

Discarnate desire: T. S. Eliot and the poetics of dissociation

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A blind, dirty, senile old man haunts the margins of Eliot's 1910 poem "First Debate between the Body and Soul."¹ Along with a cast of characters in *Inventions of the March Hare* – clowns, actors, marionettes – he inserts himself in the consciousness of Eliot's narrators as both self and other, a voice at once within and without the "I" who ostensibly speaks. Unlike Eliot's theatrical personae, this often vile, chattering, drunken, or mad old man carries with him a horror of self-representation little mediated by a stage setting or controlled script. Similar figures appear in other poems, notably "Dans le Restaurant" and "Hysteria." Yet he plays one role among many; in other forms, alien and intimate figures serve, in Eliot's work, both to claim and to disavow desire. For example, the marionettes – "my marionettes" – of "Convictions (Curtain Raiser)" are filled with naive and exaggerated desires carefully detached from the narrator who also claims them: they "Await an audience open-mouthed / At climax and suspense" and have "keen moments every day." The narrator of "The Little Passion from 'An Agony in the Garret'" observes himself walking and notes, sardonically, his own "withered face" as if in a mirror behind a bar: speaker and other are strangely indistinguishable.

That Eliot's poetry, especially the early work, depicts states of internal division, disorder, doubling, or multiple voices is well known. Especially in regard to "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and *The Waste Land*, these inner states have been defined in relation to Matthew Arnold's "buried life," Bergson's distinction between *durée* and external social life, F. H. Bradley's closed selves, and Freud's notion of the uncanny.² Yet such divisions of voice, personae, sensibility, even personality had long been recorded in pre-Freudian theories well known to Eliot, whose figures of modern unease depict recognizable forms of psychological distress – notably what was clinically defined as hysteria – and whose famous concept of the "dissociation of sensibility" can be traced directly to their language. Although this source

remains almost wholly unrecognized, it offers both a new understanding of Eliot's elusive term and a new way of seeing his poetic forms.

Eliot affirmed in "The Music of Poetry" that poets, in their critical writings, are always defending the kind of poetry they are writing.³ "The dissociation of sensibility" framed a definition of consciousness the sources of which – and therefore the specific meaning and significance of which – illuminate his claims about poetry and his own poetics. In psychological theories of dissociation Eliot found, first, a way of understanding the seemingly fragmented modern self and, second, a way of depicting "modern" states of consciousness in which desire is simultaneously present and absent, in which sensual and abstract converge. This poetic strategy helps explain the continuing fascination of readers with a poetry obsessed with death and etherized numbness, yet powerfully evocative in its sensation and emotion. In *Inventions of the March Hare* these starkly conflicting inner states appear overtly as forms of psychological disorder that return, in coded forms, throughout the poetry.

The dominant trope of *Inventions of the March Hare* is madness: "mad as a March Hare," "a Mad Tea Party," "the Mad Hatter." But "madness," in this text, is manyness, the failure of unity and control attributed to a traditional notion of unity and consciousness. In modernist literature multiplicity of voice is an acknowledged mode. *The Waste Land's* many voices, for example, are understood as representations of plural discourses, experiences, emotions, desires. Yet a voice assumes also a body, a material site. While multiplicity in texts is generally read in an idealist mode such that dispersal of self, voice, identity, remains textual only, psychological theories of dissociation – both pre-Freudian and recent – acknowledge the internal splits, divisions, *dédoublements* represented in Eliot's early characters. Eliot had read key accounts of dissociation theory, notably by Pierre Janet and William James, but before turning to his immediate sources it is perhaps easier to clarify their explanatory power by considering a current theoretical model. "In its broadest sense," according to Etzel Cardeña in "The Domain of Dissociation" (1994), "'dissociation' (Janet's *désagrégation*) simply means that two or more mental processes or contents are not associated or integrated."⁴ A more specific meaning still includes a range of psychological experience: "'dissociation' applies to mental processes, such as sensations, thoughts, emotions, volition, memories, and identities, that we would ordinarily expect to be integrated within the individual's stream of consciousness and the historically extended self, but which are not."⁵ The form of dissociation called "depersonalization," for example, "refers to a wide range of chronic phenomena, in which the self experiences itself as detached or at an unbridgeable distance from ongoing perceptions, actions,

emotions, or thoughts.”⁶ Or the person may feel as if he or she is dead.⁷ Forms of this include sensations of numbness, distancing of bodily sensations from the self, and experiencing the self as outside the physical body, including the experience of the “double,” in which “a person may actually ‘perceive’ and even interact with an external double of him- or herself.”⁸ “Doubling,” in French *dédoublement*, is also applied to dual personality, a condition discussed in Janet.⁹

Like Janet’s, most current theories of dissociation define internal splits or divisions as symptoms of pathology. For Eliot, drawing largely on Janet and similar theorists, no other conclusion was readily available, and his assumptions parallel those of Janet for whom, according to recent theorists, “dissociation – the splitting off of various mental contents from consciousness – was something that occurred under stress, particularly to individuals who were congenitally predisposed to dissociate. The implication was that there was some particular kind of mental deficit or biological weak-mindedness in people disposed to dissociation.”¹⁰ More recently neodissociation theory starts from a different position; rather than assuming the norm of original unity, it begins, according to Erik Z. Woody and Kenneth S. Bowers, “with the assumption that some multiplicity of mental process is typical and normal, in the sense of coexisting levels of control that are usually well-coordinated by higher conscious functioning.” They take as their initial model Robert Louis Stevenson’s statement, placed in the voice of Dr. Jekyll, “Man is not truly one, but truly two . . . I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous, and independent denizens.”¹¹ They further note an extension of this idea on the analogy of a computer:

Pursuing this computer metaphor, it is an intriguing fact that nothing can prevent the possibility of two operating systems coexisting on the same hardware – for example, Windows and OS/2, either of which could be “brought up” during a particular session . . . Returning to people, normally one good supervisory or operating system is all that is needed; but perhaps in rare cases, two alternative, coexisting executive control systems, each with its own memory-management processes and access to unique records, may develop.¹²

According to neodissociation theory, then, “dissociated” experiences need not be pathological, though of course they may be. But if pathology is presumed as a characteristic of such experiences, they will almost inevitably be disturbing, denied, and disavowed.

Such disturbed and disturbing states are repeatedly enacted in *Inventions of the March Hare*. Considering these representations together with Eliot’s early prose reveals specific new ways of understanding both his theory of

the “dissociation of sensibility” and the more coded versions of identity and desire in later published work. In these early poems desire is inseparable from the very conditions of existence and identity; it defines, by its exclusions, the limits of Eliot’s ostensible “I,” a speaking voice dissociated from the sensation and emotion it articulates. And its significance is inseparable from a theory of personality, identity, self, and sensibility developed in Eliot’s critical commentary, particularly the Clark and Turnbull Lectures. By examining the relations among Eliot’s sources, theories, and early poetry, I wish to make three key points: that Eliot knew and drew on pre-Freudian theories of dissociation when he began writing his poetry and his aesthetic theories of dissociation, that he developed – beginning with the *March Hare* poems – a distinctive poetics of dissociation, and that he found in the double as vile or dirty or mad old man a pervasive image of modern consciousness.

In the earliest poems, forms of consciousness represent complex and varied versions of the “dissociation” Eliot so elusively asserts in “The Metaphysical Poets.” For example, “Convictions (Curtain Raiser),” the opening poem of the notebooks, enacts one end of the spectrum of Eliot’s strategies of dissociation: “Among my marionettes I find / The enthusiasm is intense!” This depiction of poseurs who elaborately stage emotion in an era long past such awed belief is itself a pose of distanced superiority or knowledge: the director’s encompassing vision. The poem serves, like the Madame Sosostriis card scene, to introduce types of emotional resonance – the moment in the garden, the canting chat of pseudo-philosophers, the extravagant and pathetic romanticizing of single ladies whose portraits are yet to be drawn – all reduced to conventions of puppetry and treated with bemused and superior, if half-affectionate, mockery: “My marionettes (or so they say) / Have these keen moments every day.” For these are, notably, *my* marionettes, types of figures who both act out convention and do so at the will of the puppeteer. Like the actors, clowns, dancers, opera singers, and comedians who populate many of the poems, they play roles only partially distinct from those of the speaker’s imagined internal world. These figures are, in Arthur Symonds’s words, “by a further illusion, . . . marionettes who are living people; living people pretending to be those wooden images of life which pretend to be living people.”¹³ My point is that the marionettes become the embodiment of emotions and feelings detached from but nonetheless claimed by the speaker. Such detachment and fusion appear repeatedly in *Inventions of the March Hare*. In another early poem, “Opera,” the narrator first describes extremes of sensation in *Tristan and Isolde*, only to pronounce on his ultimate indifference and

the failure of emotional experience. Yet the experiences are depicted in extreme language: the music is "fatalistic," "passionate," and "ominous," and "love" is "torturing itself . . . Writhing in and out / Contorted in paroxysms, / Flinging itself." But despite the narrator's dismissal of such overwrought expression ("We have the tragic? oh no!"), his closing lines suggest, not knowing judgment, but absence and loss: "And I feel like the ghost of youth / At the undertakers' ball." Here the capacity to experience the senses is cut off in a narrator experiencing himself as dead, a ghostly presence, yet a watcher of life that can only be known from outside. In poem after poem, we find extreme sensation or passion disavowed by an "I" who expresses despair or cynicism or ennui. Yet the emotions remain on the page, for Eliot's poetry persistently states an emptiness or weariness its images of intensity persistently override. In much of his work, the most distinctive effects are created by strategies of dissociation in which what is denied intellectually is most present emotionally.

DISSOCIATION

In 1906, the year Eliot entered Harvard as an undergraduate, Pierre Janet delivered a series of lectures at Harvard Medical School entitled *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria*.¹⁴ For Janet, although hysteria "incorporates a wide range of neurotic symptoms sharing specific characteristics, it is fundamentally "a malady of the *personal synthesis*." "Hysteria," he claims, "*is a form of mental depression characterized by the retraction of the field of personal consciousness and a tendency to the dissociation and emancipation of the systems of ideas and functions that constitute personality*."¹⁵ For Janet, as later for Eliot, "dissociation" is a failure of unified consciousness. The term "dissociation," central to Eliot's early definition of metaphysical poetry,¹⁶ is a primary concept throughout the Clark Lectures and Turnbull Lectures published in 1993 as *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*.¹⁷ This term, according to Ian Hacking, was invented by Janet and brought into English by William James, who was then in the philosophy department at Harvard; it was, he claims, "cemented . . . into English" by Morton Prince in *The Dissociation of a Personality*,¹⁸ a now classic text well known to both Janet and William James. Though Hacking adds that Janet dropped the term after 1889, it was, in fact, retained in Janet's 1906 definition of hysteria. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Eliot's Boston was a site of considerable study and discussion about related concepts developed in France in the nineteenth century: hysteria, dissociation, and dual or multiple personality. Moreover, Eliot read and took notes on both Janet and James – especially James's *The*

Varieties of Religious Experience, which includes a chapter on the “Divided Self” and attributes mysticism in part to the unifying of dissociated selves.

In both France and America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a complex psychological conceptualization framed discussions of depression, dual and sometimes multiple personality, various states of amnesia, somatic reactions, and fragmented consciousness – categorizing them as aspects of the broader term “hysteria.” In the first 1906 Harvard lecture, Janet claimed that “what has been most characteristic in France for a score of years in the study of nervous diseases is the development of pathological psychology,” and that, to understand them, it is with “Hysteria . . . that one should begin.”¹⁹ Naming a long list of prominent early researchers including Charcot, Breuer, Freud, and Prince, he offers a comprehensive definition:

No doubt they seemed, like Professor Ribot, to speak of all possible mental diseases and to seek for mental disturbances in all the forms in which they present themselves. Now and then, it is true, they devoted a few lines to idiocy or insanity; but if you read their books again, you will see that, whatever the matter is, “*Maladies de la mémoire*,” “*Maladies de la Volonté*,” “*Maladies de la Personnalité*,” they always speak of localized amnesias, of alternating memories, which in reality are only met with among hysterical somnambulisms; of irresistible suggestions, hypnotic catalepsias, which are, as I will try to prove to you, nothing but hysterical phenomena; of total modifications of the personality divided into two successive or simultaneous persons, which is again the dissociation of consciousness in the hysteria.²⁰

Janet thus defines the primary new science of his time as the study of forms of personality, consciousness, and “sensibility” as a particular way of understanding “dissociation”: “In a word, if any interest is given to the development of that pathological psychology which has been growing these twenty years, it ought to be recognized that this interest has for its object a special disease: Hysteria.”²¹ And hysteria is characterized, as his definition makes clear, by “dissociation and emancipation of the systems of ideas and functions that constitute personality.” Discussion of hysteria was, moreover, intensified in Britain during World War I as “shell-shocked” soldiers came home exhibiting symptoms traditionally attributed to “hysterical” women, and doctors frequently focused on ways of curing “dissociative” disorders.²²

With the rise of Freud’s later theories in the 1920s, “dissociation” lost ground; interest in these early studies revived in the 1980s and 1990s with the developing study of multiple personality, and pre-Freudian models have recently been revived in neodissociation theories. But when Eliot famously wrote of the “dissociation of sensibility” in “The Metaphysical

Poets" and traced the disintegration of intellect from Dante through the Metaphysicals to the divided self of Laforgue and Corbière in *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*, he was drawing on a widely held and pervasive theory of consciousness, the original texts for which he had read²³ and two of whose authors – William James and Morton Prince – were well known in the Boston of his college years.

The "dissociation of sensibility" has generally been read as a division between emotion and intellect. In "The Metaphysical Poets" this apparent meaning can be drawn from the very vagueness of definition. Yet in Eliot's 1926 Clark Lectures it is far more complex, and it refers to an ongoing "disintegration" from Dante to Laforgue. What disintegrates is not limited to the immediacy of thought and emotion, and "sensibility" does not refer simply to the common meaning of emotional responsiveness. Rather, it includes but goes beyond sensation itself – "sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch." Eliot's definition of "sensibility" in the Clark Lectures begins with a reference to Sappho's "Second Ode": "You will see that Sappho's great ode, for instance, is a real advance, a development, in human consciousness; it sets down, within its verse, the unity of an experience which had previously only existed unconsciously; in recording the physical concomitants of an emotion it modifies the emotion."²⁴ "Metaphysical periods," he claims, are those "moments of history when human sensibility is momentarily *enlarged in certain directions*."²⁵ This occurs when a type of poetry is written in which an "idea, or what is only ordinarily apprehensible as an intellectual statement, is translated in sensible form; so that the world of sense is actually enlarged."²⁶ And "the characteristic of the type of poetry I am trying to define is that it elevates sense for a moment to regions ordinarily attainable only to abstract thought, or on the other hand clothes the abstract, for a moment, with all the painful delight of flesh."²⁷ "Metaphysical" poetry thus reverses the action of dissociation – enlarging rather than retracting the field of consciousness and unifying what has been split apart. Eliot finds this kind of poetry in three historical "moments": Dante, the seventeenth-century Metaphysicals, and the French Symbolists, chiefly Laforgue and Corbière. What these poets all share is a fusion of thought and feeling or sense; what they do not share is a system of thought that is an exact equivalent of feeling. For Dante this existed; for Donne there were fragments of a system that he was able to fuse with feeling. For Laforgue there was already a disintegration of intellect that he could only address by "the intellectualizing of the feeling and the emotionalizing of the idea."²⁸ In each case it is the fusion or integration of sense and idea or thought and emotion that is "metaphysical."

These ideas are worked out in great detail in the Clark Lectures, and any summary necessarily simplifies. Yet if we examine Eliot's key terms, we find that his idea of "metaphysical" poetry, which in Laforgue, he claimed, made possible his own early poetic voice, is a unity of consciousness achieved by bringing what has been unconscious into consciousness. Moreover, this involves not only emotion but sensation or the capacity to experience the senses, which become, through poetry, elevated to a level above flesh itself. He uses the word "beatitude" to describe this "intellectual completion."²⁹ In the lectures Eliot primarily uses the term "disintegration," a more common translation of Janet's *désagrégation*. Although the Janet texts Lyndall Gordon lists as read by Eliot are in French, the French term is translated both ways, and Janet himself used "dissociation" in his 1906 lectures in English. Eliot uses the terms almost, but not quite, interchangeably: "not quite" because – although both refer to internal division of consciousness – by 1926 "disintegrate" dominates, tracing a historical process from the Middle Ages to the present. This translation suggests a more total breakdown of self and consciousness than "dissociation," which refers to a separation of parts or "units" of self coexisting or existing in succession but not accessible to each other.³⁰ The term he chose for the 1921 essay "The Metaphysical Poets" more closely describes the characters represented in *Inventions of the March Hare*; that is, they frequently display what Janet calls symptoms of "hysteria" in the forms of dissociation.

That Eliot knew and represented the characteristics of "dissociation" in his early poems is apparent from his reading and his use of the term (along with the alternative translation of "disintegration") and from his specific attributions of what he saw as disorder and "hysteria," but he saw these in opposition to a capacity for re-associating through poetry, for achieving "beatitude," for an intellectual completion in spite of psychological fragmentation. Dissociation, in Eliot's prose, is "modernist," a psychological characteristic suffered in intensifying degrees from the Metaphysicals to the present but capable – in poetry – of being transformed by the poet's associations and, in Laforgue and Corbière, a source of poetic form he could use. Moreover, the mind of the poet could provide a counter to this inevitable "*maladie*." Having claimed that the function of the metaphysical poet (that is, in the general sense that comprises the poets of his three "moments") is to "transform thought into feeling and feeling into thought," he offers an astonishingly sweeping claim: "What I am insisting on is the role of the artist in the development and maintenance of the mind."³¹ Thus the "dissociation of sensibility" is not only an aesthetic style but also a psychological condition to be resolved in part through poetic means.

In 1921, the year of "The Metaphysical Poets," Eliot contrasted James Joyce and Virginia Woolf in their "craving" for the fantastic and strange, a "feeling" which Joyce, he claimed, made "into an articulate external world." Woolf's writing, on the other hand, in "what might more crudely be called a feminine type, when it is also a very sophisticated type, makes its art by feeling and by contemplating the feeling, rather than the object into which the feeling can be made." The result he calls an example of "a process of dissociation."³² While he calls her writing both "sophisticated" and "remarkable," it is also crude, a distinction reiteratively made between what produces order or unity in aspects of consciousness and what leaves them apart or dissociated. Considering this commentary on the division in the artist in terms of the Clark and Turnbull Lectures, we see a pattern of language and conceptualization that places his own poetry in relation to the "process of dissociation," with its accompanying "moments" of re-association.

For example, Eliot takes over the term *dédoublement* in a different context to articulate again what is fundamentally "modernist"; the internal division modernists sought to reconcile is described as a central characteristic of Laforgue and his work. Laforgue's use of irony – a style Eliot appropriated – reveals this particular disturbance of the subject: "What we rebel against is neither the use of irony against definite men, institutions or abuses, nor is it the use (as by Jules Laforgue) to express a *dédoublement* of the personality against which the subject struggles."³³ Eliot wrote this in 1933, the year of the Turnbull Lectures that revised, shortened, and focused the argument of the Clark Lectures. In the later version, he tells us that "Laforgue is surprisingly modern," that he "is certainly in revolt against something, a revolt which, as with D. H. Lawrence, is enacted on a deeper level of consciousness than that which deals with political and social notions."³⁴ In this same lecture he acknowledges his own debt to the French Symbolists without whom he doubts whether he "should have been able to write poetry at all." In emphasizing their importance for the present," he admits that he "may only be defending [himself]."³⁵

Reading these excerpts in relation to one another reveals a pattern of related ideas and poetic strategies that are, as so often in Eliot's prose, about Eliot himself as poet. How far this psychological framework might describe Eliot as a person is not my focus, not least because it would require biographical material beyond what is available. That it was familiar terminology in relation to his own early breakdown, however, is almost certain, given that Eliot's self-diagnosis of a form of "aboulia," and his trust in Dr. Roger Vittoz, who treated him at Lauzanne, both point toward theories

of dissociation. Janet lists "aboulia" as one of the "hysterical stigmata," and Vitzthum attributes this loss of will to dissociation of the conscious and unconscious.³⁶ Eliot's familiarity with the pre-Freudian analysis of a particularly "modern" unease or dis-ease as dissociation thus derives from his Harvard reading, his personal experience, and his extended thinking about the poetic revelations of the French Symbolists. In *Inventions of the March Hare* it allows for distinctive structures of identity and desire.

DISCARNATE DESIRE

In *Modernisms: A Literary Guide*, Peter Nicholls, who aptly notes the role of the double in modernism, comments on Eliot's "curiously empty poetic voice for which irony is a constant reminder of the self's instability, not to say intermittence." Yet he attributes this absence in "Prufrock" to a lack of different *personae* or masks and to Eliot's lack of interest in psychology. Eliot, he claims, "shows no nostalgia for the lost self . . . nor does he regard the resulting multiplicity of selves as anything more than the detritus of social role-play."³⁷ But this "empty voice" can be read as an acutely accurate description for different reasons: the "selves" in "Prufrock" are represented not as masks or *personae* but as dissociated doubles; there need be no nostalgia because the "self" is not lost. Moreover, Eliot's terms and references as well as his poetic voices show an intense interest in the psychology of doubling and depersonalization, which he denigrates and reframes as philosophy, not internal division as an individual condition but the absence of a unified philosophy (such as Dante could assume) that explains the "disintegration" of intellect in a time of fragmented ideas. I will come back to "Prufrock," specifically in the light of "Prufrock's Pervigilium," but first I wish to define the forms of desire consequent upon such an intellectual basis. "'The Love Song,'" in Nicholls's formulation, "is like a thin skein stretched across a chaos of inchoate romantic desire." Again, this is a precise description, but the desire is in fact located in an alter "self" (or selves) who could or would or might choose, or act, while it is distanced and detached from any speaking subject.

Desire, in Eliot's early poems, is discarnate: both disembodied and removed from the voice that speaks it, yet intensely realized in altered selves or states of consciousness from whom the speaker withdraws and in whom intensities of sensation and emotion exist apart from the ostensible "I" who speaks. Along with the many objectified personae of marionettes, clowns, and actors, in whom desire is contained and mocked, Eliot depicts states of depersonalization and *dédoublement* as representations of desire

that it would seem madness to retain and also a kind of madness to detach, for dissociation was understood as hysteria, disorder, *maladie*, and yet a definitively “modernist” form of consciousness. In accounts of dissociation, Eliot would have found a way of understanding and portraying such inner division or “disintegration”; in Laforgue, on whom he drew for images of puppets, clowns, and poseurs, he saw precisely such doubling. Desire, which disturbs, is detached and relocated in these objectified personae or in the external world, or in a double perceived as outside the self.

If we return, for example, to “Convictions” and “Opera,” we see an excess of sensation and emotion vividly realized in images of anticipation or theatrical performance. The mocking and empty voice of an undefined narrator presumes to diminish and exclude as ludicrous such “keen” moments, but only after they have been articulated, even indulged. And yet what is left is not philosophic insight, still less “beatitude,” but a “ghostly” presence from whom any feeling is apparently evacuated. However sentimental or clichéd, the feelings and emotions of “Convictions” are presented only by report, and yet presented as deeply experienced for the marionettes. The voice of “Opera,” left in indifference, “feels” like one who is dead or, in Cardena’s definition, “at an unbridgeable distance from ongoing perceptions, actions, emotions, or thoughts”; the players on the stage, if overwrought, are still intensely sentient. The effect of the poems is not to leave one sharing the mockery or deadness but to experience the “keen” intellectual awareness of sensation. The speakers themselves are unconvincing. Though “Opera” is adolescent in its contrived ennui (as Eliot later found Laforgue adolescent), what remains striking is the portrait of depersonalization, the sensation of being detached or dead, not the speaker’s self-conscious and pseudo-weary denial.

As in “Convictions” and “Opera,” the speakers in poem after poem both offer and withdraw desire, reiteratively voicing and projecting it outside the speaker. Desire is thus figured as undesirable, the excessive or banal or disgusting or mad longing after what does not or cannot satisfy. It can be acknowledged only in the “other.” It is dealt with by a particular form of “disavowal” in S. Hall’s terms, “the strategy by means of which a powerful fascination or desire is both *indulged* and at the same time *denied*.”³⁸ For Eliot’s early poems “disavowal” reveals the simultaneous possession and dispossession of desire by asserting while disclaiming it or by displacing it onto a persona or double. In actors, clowns, puppets, and doubles, the “I” of each poem both experiences and places outside the self what evokes longing and anxiety. If the voices are empty, it is because all feeling and emotions have been displaced. Yet desire is not erased or transcended or

denied; rather it is evoked and placed where the "I" may observe, comment, or philosophize about it, or become absorbed in horrified identification with its "mad" manifestations. Rather than consider and reject desire, the narrators of these poems, for the most part, detach and multiply it; they attend to, mock, brood over, or agonize about it, but they simultaneously indulge in the possibilities of experiencing it. The "I" is thus reduced and abstracted – dissociated from both thought and feeling – while the potential sphere of sensibility is "enlarged" to include what the "I" finds intolerable to think or feel, even violence or degradation.

While many poems thus emphasize, even exaggerate, the "keen moments" they repel or mock, others place at the center the empty-voiced "self" who, having disavowed such sensation, is left with deadness or disgust. *Inventions of the March Hare* includes representations of much more disturbing, even terrifying emotions. If we read these poems in terms of dissociation, and particularly Eliot's own language about it, we find voices disavowing desire and personae or doubles overwhelmed by desire. Most frequently we find forms of "depersonalization" in which the "I" either experiences [him]self as unreal or dead, or encounters a strange and repellant other such as the mad and chattering old man, who is both outside and disturbingly within, one who is both self and not self. Identity is thus unstable and multiple, and personality is defined by disintegration, a sense of unreality, numbness, or doubling. What is desired is mocked or excluded but *in the poem* both real and intense. The poems, in Eliot's terms, "express a *dédoublement* of the personality against which the subject struggles." Desire tests the limits of self because it must remain outside the self, and identity is multiplied to contain what the emptied voice disavows.

Disavowal through dissociation appears in many forms. The "Burnt Dancer," for example, dances in a "circle of desire," warns of "agony nearest to delight," fills the room with tropic "odours" from "Mozambique or Nicobar." Yet the watcher/narrator internalizes the dance: "Within the circle of my brain / The twisted dance continues"; the waltzes of August afternoons in "Goldfish (Essence of Summer Magazines)" return "like the cigarettes / Of our marionettes"; the narrator of "Mandarins" notes "How very few there are, I think / Who see their outlines on the screen. / And so, I say, I find it good / (Even if misunderstood) / That demoiselles and gentlemen / Walk out beneath the cherry trees"; in "Humoresque" the narrator confesses to having liked "one of my marionettes" – now dead – and imagines him as a "mask." In such poems what is split off and disavowed is the clichéd and gauche "inchoate romantic desire" that "does not hold good at all" and yet recurrently appears in terms of emotional intensity and

physical sensation in contrast to the deadness avowed by many narrators. In "The Burnt Dancer," the line "Agony nearest to delight" asserts a moment of physical/intellectual fusion, however unworthy the form it seems to allow. That is, the poem has it both ways: the letting go of sensuality and pleasure is made vivid but terrifying: "Of what disaster do you warn us / Agony nearest to delight?" That it is placed in the context of purgatorial fire exaggerates its significance, since the black moth dances "Distracted from more vital values / To golden values of the flame / . . . For mirthless dance and silent revel." The speaker melodramatically contrasts this "twisted dance" that stays in his own brain with the "whiter flames that burn not" from which the "singéd reveller" has strayed. A far more disturbing poem than those of comic marionettes, it nonetheless retains the hyperbole of emotional excess depicted in movement, color, and heat by one who displaces it and finds it still in his own brain.

If Eliot's appropriation of alter selves in forms of puppets, clowns, actors, and mandarins allows a sardonic distance from romantic desires, forms of desire that could then be conventionalized and reduced to the sentimental or absurd, these objectified containers of sensation could not suffice for such terrors as appear in other poems. In many, fears of "madness" and of its dark interiors intensify the modes of disavowal, set aside mockery for a self-absorbing horror, "enlarge sensibility" beyond what is bearable. These desires are beyond foolish or excessive. They are obsessive, violent, sexual, mad – as in, for example, "The Love Song of St. Sebastian," "Oh little voices of the throats of men," "Do I know how I feel? Do I know what I think?," and "Prufrock's Pervigilium." Yet these extreme feelings and desires are also, in different ways, both possessed and dispossessed: the poems enact forms of dissociation in which desire is split off and enclosed in an/other without freeing or easing the speaking persona. Unlike Eliot's marionettes, clowns, and various players, who embody the inchoate desire his speakers sardonically dismiss, his dissociated states, apparitions, hallucinations, and doubles carry unbearable desires that cannot be owned even if recognized in moments of horror. Several poems written in 1914 and several that are undated, for example, explore states of derealization and depersonalization. More disturbed and internal than any of the poems Eliot published, they nonetheless evoke a realm of experience so terrible as to underscore later, more coded expressions, as in the "lost / Violent souls" of "The Hollow Men" or the *The Waste Land's* images of madness and dissolution or the more controlled representations of horror in "Sweeney Agonistes." When such inner terror appears later, it is usually reframed in abstractions or distanced in allusions or attributed to dramatic characters. In *Inventions*,

it is explicit and expressed as direct sensation and emotion. In "Oh little voices of the throats of men," for example, the debate between desire and indifference ends in distraction and sleep, the agitated circling of thought displaced by shadows of lilac that take on human character – dancing, leaping, and crawling: "You had not known whether they laughed or wept." Yet the relation of this figure to whoever speaks is indeterminate. The poem begins in the third person, shifts to "you" in admonishing careful paths, "we" in imagining some balance of pleasure and pain, "he," and then an "I" who may be the voice of "he," to dismiss all possibility of hope, knowledge, or desire. "He" sleeps and "you" would not know whether the voices of the shadows laughed or wept. This dissolution of consciousness into all pronouns so removes and abstracts desire as to nullify it. Only of an unspecified "you" addressed by the unspecified "he" is fear or hope or feeling predicated. And yet the speaker is haunted all night by the shadows of lilac plumes and voices in chimneys that may laugh or may weep. The poem begins with little voices in the throats of men that "rend the beautiful and curse the strong." "We" the readers are left then with emotionally intense potentialities vividly realized and dis-owned, projected onto voices and shadows, yet acknowledged with a kind of anguish. The sensual and engaged obsess – in the early sense of "lay siege to" or "assail" – Eliot's abstracted and indifferent voices.

Such voices are not "hysterical" in the common sense of the word, as in "out of control"; rather they reveal internal states that have been disavowed and in later poems become more enigmatic and distanced, so that the reader is left with a constant sense of something deeply disturbing just out of reach or just beyond vision. Such poems as "The Burnt Dancer," "Oh little voices of the throats of men," "The Little Passion: From 'An Agony in the Garret,'" and "Do I know how I feel? Do I know what I think?" explore states of derealization and depersonalization in which horror of self is pervasive but sense and feeling are removed and watched or are strangely inarticulable. They represent "hysteria" in Janet's terms: a dissociation or disintegration of self so intolerable it is felt as mad. In "Do I know how I feel? Do I know what I think?" elements of both derealization and depersonalization present an "I" so disintegrated as to be uncertain of what is real or even of who he is.

The poem has three sections. In the first a voice questions both knowledge and identity so radically that the "I" is outside even self-awareness: "Do I know how I feel? Do I know what I think? / Let me take ink and paper, let me take pen and ink . . ." With the ellipsis this thread trails off, and the speaker imagines walking softly down the hall to inquire of the porter

what he feels and thinks, wondering whether the porter may simply assert a fact of normalcy and say he is the gentleman who has lived on the second floor. But this gives way to fear of what answer may be given:

Yet I dread what a flash of madness might reveal
If he said "Sir we have seen so much beauty spilled on the open street
Or wasted in stately marriages or stained in railway carriages"

This shift from the flattened affect of ordinary existence to a flash of almost visionary insight into the terror of the ordinary is felt as "mad," as a disconnection between the dailiness so frequent in early published poems and some terrible reality behind or beneath or outside it. The speaker is, in terms of "depersonalization," "at an unbridgeable distance from ongoing perceptions." The poem also contains aspects of "derealization" in which "the individual . . . *experiences* the world or its inhabitants as not quite real."³⁹ The voice of the "I" questions who or what he is and seeks an external definition from some other voice; at the same time, he experiences a hypothetical description of the world and daily life as a revelation of madness.⁴⁰ Even the walk down the hall, the inquiry of the porter, the possible response are all conditional, premised on "if."

The second section imagines the self as both unable to grasp reality ("There is something which should be firm but slips, just at my fingertips") and, abruptly, lying dead under a doctor's knife. Seemingly a corpse while an autopsy is performed, the speaker is yet aware that "the cause of death that was also the cause of the life" is probed. This experience of being dead is, as in so many of these poems, sharply imagined in sense images: of smell ("creolin") sight ("a black bag with a pointed beard"), sound ("of something that drips," "whisper in the brain"), touch ("the ancient pain"), and taste ("tobacco on his breath"). Though these sensations are acute, they are placed in a hypothetical future state of death, and the "I" remains dissociated, uncertain of what is known or felt or even of "the secret which I cannot find."

In the third, brief, section, the speaker slides into the numbness of ether, escaping thus the brain's imaginings:

My brain is twisted in a tangled skein
There will be a blinding light and a little laughter
And the sinking of blackness of ether
I do not know what, after, and I do not care either

What is explicit here as psychological states of derealization and depersonalization is echoed in published poems in ways not overt and explicit.

Prufrock, in the published poem, questions his own identity, imagines others defining him, imagines the evening as an etherized patient. The last two sections of "Preludes IV" envision and then mock a sense of what is real. Gerontion has lost "sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch" and dissolves into a thousand deliberations. The surreal images in Part V of *The Waste Land*, framed in a context of allusion and myth, still represent a sense of personal unreality and dissolution, in the end, into madness, now Hieronymo's. In the *Facsimile's* original version of the surreal landscape, beginning with the woman drawing out her long black hair, the speaker says the line, "It seems that I have been a long time dead," echoing the voice in "The Little Passion: From 'An Agony in the Garrett'" as well as the experience in "Do I know how I feel?"⁴¹ Here it might well be associated with Dante, with its added line, "Do not report me to the established world," or with Jessie Weston's barren waste lands, but in the poems of *Inventions* the sensations are direct and asserted not only as internal psychological states but as forms of experience definable in Janet's terms of hysteria and dissociation. They reveal the "modernist" sensibility Eliot so extensively sought to resolve by the reconstruction of order through poetic means, through the "role of the artist in the development and maintenance of the mind."

Eliot's earliest poems can be read – even when their language seems melodramatic or personally agonized – as a poetic fusing of sensation and thought that have, for the speakers of the poems, fallen apart. In "Do I know how I feel" the loss of sensation is represented as sensation; the experience of numbness or being dead is realized – in its loss – as feeling. Eliot's poetry develops this extraordinary form of representing absence (what has been excluded) as presence (what remains in some sense known) in the published poems, especially through *The Waste Land*.

THE DOUBLE

Depersonalization, derealization, and numbness thus appear in many poems, splitting off sensations, emotions, and desires from immediate consciousness and leaving Eliot's "curiously empty" voices. In other poems, feelings and emotions, so disturbing as to be completely separated from the "I" who speaks, are re-embodied in other selves, "both intimate and unidentifiable." While the marionettes, actors, dancers, and clowns tend to deflect and mock romantic desire and conventional pleasure, and the speakers of poems representing depersonalization and derealization generally express horror of ordinary experience as like death, the doubles tend to reincarnate "madness" in the form of disavowed lust or violation.

While the “double,” an other self experienced as external and able to be perceived, even interacted with, may seem quite distinct from experiences of unreality or etherization, it is also defined as dissociation in a more total form. For Eliot this “other” or “alter self” is often the strange old man, who sings and mutters and claims his identity with the horrified and resistant “I” who speaks. In “Prufrock’s Pervigilium” he appears, sitting across the street in the dawn, and is named “my Madness.” Were it an isolated image, the name might be read as simply similarity or empathy with such a character, but read in the context of a series of interconnected images as well as Eliot’s ongoing preoccupation with disintegration, *dédoublement*, internal division, and dissociation, this figure fits a pattern: a dirty, mad, chattering, drunken, and vile old man with whom the speaker identifies and with whom he shares illicit desires. In “First Debate between the Body and Soul,” he is blind and stumbling in alleys and gutters. He is senile and he “pokes and prods . . . The withered leaves / Of our sensations.” The “withered leaves” of sensation return as a refrain three times, rhyming on “masturbations” and “defecations,” and framing a narrator’s contemplations of the “pure idea” and the “Absolute.” The opposition of the ideal to the physical, seen as degradation, is sustained in other versions of this figure. In “The Little Passion from ‘An Agony in the Garret’” the “withered” face in the mirror has a smile of “washed-out, unperceived disgrace.” Like Prufrock in “Pervigilium,” he has walked the streets, “diving into dark retreats.” In “Dans le Restaurant” the old waiter disgusts and horrifies the speaker with his dirty fingernails, his story of a long-ago (at age seven) moment of power and delirium with a little girl in a field, but most of all his recognizable similarity to the speaker himself: “Quel droit as-tu a des expériences comme moi?” This scene reappears in parallel ways in the hyacinth girl episode of *The Waste Land*, where the speaker also feels both longing and incapacity in the face of a young girl with flowers and damp hair, and in “Death by Water,” where Phlebas is taken directly from the ending of “Dans le Restaurant” and is, in both poems, in need of purification. In “The Death of Saint Narcissus” the speaker is both a “young girl / Caught in the woods by a drunken old man” and the old man himself: “And he felt drunken and old.” As in “Dans le Restaurant,” a moment of illicit desire in a country scene is horrifying and remembered with revulsion as one’s own act or experience. An elderly waiter with trembling hands tries to intervene in “Hysteria” by urging the couple toward a rusty green table in a garden.

What these figures have in common are age, associations of dirt and disgust sharply contrasted with flowers or gardens or lush countryside, images of “withering” or “disgrace,” and a powerful sense of revulsion in

the narrator, who experiences both loathing and identification. Although the identification is not direct in "Hysteria," the speaker and elderly waiter share a panicky need to stop the scene of uncontrollable laughter and its effects.⁴² Gerontion too is associated with decay and dirt, recalls lost beauty, and experiences a horror of vice and "unnatural crimes." Though the setting differs, he, like the old blind man of "First Debate," the narrator of the hyacinth girl episode, and Prufrock, experiences a sense of dissolution and loss of sensation. Even the "familiar compound ghost" of "Little Gidding," who returns with wisdom, recalls the division when "body and soul begin to fall asunder" – a dissolution comparable to that of Prufrock in "Pervigilium": "And as he sang the world began to fall apart." This figure, much explicated and identified with other poets, is also a transformed version of the double – in this case explicitly identified:

So I assumed a double part, and cried
 And heard another's voice cry: 'What! are *you* here?'
 Although we were not. I was still the same,
 Knowing myself yet being someone other –.

The streets they walk are "streets I never thought I should revisit." Though this figure is represented as a ghost and a "dead master," he is also represented as the speaker's self, and, like the other doubled figures of old men, one whose memory of tasteless fruit and "expiring sense/ Without enchantment" and of the dissolution of body and soul parallels those of other doubles. Yet, as a ghost, he is past the experience itself. The double thus appears from Eliot's earliest to his latest poetry,⁴³ and it assumes, in various guises, the form of an old man who mirrors the speaker's disintegration or dissolution of mind and world, a disintegration Eliot saw as madness. The senile or mad old man in many incarnations embodies what is worst and most impossible to acknowledge in oneself.

While the old man appears repeatedly in Eliot's work, the most revealing and most striking example is in "Prufrock's Pervigilium," revealing because in this poem he is most directly identified with the speaker himself, both by the pronoun "my" and by the linking of his chatter with the dissolution of the speaker's world (rolled up into a ball). The doubled self of "you and I," long recognized as internal division and presciently defined as a "doppelganger" by Grover Smith as early as 1950, is here addressed as the external double of dissociated selves. While the published poem can be read in other ways, the early version incorporating the "Pervigilium" provides a new lens for Eliot's representation of identity and desire. As he so often did, Eliot gave conflicting accounts of his own text: he wrote to Kristian

Smidt that the "you" was a male companion.⁴⁴ Yet in a later interview he claimed that Prufrock was partly himself and partly someone else, a man of about forty who also partly expressed his own feeling.⁴⁵ One might, of course, see these claims as consistent if one's male companion is one's alter self. Nonetheless, the companion of the published poem is transformed as "my Madness" into the disturbing figure of displaced and disavowed desire.

The night of the "eve of Venus" evokes this figure. And as Christopher Ricks describes in his extensive notes to this suppressed section of "Prufrock," it alludes both to the resurgence of life, generation, and sexuality and to "the dark sense of *Veneris*, not only Venus but the venereal."⁴⁶ The nausea, hallucination, and self-loathing portrayed in "Prufrock's Pervigilium" opens in city streets of prostitutes and evil houses, and leads to madness. According to Lyndall Gordon, this section was apparently written slightly later than the published poem but suppressed before publication.⁴⁷

The Prufrock of the published poem exhibits numbness, aboulia, depersonalization, and derealization, as well as implied doubling. Yet the anxiety and distress, so vividly represented, lack what Eliot calls an "objective correlative"; the anxiety far exceeds any given situation. In the "Pervigilium" such anxiety emerges with particular details in hallucinatory houses leaning, chuckling, and whispering, and in catlike darkness, transformed by tentacles, preparing to leap; the doubling is psychologically explicit as madness. The enigmatic and coded forms of multiplicity, which for Eliot were "mad," are here direct and powerfully expressed as sensation and knowledge. While the material is far more disturbed and dark than that of the published version, the images and experiences – of streets, women, a catlike physical world – are the same in more extreme forms, revealing in sharp outline the re-incarnated experience of internal division and "madness" evasively implicated in much of the published work.

In like manner, anxieties and disturbances, barely beneath the surface of many published poems, are directly represented in the poems of *Inventions*. They offer a kind of vocabulary of modernist dis-ease, as Eliot defined it in his various discussions of the "dissociation of sensibility" and "disintegration": his early characters are both representations of such dissociation and poetic attempts at re-association through sensually explicit awareness of discarnate desire. For Eliot, as for Janet, this experience was "hysterical": the fear it induces troubles his personae, from speakers who displace romantic desire onto singers and puppets yet feel dead in its absence to Prufrock staring out at the world and at his alter self muttering and singing. That Eliot himself may have feared manyness as madness, as something against which the soul struggled, may reveal more about the forms his early

poetry took and the directions of his critical claims about sensibility and order than about the meaning of the multiplicity he recognized.

Whether experienced, observed, or known through the psychological theory he studied, dissociation provided Eliot with a model for representing passionate, extreme, even sensational forms of inner experience while separating them from the speaking voices I have called the “ostensible I.” By suppressing the “mad” voice, Eliot later developed an increasingly abstract poetry, yet the voices return, even in the compound ghost of “Little Gidding.” Reading these voices in terms of Stevenson’s “polity” reveals complex, diverse, and often overwhelming forms of identity and desire that Eliot recognized and understood but found it impossible to affirm. In *Inventions* they are vividly realized fragments of consciousness or doubled selves dissociated from the speaking voice yet intensely present in the poem. I speculate that this early poetics of dissociation – its incarnated roles and puppets, its depersonalization of hallucinatory selves and doubles – allowed, even facilitated, the peculiar and distinct coexistence of sensual immediacy and abstraction, desire and detachment in Eliot’s early published poems.

NOTES

1. T. S. Eliot, *Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909–1917*, ed. Christopher Ricks (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1996), 64–5.
2. See, for example, discussions of “you and I” as two aspects of self in Elizabeth Drew, *T. S. Eliot: The Design of His Poetry* (New York: Scribner, 1949); Grover Smith, *T. S. Eliot’s Poetry and Plays: A Study in Sources and Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956); and Robert Langbaum, “New Modes of Characterization in *The Waste Land*,” in *Eliot in His Time*, ed. Walton Litz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973). Examples of the use of Bergson may be found in Kristian Smidt, *Poetry and Belief in the Work of T. S. Eliot* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961); Nancy K. Gish, *Time in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot* (London: Macmillan, 1981); and B. C. Southam, *A Guide to the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot*, 6th edn. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1996). James Longenbach discusses Eliot’s doubling as ghostly specters in “Uncanny Eliot,” in *T. S. Eliot: Man and Poet*, ed. Laura Cowan (Orono, Maine: National Poetry Foundation, 1990). Langbaum also notes that Eliot referred readers to Pierre Janet.
3. T. S. Eliot, “The Music of Poetry,” in *On Poetry and Poets* (New York: Noonday Press, 1961), 17.
4. Etzel Cardena, “The Domain of Dissociation,” in *Dissociation: Clinical and Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. Steven Jay Lynn and Judith A. Rhue (New York: Guilford, 1994), 15.
5. *Ibid.*, 19.
6. *Ibid.*, 24.

7. Frank W. Putnam, "Dissociative Disorders in Children and Adolescents," in *Dissociation: Clinical and Theoretical Perspectives*, 176.
8. Cardeña, "The Domain of Dissociation," 24.
9. Ian Hacking describes the development of the term "*dédoublement*" in relation to the famous case of Felida X as a hysteric. See Ian Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 160 ff.
10. Erik Z. Woody and Kenneth S. Bowers, "A Frontal Assault on Dissociated Control," in *Dissociation: Clinical and Theoretical Perspectives*, 53.
11. *Ibid.*, 52–3.
12. *Ibid.*, 75.
13. Quoted in Christopher Ricks's notes to "Convictions," in *Inventions of the March Hare*, 103. Ricks comments at length on the parallels in Laforgue and others as well as Symons.
14. Pierre Janet, *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria* (New York: Macmillan, 1907). I first discussed Eliot's use of dissociation in an MLA paper in 1997. Since developing this study in detail, I have read Grover Smith's article, "T. S. Eliot and the Fragmented Selves: From 'Suppressed Complex' to 'Sweeney Agonistes,'" *Philological Quarterly* 77, no. 4 (Fall 1998): 417–37. Smith also notes Eliot's familiarity with Janet and Prince, using their definitions of dissociation in a reading of "Suppressed Complex" and commentary on other poems. While I share his focus on Janet and the accurate representation of clinical dissociation in several poems, my argument extends Eliot's use of this to a complex theory of poetics. Also, I do not share Smith's acceptance of the intrinsic pathology in multiplicity assumed by Janet and Prince. I wish to thank David Micklejohn for pointing out this article's related discussion.
15. Janet, *Hysteria*, 332.
16. T. S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets," in *Selected Essays* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1964), 241–50.
17. T. S. Eliot, *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*, ed. Ronald Schuchard (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1993).
18. Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul*, 44. See also Morton Prince, *The Dissociation of a Personality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1905; 1978). Prince studied the three personalities of a woman he names as Miss Beauchamp and concludes that one is the "real Miss Beauchamp."
19. Janet, *Hysteria*, 3–4.
20. *Ibid.*, 4.
21. *Ibid.*, 5.
22. Throughout the war years, the *Lancet* carried articles on how to cure hysteria in soldiers. For an overview of hysteria in World War I, see Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 20–3.
23. See Lyndall Gordon on Eliot's reading and notes in the Houghton Library. *T. S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life* (New York: Norton, 1999), 37–8.
24. Eliot, *Varieties*, 51.
25. *Ibid.*, 53.

26. *Ibid.*, 53–4.
27. *Ibid.*, 55.
28. *Ibid.*, 213.
29. *Ibid.*, 212.
30. I wish to thank Lavinia-Onitiu for translating and researching etymologies of key French terms.
31. Eliot, *Varieties*, 221.
32. T. S. Eliot, "London Letter," *Dial* 71, no. 2 (1921): 216. The gendering of dissociation appears in a few other places but does not seem to be consistent.
33. T. S. Eliot, "A Commentary," *Criterion* 12, no. 48 (1933): 469. Eliot defines the irony in contrast to that of Anatole France, who represents, he claims, "the age which is past."
34. Eliot, *Varieties*, 284–5.
35. *Ibid.*, 287.
36. See Janet, *Hysteria*, 314–6. For an account of Vittoz's ideas and methods, see Adam Piette, "Eliot's Breakdown and Dr. Vittoz," *ELN* 33, no. 1 (1995): 35–8. Piette notes that Vittoz "may have guided Eliot to confirming a key-word, 'dissociation'" (38), but he does not connect this with the extensive French and American psychiatric literature on hysteria and dissociation.
37. Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 181–2.
38. Quoted in John Jervis, *Transgressing the Modern* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 9. Like Jervis, I draw on this concept for its specific value here, without using its discourse of origin.
39. Cardeña, "The Domain of Dissociation," 24.
40. I am indebted to Dr. Michael Garnett for the recognition that aspects of derealization as well as depersonalization are present in the poem's narrator.
41. Eliot wrote to Conrad Aiken on December 31, 1914 of his own sense of being not quite alive in Oxford. *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Valerie Eliot (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), vol. 1: 74.
42. The "hysteria" has been read as either the man's or the woman's. I suggest that in terms of then-current views of hysteria, both characters are hysterics. The uncontrollable laughter is, in Janet's terms, one form of "automatic agitation" (see *Hysteria*, 257–62), while the male speaker experiences a kind of hallucination of himself being swallowed. Moreover, the old waiter's trembling hands and urgently repeated suggestions to take tea "mirror" the speaker's anxiety.
43. A ghost prefigures as well as follows and transforms Eliot's "mad" doubles. In Eliot's first poem, "A Fable for Feasters," written in 1905, a "wicked and heretical old sinner" returns as a ghost to terrify monks given up to gluttony and sensation. T. S. Eliot, *Poems Written in Early Youth* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1967), 3–8.
44. Smidt, *Poetry and Belief in the Work of T. S. Eliot*, 85.
45. See Southam, *A Guide to the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot*, 48–9. Eliot did not, however, use the specific term "split personality" as Southam claims.

46. For a discussion of Pater's treatment of this theme and Flavian's death from venereal disease in *Marius the Epicurean*, see Ricks's notes in *Inventions*, 176–8. Flavian, in Pater's version, writes the "Pervigilium Veneris" while dying of the disease.
47. Lyndall Gordon, *Eliot's Early Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 45; cited in *Inventions*, ed. Ricks, 176–7.