

T. S. Eliot's Views on James Joyce: The Harvard Teaching Notes

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The place of T. S. Eliot in scholarship on modernism, and on James Joyce in particular, has long rested upon his much-anthologized 1923 essay from *The Dial*, "Ulysses, Order and Myth."¹ In that short piece, focusing exclusively on matters of form and genre, Eliot exemplified an approach to modernism that dominated criticism for decades and helped future readers of Joyce to appreciate what he called "the mythical method," an ordered underpinning that would help make "the modern world possible for art" (178). Although critics would subsequently question Eliot's frame of reference and implicit moralizing, the essay was highly influential for generations of readers of Joyce and modernism more widely, prizing formal autonomy above all else.² And yet this is only a part of the story. We need to revise our understanding of Eliot's views on Joyce by incorporating into his legacy for Joyce studies—and modern writing more broadly—the neglected teaching notes from his short stint at Harvard University in 1933.³ Alongside other late essays in which Joyce occasionally appears, these notes provide the substance for a re-reading of the Eliot-Joyce relationship. In this essay, I will show that the way in which Eliot taught *Ulysses* to undergraduates in the early 1930s provides compelling and detailed evidence of two substantial changes in his views of Joyce. In the first place, the Harvard teaching notes reveal an Eliot who is determinedly personal, even emotional, in his reading, in a decided shift from the buttoned-up Eliot of "Ulysses, Order and Myth." Second, Eliot now presents Joyce as a Catholic writer, and so the notes represent a significant and previously unrecognized step in the long-running "Catholic question" in Joyce studies, that is, the appraisal of Joyce's work as distinctively Catholic in setting, theme, or ethos. In this respect, the notes provide fascinating preparations for Eliot's Page-Barbour lectures,

which were delivered at the University of Virginia and published as *After Strange Gods*.⁴ The significance of this shift in Eliot's appraisal of Joyce lies, I argue, not in the validity of Eliot's new opinions but in the need for Joyce studies to heed the religious contexts within which Joyce's work has been read. Accordingly, this essay first introduces Eliot's notes in the context of his Harvard teaching, a particular aspect of which was the comparison he drew between Joyce and D. H. Lawrence; it then considers in turn the two major shifts in his views of Joyce—his emotional response and "the Catholic idea" ("Notes" 785)—before concluding with a reflection on the significance of these notes for Joyce studies.

Eliot at Harvard: English 26

Eliot occupied the seven-month post as Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard University from autumn 1932 to spring 1933. It gave rise to a lecture tour that took in more than a dozen engagements, concluding with three Page-Barbour lectures at Virginia on 10–12 May 1933.⁵ Clearly, this was no sabbatical; on being appointed, Eliot had requested permission to offer *more* teaching, possibly enthused by his experiences in teaching adults as part of the University of London extension course between 1916 and 1919.⁶ Just as that earlier experience informed *The Sacred Wood*, so the Harvard teaching would inform *After Strange Gods*. The result was that he taught, with the assistance of Theodore (Ted) Spencer, a course on "English Literature from 1890 to the Present Day" (known simply as English 26), held every Tuesday and Thursday, and occasional Saturdays, between 7 April and 4 May 1933.⁷

Teaching in Harvard, and across the United States, helped Eliot to develop and widen his presence as a commentator on contemporary social and ethical matters, beyond a narrower focus on literary criticism. Michael Levenson has identified this period as a "crossing point in his career as public intellectual," marked by the "broadening reach" of his ambition from writer and critic to self-appointed moralist.⁸ He had already been moving with

greater sureness, from the late 1920s, toward a role as commentator on wider social, religious, and cultural matters. This shift to the role of public intellectual was propelled by many factors including his ability to exploit his burgeoning celebrity and his newly acquired Anglo-Catholicism. It was also assisted by his roles at the *Criterion* and Faber as well as his regular talks for the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Given this carefully cultivated public persona, the private nature of these notes is important. As with many other kinds of archival documents, their once-private character creates its own history that is pertinent to their contemporary public use. When Eliot departed the United States, he gave Spencer ninety-two pages of handwritten notes that he had used as the basis for his classes. A note by Spencer recalls that Eliot told him that he had "no further use for them" ("Notes" 758). In April 1936, Spencer gave them to the Harvard library, and they were typed with some minor deviations. As teaching documents, they were not intended for public perusal, but the editors of *The Complete Prose* say that they offer "unparalleled evidence of his thoughts on his contemporaries."⁹ Eliot seems to have planned as much: before leaving England, he declared to I. A. Richards, "I shall have to walk very warily not to offend literary friends and acquaintances" ("Introduction" xxix). The value to scholarship is indisputable although it is worth remembering that Eliot himself may well have decried the publication of private notes as "literary gossip."¹⁰

As notes written toward a performance, they occasionally reveal the peculiar shorthand of the teacher writing to himself, yet speaking to others. We cannot be certain that Eliot did not alter some expressions—perhaps even some of his judgments—either in delivery or in response to student comments. If the performance of the notes in the classroom can only be guessed at, one student of the seminar, C. L. Sulzburger, has recalled that Eliot was "timid and withdrawn" in class but livelier in less formal encounters.¹¹ For the most

part, these are extensive notes in grammatical sentences, constituting the draft of an argument, seemingly designed more for lecture than discussion. At the same time, at moments, Eliot appears, in print, to be cautiously struggling to express his own voice, searching perhaps for the right tone, as when he introduces his comparison with Lawrence by coyly announcing his preference for Joyce; at a point when *Ulysses* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* were both banned,¹² it added a particular frisson to discuss them in the classroom. He may have addressed the nation via the British Broadcasting Company, but the intimacy and directness of a classroom with twenty invited undergraduates was an unfamiliar environment. The Harvard teaching was not entirely private, however, surely having some wider influence both within and outside of the classroom, on the thought and practice of those attending. Further, as part of the testing ground for later, public lectures, these notes represent an initial and somewhat experimental stage in the presentation of public pronouncements. The documents therefore occupy an ambiguous position along the spectrum between private and public.

English 26 encompassed over forty years of literature ("1890 to the present"), but Eliot is concerned from the first to stress the contemporaneity of the writing he discusses and the necessity of treating it differently than older literature. In the present, "no values are settled," he says; readers struggle more to respond individually with "sensitivity and judgement" ("Notes" 758). The classes encompass a series of writers, all male, moving from an initial overview of the 1890s to Rudyard Kipling, George Bernard Shaw, and G. K. Chesterton, before a lengthier discussion of Henry James and Joseph Conrad, then W. B. Yeats, followed by Ezra Pound and Anglo-American poetry, and then Gerard Manley Hopkins. The final section of classes, which comprises roughly one quarter of the notes, is given over to an extended comparison between Joyce and Lawrence (with a brief finale on Wyndham Lewis).¹³

Joyce and Lawrence

The shifts in Eliot's thinking come out in the running juxtaposition he strikes between Joyce and Lawrence, creating an extended "parallel" between the two that is absent from *After Strange Gods*. Whereas the later Virginia lectures, which led to that volume, were dominated by Eliot's critical and moralistic social commentary, with Lawrence as the chief literary example, in the earlier Harvard notes, literary analysis comes to the fore, and the negative aspect of Eliot's thought is balanced by the positive example of Joyce.

It is clear that Lawrence was of deep interest to Eliot at this juncture. Of the four sections in the notes that concern Joyce, the first and second address both Joyce and Lawrence, where the principal texts mentioned are *A Portrait* and *Sons and Lovers*; the third deals with Joyce alone, with a focus on *Ulysses* and *Work in Progress*; and the fourth returns to Joyce and Lawrence.¹⁴ The diary of Dorothea Richards—whose husband, I. A. Richards, had worked and corresponded with Eliot for a decade—provides further evidence of the way that Eliot held the two writers together while favoring Joyce. On his return from the United States, Eliot visited the Richardses, and Dorothea Richard recorded in her diary that, after mellowing a little, Eliot "talked about English teaching at Harvard & how the young don't now get anything out of *Ulysses* now its notoriety has gone—more interested in Lawrence, Teaching a limited class English 26—at 9am."¹⁵

More significantly, the United Kingdom censors had inadvertently established an implicit comparison—in Eliot's mind at least—by banning works by both writers: *Ulysses* in 1922 and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in 1928. It is interesting to note that I. A. Richards informed Eliot he had been asked *not* to put *Ulysses* on his reading list when he taught English 26 at Harvard a few years before Eliot, although he was allowed to read from and discuss the book. Richards reports spending "two or three very lively hours" teaching it,

including the "Scylla-Charybdis Library Doorway" passage.¹⁶ In his Harvard instruction, Eliot's notes address the charge of obscenity but make no direct reference to the ban then still in place. It is clear, however, that Eliot connected Joyce and Lawrence in part because of the censorship of their work. In 1931, two years before the Harvard appointment, in his statement of religious affiliation, "Thoughts After Lambeth," Eliot regretted that many bishops had not dissociated themselves from "the condemnation of these two extremely serious and improving writers" who were "the only two authors of "recognised ability and position" officially disapproved in England."¹⁷ Eliot had invited them both to contribute to the *Criterion Miscellany* series.¹⁸

Eliot's main line of treatment consists of juxtaposing the two writers' personal histories, making eight numbered points of comparison, ranging from the banal ("Contemporary," "Both exiles," "Different methods of writing" ["Notes" 783]) to the psycho-biographical ("Both were exceptionally sensitive children in an uncongenial environment" and "Relationship toward their parents most important" ["Notes" 784]). Within these eight points are religious and cultural themes that will come to dominate Eliot's notes. His second point is that Joyce is "Irish Catholic" while Lawrence is an "English nonconformist," "which colours their whole outlook" ("Notes" 783). Indeed, in some ways, the whole course of English 26 has been building towards this moment since one of the "antitheses" introduced at the very start that "must always be remembered" ("Notes" 760) had been "Catholic vs. Protestant" ("Notes" 759). In setting the comparison, Eliot uses the misleading shorthand of "vs." to account for their religious difference, a mark perhaps of the stress he sought to place on this matter. Lawrence, he says, writes with a "message," but Joyce does not ("Notes" 783). In terms of their education, Lawrence is described as "self-taught," implicitly lacking a principled approach, whereas Joyce has received the "finest training there is" from the Jesuits ("Notes" 783).¹⁹ It appears that, for Eliot, these educational

differences are bound up with class distinctions, a matter in which his prejudices are implicitly developed. Following an allusion to "Class consciousness," Joyce is described as a "'gentleman'" (a term nicely couched in the ambiguity of quotation marks), perhaps with a view to forcing a greater distinction from Lawrence the "miner's son" ("Notes" 783).

These initial points of comparison are a curious mixture of detachment (a matter-of-fact tone) and valuation (especially in the comments about education). Remarkably, in this opening preamble to the Joyce-Lawrence sections, prejudice becomes even more explicit when Eliot declares: "feel racial antipathy to Irish" and follows this up, as if to excuse himself, by saying "but *civil* wars are the bloodiest" ("Notes" 783). How should one read this bizarre, brazen remark? The comment is crass, ugly, and a mark of Eliot's personal distance from the society that was, at least on the face of it, closest to his ideal of Catholic Church and State in tandem. As I have suggested, Eliot is trying to find his voice—a voice that is both authentically his but still right for the classroom—and the tone is uncertain, double-edged. He offers this remark immediately after stating his friendship with Joyce, as if to row back from that, qualifying any misleading perception of closeness with this comment about "racial" difference. The absence of the first-person subject (it is not "I feel . . .") might indicate ambivalence in putting across so apparently blunt a declaration of attitude. Whatever the motivations behind this statement, it underlines the historical difference between our reading of Joyce and Eliot's own (a point to which I will return).

Emotion and Intensity

The first significant aspect of the new approach to Joyce that is evident in Eliot's English 26 notes is the personal investment he makes in the reading of literature. His stress on "emotion" and "intensity" is revealing in that it signals a shift of emphasis from "Ulysses, Order and

Myth." In some respects, the 1933 teaching notes might be said to take up and extend the 1923 essay. This is the view of the editors of *The Collected Prose* who cite Eliot's new term, "Synchronisation," as a "development" of his earlier idea of a "mythical method" ("Introduction" xxviii).²⁰ While this is surely the case, Eliot's revised reading of Joyce also introduces a quite new approach. Written nearly a decade after his earlier pronouncement that *Ulysses* is a Classical rather than Romantic text, the notes for English 26 might initially suggest that Eliot's critical frame of reference for *Ulysses* was still set in 1923: his class devoted to Joyce begins by mentioning "Interior Monologue" ("Misunderstood," he says) and the Odyssean "framework" ("Necessary," he comments pointedly, "for author rather than for reader"), offering an "Admonishment about Commentaries: Gilbert and Curtius" ("Notes" 788). In annotating what he calls "Synchronisation," Eliot adds a parenthesis—"(cf. Pound and myself)"—which offers vague support for the view that this is a development of the earlier essay ("Notes" 788).

"Synchronisation" is then discussed in a paragraph beginning with this comment: "Several periods of time and several planes of reality at once. Strong historical sense, and of everything happening at once" ("Notes" 788). This is "Not in Woolf and Lawrence" Eliot continues, but as it "Gets away from straight narrative" he admits this is also "Mrs Woolf to some extent" ("Notes" 788). Joyce's distinctiveness, as Eliot appears to see it, lies in his ability to render events and associations from distinct periods as though they were simultaneous. The coexistence of specific elements of past and present in the perceiving mind gives rise to the idea of a "consciousness" that cuts across "planes of reality."²¹ Eliot does not say so explicitly, but such a reading of the formal achievement of *Ulysses* prepares his listeners for the argument that Joyce's writing is theological and spiritual, surpassing temporal and rational constraints. In this respect, the ordering principle of myth (or indeed religion, literature, or history) remains in

place in his critical approach: the "mythical method"—enlarged to encompass a range of associative meanings—continues to exert order but an order whose purpose is deeply felt by individuals. In this respect, the ordering principle of myth (or, indeed, religion, literature, or history) remains in place in his critical approach: the "mythical method"—enlarged to encompass a range of associative meanings—continues to exert order, but an order whose purpose is deeply felt by individuals.

What is new here is the way that Eliot's notes bring out in fresh terms a more personal response on which "Ulysses, Order and Myth" did not elaborate, perhaps because the Classical/Romantic dichotomy had operated like a straitjacket on his expression in that earlier essay. It is true that Eliot had begun 1923 by acknowledging the "surprise, delight, and terror" that *Ulysses* gave him, but these emotions are checked by the subsequent extensive discussion of the mythical method which is likened to a "scientific discovery" (*Prose* 175, 177). A decade later, the teaching notes are more relaxed in their direct reference to emotional response: they cite an "intensity by association" wherein memories are "charged with emotional significance" ("Notes" 788). Although "intensity is gained at the expense of clarity," the important thing is that "The real deeper emotional current of life is continuous, but ordinarily is not in full consciousness" ("Notes" 788). The word "order," previously so important to Eliot's reading of *Ulysses*, has disappeared altogether, to be replaced by the terms intensity, emotion, and an admission of what is "felt" ("Notes" 788). Ron Bush has called this the "matter he usually preferred not to mention" and points out its importance to Eliot's poetry, suggesting that the poetry's allusiveness was a means for Eliot's own emotional intensity to be worked through (718). The formal achievement of *Ulysses*, which had earlier seemed an end in itself, is now implied to have as its greatest effect the revelation of the "real deeper emotional current of life" ("Notes" 788).

"The Catholic Idea"

As we have seen, the sketchy introduction to the final four classes of English 26 stresses that Joyce was an "Irish Catholic" and Lawrence an "English nonconformist." Eliot, however, is really only interested in one side of this equation: Lawrence's relationship with the church of his boyhood is then dropped altogether apart from the occasional use of the catch-all term "Protestant" ("Notes" 759). For the most part, the Englishman appears as a secular figure, "always . . . occupied with human relations and their failure" ("Notes" 785). Joyce, meanwhile, is consistently associated with Catholic thought, and Eliot reads him in his own image—he appears in these notes as a high-minded theologian, "concerned with the relation of man to God" ("Notes" 785). In a sense, Eliot is writing about himself and admitting the failure of human relations. He indicates his distance from a Protestantism that he thinks of as broadly secular, and he signals his attraction to theological questions of belief and principle.

Eliot's term, "the Catholic idea," appears to be a kind of shorthand expression indicating how Joyce's background and learning have influenced the perspective of his characters and the social framework in which they operate:

In Stephen, in spite of the greater sordidness, you get the Catholic idea: the sense that society is more important than the happiness of the individual, hence none of the sentimentality that you find in *Sons and Lovers*. In the latter you find only individuals, in the former you find society. To me, *Sons and Lovers* is devoid of moral sense, an evil book: and the *Portrait* is directed by moral sense. ("Notes" 785)

One obvious objection to Eliot's claim is that Stephen Dedalus professes individualism in his attempt to fly by the nets of family, church, and nation. That objection does not take into account two factors. First, the novel shows that those constraints cannot be simply sidestepped. They also (in their own way) enable Stephen's youthful development, which is itself

arguably subject to Joyce's irony. Second, *A Portrait* is a philosophical novel about the meaning of liberty—an exploration of the friction between the individual will and the social code—an issue that, despite its Catholic setting, has wider bearing.

What Eliot is getting at is something like the adage of Cranly: that, despite his protestations of disbelief, Stephen is "supersaturated" with Catholic lore (*P* 244). Eliot appears to draw on this observation and conversation in his references to *A Portrait*. (His notes include page numbers and I have been able to track down the edition he must have used - the 1924 "new edition, type re-set" by Jonathan Cape, quite possibly in the Traveller's Library 1930 issue.²²) Eliot draws on Stephen Dedalus's conversation with Cranly in which he admits he 'is not at all sure' why he was shocked at Cranly's blasphemy (Jesus was 'a conscious hypocrite', 'a blackguard'), implying either that he cannot escape the affect which his religious upbringing provokes or even that he has retained some of his faith.²³ Joyce was himself immersed in Catholic life—not just theological distinctions and allusions but a real personal anxiety and a sense of the deep social significance and inescapable everyday-ness of Catholicism in a Catholic society. It is this stress on society that matters most to Eliot in defining his "Catholic idea." Joyce may have lost his Catholic faith, but he "has gone too far to believe anything else," Eliot says, pointing out that Stephen can refuse to pray at his mother's deathbed but she will return to haunt him in Nighttown ("Notes" 787). Eliot repeats his phrase "the Catholic idea" in explaining a crucial distinction between Joyce and Lawrence: that the former assumes implicit moral codes that stretch beyond the everyday world ("Notes" 785). Stephen's sins "recognise a standard"; he "knew what repentance is," Eliot proposes, whereas Paul Morel "just treats everything as experience" ("Notes" 787). *Sons and Lovers* cannot then convey a sense of individual duty to society.

Eliot's emphasis on the social in his "Catholic idea" would appear to have contributed to his new sense of "tradition," which he had revised since the famous essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (*Prose* 37-44). His articulation of "the Catholic idea" in his Harvard teaching was, I suggest, therefore a key stage in adopting the views expressed shortly afterwards in the Virginia Page-Barbour lectures which became *After Strange Gods*. At the start of that volume, Eliot states:

Tradition is not solely, or even primarily, the maintenance of certain dogmatic beliefs; these beliefs have come to take their living form in the course of the formation of a tradition. What I mean by tradition involves all those habitual actions, habits and customs, from the most significant religious rite to our conventional way of greeting a stranger, which represent the blood kinship of "the same people living in the same place." (*Gods* 18)

It is an almost incomprehensible irony that Eliot should take this definition—the one used by Leopold Bloom to define a nation in the face of anti-Semitic abuse (*U* 12.403)—to go on two pages later to state his own infamous, ugly, and clumsily expressed anti-Semitism ("reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable"—*Gods* 20). Chris Ackerley was the first to notice Eliot's echo of Joyce's phrase,²⁴ but he did not have the benefit of access to the English 26 notes, and so the allusion necessarily appeared somewhat uncertain. In the context of these teaching notes, however, the phrase seems to me to be incontrovertibly an allusion to *Ulysses*. Certainly, as Ackerley notes (112), Eliot couches Joyce's phrase within quotation marks—but did Eliot really know he was citing Joyce here? If he did, why did he cite Bloom's defense against anti-Semitism when his own derogatory comments toward Jews would follow? One reason I think we can be sure that Eliot *did* know that he was citing Joyce is that not only had he just been teaching *Ulysses* weeks before preparing these

lectures but the Harvard notes also make clear that "Cyclops" was one of the episodes with which Eliot was most familiar. It is mentioned twice by name in English 26 (as is "Circe" but no other episode is named), and on each occasion Eliot quoted from it.²⁵

To ask the question "why did Eliot cite this passage?" is also to mark our own historical distance from Eliot. The answer, surely, is that Eliot read *Ulysses* differently from the way that most readers nowadays do: Joyce's ironic undercutting of xenophobia and racism in "Cyclops" makes him appear now as a more "progressive" modernist, but such liberal politics were not the interpretative frame of pre-war Europe. In Ackerley's words, "the problem of interpretation may arise from the differences in the reading of *Ulysses* (and hence the character of Bloom) in the 1920s and 1930s, compared with a post-Ellmann and post-Holocaust reading" (113). For the past half-century, notwithstanding the huge shifts that have taken place in Joyce studies and literary criticism more widely, it has been Bloom and not Stephen who has been seen as the champion, the real hero, of *Ulysses*. Pre-war and pre-Ellmann analyses of Bloom were as likely to signal moral condemnation as much as understanding of his ordinariness or his sexual activity.²⁶ In Eliot's reading, however, Stephen is the more prominent. For sure, Eliot does provide Bloom with sympathetic space (and Molly a little), but given that *A Portrait* is the book more often cited in his teaching notes, it is perhaps not surprising that Stephen figures as often as he does. In turn, this emphasis on Stephen helps to reinforce "the Catholic idea."

Eliot's teaching notes, then, display some of the groundwork that went into the lectures of *After Strange Gods*. With the benefit of the Harvard English 26 notes, we can see that Joyce played a far more powerful role in the creation of *After Strange Gods* than the three references to him in the later volume might suggest. The running parallel between the two writers in the English 26 notes shows that Joyce is a largely silent presence in *After*

Strange Gods as the unspoken counter-example to Lawrence. Whereas Lawrence is the dominant personality of the eventual publication, his role as chief exemplary of modern laxity could not have been created without the positive counterweight of Joyce in Eliot's recent teaching.

Without knowledge of the teaching notes, allusions to Joyce can seem opaque in *After Strange Gods*. For instance, Eliot here claims that "the relations of Lawrence's men and women" are said to have an "absence of any moral or social sense"; his characters possess no moral obligations or conscience (*Gods* 37). Eliot immediately goes on to cite "The Dead," and this leads to the claim—which has understandably puzzled many subsequent readers—that Joyce is "the most ethically orthodox of the more eminent writers of my time" (*Gods* 38). Some explanation for this pronouncement is to be found in the Harvard notes. There, Eliot explains that Lawrence is "perpetually and distressingly occupied with human relationships" ("Notes" 785). This preoccupation is "Not Catholic" ("Notes" 785). Joyce, on the other hand, is "concerned with the relation of man to God" ("Notes" 785). Consequently, *Sons and Lovers* is "devoid of moral sense," but *A Portrait* is "directed by moral sense" ("Notes" 785). It comes back to "the Catholic idea"—"that society is more important than the individual" ("Notes" 785). Eliot's attempt to articulate this idea to the students at Harvard lies behind his lectures at Virginia.

For all its strident intemperance, *After Strange Gods* is curiously shy of the sort of declaration in favor of a "Catholic" theology and worldview, as then understood and pursued by Eliot and which the English 26 notes contain. Instead, Eliot presents a negative argument against liberalism. The Harvard notes illustrate his developing ideas in a slightly earlier form, sketching a similar point in a literary critical context prior to Eliot's public moralizing. In the Harvard classroom, he is explicit about siding with Joyce because of his personal interest in Catholicism. Later, in the *After*

Strange Gods lectures, he became at once less clear-cut and more dogmatic (a party to the "rhetorical unsteadiness and the elusive mobility" that Levenson finds in his "later public discourse"—68). Perhaps the relative privacy of the Harvard classroom offered Eliot the security to articulate, through Joyce, something of his own faith, or perhaps he was more comfortable in the Virginia lecture hall and subsequent publication adopting the public role of critical commentator. Whatever the hidden motivation, it can be seen that the argument of *After Strange Gods* derives much more from a literary interpretation of Joyce than readers have recognized. Sometimes teaching is the most honest form of criticism.

The Legacy of Eliot's Teaching Notes

The English 26 teaching notes contribute to the long-running "Catholic question" in Joyce studies by prompting a return to a significant context in which some of the founding interpretations of Joyce were made. My point here is not to survey the recent interest in the matter of Joyce's Catholic upbringing, its hold over his intellectual development, and the extent of his affiliation with the church, which has contributed to something approaching a "religious turn" in modernist scholarship—although these teaching notes certainly have the potential to deepen and enrich this scholarship. Instead of pondering the unanswerable question of Joyce's beliefs, criticism is better directed at the wider point that his work illuminates a critical phase in Irish cultural development, including religious practices, theological dogmas, and secular responses. In this respect, the religious turn in modernist scholarship helps to direct attention to a missing but crucial element in critical assessments. In the words of Pericles Lewis, some modern critics have tended "anachronistically to read back into" modernist writing "a blithely secular point of view."²⁷ Others have considered more closely the contexts of Catholicism between the influences on the First Vatican Council and the eventual dismissal of theological modernism.²⁸

Lewis's point can be extended to the contexts within which influential critical interpretations have been formed. One implication of a wider knowledge of Eliot's teaching notes should be a greater awareness of the religious debates that bore upon important critics and their work. To illustrate this point, consider the dispute between Eliot and Leavis in which each favored one writer—Joyce and Lawrence, respectively. As the initial public articulation by Eliot of his disapproval of Lawrence, *After Strange Gods* became a key marker in the dispute between Eliot and Leavis over the direction of contemporary fiction—a dispute that explicitly centers on their respective sympathies with Joyce and Lawrence but whose implicit impetus is the profound social and religious difference between the two critics (and the two writers). The fact that Eliot seldom refers to Joyce in *After Strange Gods*, however, has obscured the role of Joyce as a Catholic writer in this debate and with that the religious differences between the critics.

When, near the start of his career, Leavis launched his flagship journal *Scrutiny* in late 1933, Eliot was personally supportive.²⁹ But the publication the following year of *After Strange Gods* provoked Leavis into dissent: he reviewed the volume, suggesting that the “dogmas” of Eliot's faith had weakened his critical faculties and noting that “moral or religious criticism cannot be a substitute for literary criticism.”³⁰ Leavis's assertion here goes to the heart of the matter: it elides his own moral judgment and the religious (Methodist) basis from which it sprang and supports the dominant academic standpoint that scholarship is premised on an essential neutrality. The widespread acceptance of Leavis's assumption (if not his practice) may account for the neglect of religious contexts in the critical historiography of literary modernism.

The English 26 notes are therefore an important document in the Leavis-Eliot dossier—itsself a defining dispute in twentieth-century English literary culture—since they represent Eliot's first expression of a decidedly pro-

Catholic criticism and show how the direction in which Eliot was tending came to influence his literary judgment. Eliot stayed loyal to the "Irish Catholic" Joyce while not, as we know, himself converting to Rome. For his part, Leavis went on to become the most vocal champion of what he saw as a distinctively English, protestant tradition. In 1948, his roll call in *The Great Tradition* included Lawrence in terms that are telling: it is Lawrence's "spirit" that gains him recognition, and Leavis repeats (apparently endorsing) Lawrence's own claim to write "from the depth of my religious experience."³¹ The absence of an explicit religious framework in Lawrence's fiction does not prevent Leavis from accepting at face value that Lawrence is compelled to write in a religious spirit. Joyce's explicit questioning of the Catholic Church passes without comment, yet immediately following his approbation of Lawrence's religious spirit, Leavis criticizes Eliot for finding in Joyce's work "something that recommends Joyce to him as positively religious in tendency (see *After Strange Gods*)" (25). Joyce's writing is said to have no "organic principle" that might unify the "elaborate analogical structure" and "technical devices" (25, 26). Indeed, Leavis's terms to describe his own position are strikingly religious: he asserts that "one should, in all modesty, bear one's witness in these matters" (26).

The broader point here is that literary criticism, from roughly the middle of the twentieth century, is presumed to be conducted within a generally secular framework. This shift in critical perspective adds a further layer to negotiate in any historical understanding of the religious contexts within which scholarly interpretations originated. The hermeneutic circle can prove impossible to escape: an anachronistic secularism is attributed to Joyce, to his milieu, and to influential early critics. The risk is that by attributing to Joyce a role as "one of the great secularising figures", as Brooker does (230), or, indeed, couching Joyce within unspoken assumptions about morality (as Leavis does), his historical significance as a

writer of Catholic heritage who dissected the Church-State nexus in pre-Independence Ireland might be lost. There are two dangers. The first is that criticism loses its historical sense of change in Catholic practice. This has been debunked by Geert Lernout: some recent criticism reads Joyce's Catholic interest as if the Church Joyce knew was a post-Vatican II institution; yet Lernout's conclusion falls prey to the problem of the hermeneutic circle by reading Joyce's work as a concerted attack on the Catholic Church.³² Instead, beginning with Arius and the decree of papal infallibility, Joyce shows himself fascinated by the history of theological schism (including his own).³³ The second danger lies in assuming that a secular modernity comes to replace theological societies rather than the two co-existing in often uncomfortable ways.³⁴ The same may be said of critical practice: religious and secular persuasions come to influence a great many critical insights. The issue is deeply pertinent to one of the defining differences in Joyce criticism: that between Richard Ellmann's humanist focus on the art of the ordinary and Hugh Kenner's mix of moral disdain and Catholic reverence for the magic of the word (see Brooker, 119-30). Both have left hugely influential traces in the interpretations of today's readers.

Eliot's English 26 notes, then, are important for Joyce scholarship in many ways. They provide evidence that Eliot's conservative Christianity found a literary legitimation in his reading of *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*. The awkward, skeletal argument of *After Strange Gods* can be seen fleshed out in the Harvard classroom. A more rounded picture emerges of the literary relationship of these writers including proof of the closeness and seriousness with which Eliot read Joyce. While they may not give rise to a radical reappraisal of Joyce's attitude to Catholicism, these notes give further evidence of the need to consider Joyce within the religious contexts that affected both his writing and its reception.

¹ T. S. Eliot, "Ulysses, Order and Myth," *The Dial*, 75 (November 1923), 480-84, and reprinted in *The Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), pp. 175-78. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text as *Prose*.

² See Joseph Brooker, *Joyce's Critics* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2004), p. 45: "Eliot's essay is an exemplary case in the history of Joyce criticism. It is the starkest and most influential instance of the abstraction of Joyce—of a practice of reading and writing that would tend towards generalities rather than specifics, broad allegorical structures rather than the work's texture." Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

³ The notes have been published online as "Lecture Notes for English 26: English Literature from 1890 to the Present Day," in *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot: The Critical Edition, Volume 4: The English Lion, 1930-1933*, ed. Jason Harding and Ron Schuchard (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2015), <<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/43271>>. The holograph lecture notes are in the Houghton Library at MS Am 1691.14 (36), and the transcription is at HUC 8932.224.26. Further references will be cited as "Notes," followed by page numbers in the online edition; Eliot's underlining has been rendered in italic. I have worked from both the excellent online critical edition and from a copy of the typescript (which contains a number of errors that are silently corrected in the edition). This essay is the first consideration of the significance of the teaching notes for Joyce studies; they have also been discussed, principally in the context of Eliot's poetic career, in Ron Bush, "'Intensity by association': T. S. Eliot's Passionate Allusions," *Modernism/modernity*, 20 (November 2013), 709-27. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

Eliot's teaching notes throw light on a number of issues that are beyond the scope of this essay, including his views on his contemporaries and near-contemporaries; his cultivation of a moral voice in literary criticism and social commentary; his still quite new and sometimes idiosyncratic stress on theological distinctions as a means of reading literature; and the relationship between these literary analyses and his own creative output. Undoubtedly, these teaching notes are a rich document for biographers of Eliot's personal as well as literary and critical shifts, his accommodations, and his occasional inconsistencies.

⁴ Eliot, *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Heresy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934). Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text as *Gods*.

⁵ For an account of Eliot's speaking engagements, see Peter Ackroyd, *T. S. Eliot* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984), pp. 198-200.

⁶ See Rachel Sagner Buurma and Laura Heffernan, "The Classroom in the Canon: T. S. Eliot's Modern English Literature Extension Course for Working People and *The Sacred Wood*," *PMLA*, 133 (2018), 264-81. The authors argue that "English classrooms at nonelite institutions have developed groundbreaking approaches to literary study" (p. 264). See also Eliot, *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen Publishers, 1920).

⁷ A poet and a Shakespeare scholar, Theodore Spencer was to become the first editor of Joyce's aborted novel, *Stephen Hero*, Harvard having acquired that manuscript in 1938—see Joyce, "Stephen Hero": A Part of the First Draft of "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," ed. Spencer (London: New Directions, 1944).

⁸ Michael Levenson, "The Role of Intellectual," *T. S. Eliot in Context*, ed. Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2011), p. 67. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text. Eliot declared himself to be

speaking "only in the role of moralist" at the start of his Page-Barbour lectures, a quotation included in *After Strange Gods* (*Gods*, p. 12).

⁹ See Harding and Schuchard, "English Lion, 1930-33: Introduction" ("Notes," p. xxix). Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text as "Introduction."

¹⁰ See *After Strange Gods*: "There is no doubt some curiosity to know what any writer thinks of his contemporaries: a curiosity which has less to do with literary criticism than with literary gossip" (*Gods*, p. 12).

¹¹ C. L. Sulzburger is quoted in *The Letters of T. S. Eliot, Volume 6: 1932-1933*, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2016), p. 545n.

¹² Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler et al. (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), and D. H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (Italy: Tipografia Giuntina, 1928). Further references to *Ulysses* will be cited parenthetically in the text as *U* and by page and line number.

¹³ The significance of Joyce for Eliot can be measured in part by the prominence of his name in the notes. Of the seventy-five typewritten pages, some eighteen concern Joyce directly. Joyce is mentioned by name fifty times, compared to thirty-two for Henry James, twenty-five for W. B. Yeats, and twenty-one for Joseph Conrad. The only writer to be mentioned more often is Lawrence (sixty-five times).

¹⁴ Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1916); Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1913); and Joyce, *Work in Progress, Volume I* (New York: Donald Friede, 1928).

¹⁵ Dorothea Richards is quoted in *The Letters of T. S. Eliot* (6:697n).

¹⁶ See a letter from I. A. Richards to Eliot (26 January 1932) in *The Letters of T. S. Eliot* (6:70n).

¹⁷ "Thoughts After Lambeth," *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot* (4:225).

¹⁸ On this series, see Eleni Loukopoulou, "Lawrence and Joyce in T. S. Eliot's Criterion Miscellany Series," *Modernists at Odds: Reconsidering Joyce and Lawrence*, ed. Matthew J. Kochis and Heather L. Lusty (Gainesville: Univ. Press of Florida, 2015), pp. 131-60.

¹⁹ The lexicon of "training," routinely associated with Jesuit education, signifies a class distinction and an acculturated order indicative of Eliot's preference.

²⁰ Bush also discusses "synchronisation" in "'Intensity by association': T. S. Eliot's Passionate Allusions" (717-719).

²¹ This is a phrase Eliot uses more than once, as, for example, in discussing *The Turn of the Screw*. The phrase summarized for Eliot a formal matter in the novel that culminated with Joyce. See "Notes" pp. 774, 788 and the editors' note on p. 800.

²² In his commentary ("Notes" 805), Ron Schuchard erroneously claims that Eliot was using either the 1916 Huebsch or the textually identical 1917 Egoist press edition of *A Portrait*, and has added two page numbers not given by Eliot, "[19]" and "[68]", which refer to the 1916 / 1917 edition. All the page numbers provided by Eliot are preceded by 'p.'. A check of the page numbers cited by Eliot in his lectures makes clear that he must be using a different edition (he did not specify any edition to his students) and his page numbers correspond to the Traveller's Library edition.

²³ Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Traveller's Library, 1930), p.276.

²⁴ I was struck immediately by this phrase but was surprised to find no critical responses besides Chris Ackerley's short article, "Living in the Same Place: Joyce's *Ulysses* in T. S. Eliot's *After Strange Gods*," *Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association*, 84 (November 1995), 111-15. This lack of response may be attributable to

uncertainty about whether Eliot was consciously citing Joyce. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

²⁵ Eliot's citations of *Ulysses* match the pagination of the fourth to eighth Paris Shakespeare and Company printing, 1923-1926, but we cannot be sure exactly which lines or passages Eliot intended to quote in his teaching. The first allusion is to "Cyclops. p. 280," in effect, the initial page of the episode; the second is an instruction to himself to "Quote Cyclops" ("Notes" 789, 790).

²⁶ In January 1933, the Catholic journal *The Tablet* declared Joyce's work to be "morally unclean," and such responses were certainly not exclusive to conservative Catholics—see E. Oldmeadow, review of *Ulysses* and *Two Tales of Shem and Shaun*, *The Tablet*, 161 (14 January 1933), 41-42, and reprinted in Robert H. Deming, ed., *James Joyce: The Critical Heritage, Volume Two 1928-1941* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 513.

²⁷ Pericles Lewis, *Religious Experience and the Modernist Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010), p. 3. See also Steve Pinkerton, *Blasphemous Modernism: The Twentieth-Century Word Made Flesh* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2017), and Erik Tonning, *Modernism and Christianity* (London: Palgrave Publishers, 2014).

²⁸ See Finn Fordham, "Between Theological Modernism and Cultural Modernism: The Vatican's Oath against Modernism, September 1910," *Literature & History*, 22 (Spring 2013), 8-24, and two works from different perspectives: Chrissie Van Mierlo, *James Joyce and Catholicism: The Apostate's "Wake"* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2017), and Mary Lowe Evans, *Catholic Nostalgia in Joyce and Company* (Gainesville: Univ. Press of Florida, 2008).

²⁹ Eliot consistently supported *Scrutiny*—see *The Letters of T. S. Eliot* (6:113).

³⁰ F. R. Leavis's review, first published in *Scrutiny* in September 1934, does not refer to Joyce. Given that a Methodist morality is clearly foregrounded in Leavis's sense of English tradition, it is no surprise when he accepts that "what it may be crude to call the religious sense" is necessary to social well-being; he is nonetheless uncomfortable that Eliot "adheres to a religion, and can point to his Church and recite its dogmas"—see *The Common Pursuit* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962), pp. 240, 241. The Leavis-Eliot relationship would henceforth take what Bernard Bergonzi calls a "zig-zag" trajectory—see *The Myth of Modernism and Twentieth Century Literature* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1986), p. 85. Bergonzi does not mention the issue of religious differences.

³¹ Leavis, *The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), pp. 25, 26. Further references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

³² Geert Lernout, *Help My Unbelief: James Joyce and Religion* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2010).

³³ In *James Joyce and Catholicism*, Van Mierlo shows the extent to which heresies and Catholic figures, with particular emphasis on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are alluded to in *Finnegans Wake*.

³⁴ See Michael Allen Gillespie, *Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2008). Ezra Pound's review of *After Strange Gods* made this mistaken assumption: "The fact is that 'religion' long since resigned. Religion in the person of its greatest organized European institution resigned"—see Pound's "Mr Eliot's Mare's Nest," in *T. S. Eliot: The Contemporary Reviews*, ed. Jewel Spears Brooker (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004), p. 277. The essay was first published in the *New English Weekly*, 4 (8 March 1934), 500.