



A COMPANION TO
T. S. ELIOT

EDITED BY
DAVID E. CHINITZ



WILEY-BLACKWELL

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Preface

Critical work on T. S. Eliot has undergone a renaissance since the early 1990s, bringing new ideas and methods to bear on a much-studied writer whose depths, by then, were long supposed to have been plumbed. Key developments have included innovative work in the areas of sexuality and gender; new insight on Eliot's relations with popular culture and mass media; more closely historicized readings of his political, social, religious, and philosophical views; a more sophisticated understanding of his role in the definition and dissemination of modernism; and rekindled debate over his prejudices. Meanwhile, *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*, a major addition to the canon of Eliot's prose, appeared in 1993, providing important new material for literary scholars; and *Inventions of the March Hare*, a fascinating collection of early poems and drafts that had been lost in manuscript for decades, was finally published in 1996, further altering critical assessments of Eliot's development, influences, and social views. Between then and now, *Cats* (for which Eliot had been posthumously awarded a Tony) ended its marathon run on Broadway; Eliot was named "Poet of the Century" in *Time* magazine; and journalism on some of the scholarly controversies kept Eliot in the public eye to an unusual degree.

A Companion to T. S. Eliot presents the "new" T. S. Eliot in a series of chapters covering, from a contemporary perspective, the full range of Eliot's output and career. Part I of the *Companion* comprises eight chapters elucidating the forces that shaped Eliot as writer and thinker, with attention given to influences high and low; Eastern and Western; aesthetic, biographical, historical, philosophical, and scientific. Part II guides the reader through Eliot's entire oeuvre, analyzing richly every phase of his poetry, drama, and critical prose.

Part III contextualizes Eliot in a variety of ways. By examining his work through the lenses of race, gender, sexuality, religion, and politics, several chapters shed light on the new developments in Eliot studies and the controversies surrounding Eliot in our own time. Two chapters consider facets of Eliot's career – his work as a publisher and his founding and editing of the *Criterion* – that were adjunct to his writing, yet

crucial to the immense authority he wielded as a cultural figure. Others give informative glimpses into his reception and reputation among several readerships, or highlight aspects of his poetics that help to account for his literary eminence and continuing influence.

A Companion to T. S. Eliot is not merely the most comprehensive book of its kind, but also the first to synthesize broadly the resurgence of Eliot studies under a new, post-postmodernist critical regime, and with the inspiration of fresh primary material. A number of projects underway at this writing, including the compilation at long last of Eliot's *Complete Prose*, the resumption of his *Letters* (hitherto suspended since the publication of volume 1 in 1988), and authoritative new editions of his poems and plays, promise to keep the momentum of today's scholarship on Eliot going, and quite likely to accelerate it further, for some time to come.

Until those new editions of Eliot's work appear, readers confront a haphazard assortment of texts. Several collections of Eliot's poems and prose are available, with those published in the United States differing from those published in Britain, each with its own unique content, pagination, and typographical errors. While any selection among these editions is inevitably arbitrary, it seemed better, for the purposes of this *Companion*, to make some selection than to make none, so that references could be standardized around a consistent and accessible set of texts. The editions in use here are listed in the *Companion's* "Bibliography of Works by T. S. Eliot." Creative works appearing in the *Complete Poems and Plays 1909–1950* (Harcourt) have been referenced to that text in preference to any others where they may also appear; similarly, essays are referenced primarily to *Selected Essays* (new ed., Harcourt). Prose pieces not included there are cited, if possible, in the listed editions of Eliot's other collections (*The Sacred Wood*, *On Poetry and Poets*, etc.); uncollected pieces – which still constitute the majority of Eliot's prose – are referenced, perforce, to their original sources. Writers and editors, as well as students and other readers, can look forward to a future in which such limitations, frustrations, and inconveniences are no longer a part of their experience of Eliot.

I would like to thank Julia Daniel for her assiduous and capable assistance with the editing of this *Companion*, and Loyola University Chicago for the research-support grant that sponsored Julia's work. For their advice, my thanks go to Debra Rae Cohen, Michael Coyle, Kevin J. H. Dettmar, Lawrence Rainey, and Jayme Stayer. Emma Bennett and the editorial staff at Blackwell have been most helpful, and I am grateful to Al Bertrand for engaging me in this project. I would also like to acknowledge the contributors to this volume for their generous cooperation with my editorial activism. And to Lisa, Michael, and Raina: thank you, as always, for being with and bearing with me.

D. E. C.

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Abbreviations Used for Works by T. S. Eliot

ASG	<i>After Strange Gods</i>
"C"	<i>Criterion</i> Commentaries
CC	<i>Christianity and Culture</i>
CP	<i>Collected Poems 1909–1962</i>
CPP	<i>The Complete Poems and Plays 1909–1950</i>
EAM	<i>Essays Ancient and Modern</i>
EED	<i>Essays on Elizabethan Drama</i>
FLA	<i>For Lancelot Andrewes</i>
IMH	<i>Inventions of the March Hare</i>
KE	<i>Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley</i>
OPP	<i>On Poetry and Poets</i>
SE	<i>Selected Essays</i>
SP	<i>Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot</i>
SW	<i>The Sacred Wood</i>
UPUC	<i>The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism</i>
VMP	<i>The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry</i>
WLF	<i>The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts</i>
TCC	<i>To Criticize the Critic</i>

For the particular editions of Eliot's works referred to in this book, see the "Bibliography of Works by T. S. Eliot," p. 460.

Note: Endnote references in SMALL CAPITALS refer to chapters in this volume.

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Part I

Influences