

Ronald Schuchard, ed. *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*. By T. S. Eliot. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1993. Pp. xvi, 343. \$29.95.

The importance of Ronald Schuchard's edition of T. S. Eliot's Clark (1926) and Turnbull (1933) lectures has been compared to Valerie Eliot's facsimile and transcript of the original drafts of *The Waste Land*: both provide materials subject to perennial scholarly speculation but previously thought unavailable or lost. But while Valerie Eliot's work has been invaluable, both in her edition of *The Waste Land* and more recently in the first volume of Eliot's correspondence, Schuchard's splendidly researched edition should be recognized as something new. Thirty years after Eliot's death, we still have no scholarly editions of the work published in his lifetime. Most of Eliot's books remain in print, but only in the original trade editions. And despite Frank Kermode's lightly annotated edition of Eliot's *Selected Prose* (1975), which reprinted two essays never collected by Eliot himself, the largest part of Eliot's critical prose has never been reprinted since its first appearance in periodical form, let alone gathered with the kind of scholarly attention given to other great poet-critics, such as that which the editors of the Routledge/Princeton edition brought to Coleridge's prose, or R. H. Super brought to the Michigan edition of Arnold's. Even the considerably more prolific, and controversial, Ezra Pound has fared better, since Baechler, Litz, and Longenbach compiled the Garland Press edition of *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose: Contributions to Periodicals* (1991); this compilation makes no claim to textual editing or explanatory apparatus, but in making generally available work of great significance to the retelling of modernist history it performs commendable service. Nothing of the kind has been done for Eliot. Everyone knows the size of the task still before us: Donald Gallup's revised *Bibliography of the Work of T. S. Eliot* (1969), for example, lists nearly a thousand individual entries, counting books and contributions to books and periodicals, and this figure does not begin to catalogue the unpublished papers in various collections. Only with Schuchard's work do we have a fully realized model for a scholarly edition of Eliot's prose.

*The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry* in every way is a superior example of scholarship. Schuchard's introduction and note on editorial principles lay out the context for these two related series of lectures: the eight Clark lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge, and the three Turnbull lectures at Johns Hopkins University, which condensed and re-presented materials from the Clark lectures. (Alluding to William James's celebrated study of religious experience, Eliot gave the Turnbull lectures the title that Schuchard has chosen for this volume.) The Clark lectures, decisive in Eliot's establishment of his own critical authority, originally were entitled "On the Metaphysical Poetry of the Seventeenth Century with special reference to Donne, Crashaw and Cowley." Eliot long considered publishing these lectures and making

them part of a larger project to be called "The Disintegration of the Intellect." He did not accomplish their expansion or their publication, but his failure to do so testifies to the scale of his investment rather than to any loss of interest.

As Eliot explains in beginning the first of his Clark lectures, his interest in describing systematically the common characteristics of that seventeenth-century poetry in England "commonly known as metaphysical" follows from his "belief that our own mentality and feelings are better expressed by the seventeenth century than by the nineteenth or even the eighteenth." Eliot believed, in other words—and in a way that for us pronounces his "modernist" identity—that "it is valuable to understand the poetry of the seventeenth century, in order that we may understand that of our own time and understand ourselves." Ironically enough, given the formalist criticism that even then was finding inspiration in Eliot's example, his study of the metaphysicals participated in a broad critique of his own culture. Nevertheless, Eliot was anxious to remind his audience "that the matter in hand is not philosophy or theology but poetry, and not Poetry as an abstraction but particular poems which are living things capable of and intended to give enjoyment" (63). The tension between this purpose and reservation characterizes these lectures as it characterizes Eliot's career.

Schuchard's "Note on the Text and Editorial Principles" is of interest because it considers the implications of Eliot's "numerous misquotations, mistranscriptions and slips in the typescript." Despite the contrary example of Eliot's own practice as editor of the *Criterion*, Schuchard wisely opts to preserve Eliot's errors and discusses the significance of Eliot's tendency to work from memory. The issue leads Schuchard to develop the earlier discussions by Frank Kermode and Christopher Ricks on "the genre of misquotation." Schuchard quotes Ricks at length: Eliot's manner of "'misquotation as re-creation' is intimate with Eliot's profoundest sense of what creation is: the creation of one's self, and the creation of others' selves, in society and in procreation and through or within art's imaginings" (35).

The editor's notes annotate the lectures by identifying allusions, translating quotations from other languages, and explaining and providing the substance of the allusions; but they also relate the arguments of particular comments in the lectures to both the broader context of Eliot's published writings and to cultural history more generally. Three appendices provide a translation into French, by Jean André Moise de Menasce, of Clark lecture III, published in 1927; a list of all Clark lecturers from Leslie Stephen's inaugural address of 1884 to 1993; and a list of all Turnbull lecturers, from Edmund C. Stedman's inaugural address of 1891 to 1984.

All told, the book is as satisfying a whole as it is compelling in its parts. Eliot's lectures frame what was for him a deeply anxious transitional period, in which he left his banking job at Lloyd's, converted to

the Anglo-Catholic Church, separated from his first wife Vivienne, and established his career as an internationally renowned lecturer and, in today's terminology, public intellectual. We can be grateful for Ronald Schuchard's impressive accomplishment, and we can hope that it proves the model for the massive editorial work that still awaits the largest part of Eliot's work.

MICHAEL COYLE



Ajay Heble. *The Tumble of Reason: Alice Munro's Discourse of Absence*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1994. Pp. x, 210. \$35.00.

Alice Munro is one of those famous Canadian writers who occupy a solid position in Canadian literature and have a strong appeal to readers and critics around the world. To most readers, Munro's stories are enjoyable, but there are elements in them that are so subtle and implicit that there seems to be a barrier to comprehension. To most critics, her works embody quite different tendencies that require commentary and explication. Most scholarly criticism seems to be focused on Munro's involvement in realism or in feminism, or on aspects of theme, style, genre, or technique. Her stories, however, involve much more than what has been explored to date.

In *The Tumble of Reason: Alice Munro's Discourse of Absence*, Ajay Heble looks at all the published stories of Munro and discusses "paradigmatic discourse" chronologically yet systematically. Heble applies a linguistic approach to his work and defines "paradigmatic discourse" as "a reminder of the unresolvable gap between all writing and the reality which that writing attempts to re-present." "Paradigmatic discourse" here is not used in its usual meaning but to "describe a domain of language use in which the meaning of an item depends on the difference between it and other items which might have filled the same slot in a given sequence" (5). It conforms to the realm of pragmatics, which is defined as the "study of use of language in communication, particularly the relationships between sentences and the contexts and situations in which they are used" (*Applied Linguistics* 225). Pragmatics studies the meaning of a discourse conveyed in certain contexts rather than the literary meaning; put another way, it considers the implication that is apparently absent in the level of literary meaning. Heble leaps over the literary meaning to the absent meaning, or to the uncertain implication suggested in Munro's fictions. His work may extend the scope of scholarly criticism of Munro and mark the advent of a kind of sophisticated and linguistic study that is required for examining the complexity of Munro's works.

Heble begins in Chapter One with "suggestions of absent or potential relationships that violate presuppositions we may have of the world around us" (19). In the following six chapters, he goes on to argue