eliot as "a modern American critic" (303) is inaccurate, as Eliot had, by then, been a naturalized British citizen for nine years, a fact which was well known. Additionally, Williams was probably more influential in bringing about a rapprochement between them than is generally realized, though one cannot prove it.

Eliot was the leading literary intellectual in the English-speaking world for most of the last century, and remains the most recent representative of the line of literary arbiters that began with Ben Jonson and continued with Dryden, Dr. Johnson, Coleridge, and Matthew Arnold. This collection confirms his central importance and shows how he was at the confluence of significant thinking about religion and culture. There is, however, little about Eliot's poetry, that not being the purpose of the book. But for those who take Eliot seriously and consider him a critic and a thinker as well as a poet, this will be a rewarding collection.

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Louis Markos, *Restoring Beauty: The Good, the True, and the Beautiful in the Writings of C. S. Lewis* (Downers Grove, 2010). 215 pages. \$20.00. ISBN: 9780830857456.

The intended purpose of Louis Markos in *Restoring Beauty* is to highlight the importance of the transcendentals—Truth, Beauty, and Goodness—by particular way of Beauty in the works of C. S. Lewis. This is, of course, an excellent and worthwhile task. Markos is not wrong when he suggests that Lewis serves as "the ideal guide for all those who would seek to restore truth and beauty to their proper place and role in our modern world" (1). Markos believes this task necessary because the modern world