

## T. S. ELIOT AND THE DYNAMIC IMAGINATION

How is a poem made? From what constellation of inner and outer worlds does it issue forth? Sarah Kennedy's study of Eliot's poetics seeks out those images most striking in their resonance and recurrence: the 'sea-change', the 'light invisible', and the 'dark ghost'. She makes the case for these sustained metaphors as constitutive of the poet's imagination and art. Eliot was haunted by recurrence. His work is full of moments of luminous recognitions, moments in which a writer discovers both subject and appropriate image. This book examines such moments of recognition and invocation by reference to three clusters of imagery – around and across the borderlines between light and shadow, surface and depth, self and other – drawing on the contemporary languages of literary criticism, psychology, physics, and anthropology. Eliot's transposition of these registers, at turns wary and beguiled, interweaves modern understandings of originary processes in the human and natural world with a poet's preoccupation with language. The metaphors arising from these intersections generate the imaginative logic of Eliot's poetry.

SARAH KENNEDY is a Fellow in English at Downing College, University of Cambridge. She gave the 2016 T. S. Eliot Lecture on 'Eliot's Ghost Women', and contributed a chapter on 'Ash-Wednesday and the Ariel Poems' to the *New Cambridge Companion to T. S. Eliot* (Cambridge, 2016).

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Sarah Kennedy  
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SARAH KENNEDY

*University of Cambridge*



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The intuition – is it something deeper even than that? – the conjecture, so strangely resistant to falsification, that there is ‘otherness’ out of reach gives to our elemental existence its pulse of unfulfilment. We are the creatures of a great thirst. Bent on coming home to a place we have never known.

– George Steiner, *Grammars of Creation*, p. 16

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## Abbreviations

Where a quotation includes end punctuation, such punctuation has been incorporated within quotation marks. In all other instances, punctuation marks are placed outside quotation marks. All quotations from Shakespeare are taken from *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974). Citations given without author are by T. S. Eliot, unless otherwise indicated.

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <i>CPP</i>         | <i>The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot</i> (London: Faber, 1969).  |
| <i>Facs</i>        | Valerie Eliot (ed.), <i>The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts</i> (London: Faber, 1971).   |
| <i>Letters I</i>   | Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton (eds.), <i>The Letters of T. S. Eliot</i> , vol. 1: 1898–1922, rev. edn (London: Faber, 2009).   |
| <i>Letters II</i>  | Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton (eds.), <i>The Letters of T. S. Eliot</i> , vol. 2: 1923–1925 (London: Faber, 2009).   |
| <i>Letters III</i> | Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (eds.), <i>The Letters of T. S. Eliot</i> , vol. 3: 1926–1927 (London: Faber, 2012).  |
| <i>Letters IV</i>  | Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (eds.), <i>The Letters of T. S. Eliot</i> , vol. 4: 1928–1929 (London: Faber, 2013).  |
| <i>Letters V</i>   | Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (eds.), <i>The Letters of T. S. Eliot</i> , vol. 5: 1930–1931 (London: Faber, 2014).  |
| <i>OPP</i>         | T. S. Eliot, <i>On Poetry and Poets</i> (London: Faber, 1957).   |
| <i>P</i>           | Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue (eds.), <i>The Poems of T. S. Eliot</i> , vol. 1: <i>Collected and Uncollected Poems</i> (London: Faber, 2015).  |
| <i>Prose I</i>     | Jewel Spears Brooker and Ronald Schuchard (eds.), <i>The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition</i> , vol. 1: <i>Apprentice Years, 1905–1918</i> (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014). |

- Prose II* Anthony Cuda, and Ronald Schuchard (eds.), *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition*, vol. 2: *The Perfect Critic, 1919–1926* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014).
- Prose III* Frances Dickey, and Jennifer Formichelli (eds.), *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition*, vol. 3: *Literature, Politics, Belief, 1927–1929* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015).
- Prose IV* Jason Harding, and Ronald Schuchard (eds.), *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition*, vol. 4: *English Lion, 1930–1933* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015).
- Prose V* Iman Javadi, Ronald Schuchard, and Jayme Stayer (eds.), *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition*, vol. 5: *Tradition and Orthodoxy, 1934–1939* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017).
- SE* T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (1932; London: Faber, 1999).
- UP* T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism: Studies in the Relation of Criticism to Poetry in England* (London: Faber, 1964).