



On Poetry And Poets

T.S. Eliot

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The Nobel Prize-winning poet's literary essays and lectures on Virgil, Sir John Davies, Milton, Johnson, Byron, Goethe, Kipling, Yeats, and the art of poetry.

On Poetry And Poets Details

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Steve Dewey says

That was dull.

Salvatore says

Ah, Eliot! - why can you write poetry and analysis so well? Even when I'm not familiar with the poet you're talking about, I still am interested. Except when it comes to Samuel Johnson. Sometimes there are just authors you know you'll never get to - Johnson is one. I much prefer Robbie Coltraine's portrayal of him in *Black Adder*. Now *that* is how I'd like to remember SJ. Anyway, asides away, this classic (I'm daring to use that word) collection of essays also acts as a good look into the mind of Eliot and how his poetics/poetic eyes work. Virgil is probably overpraised. Byron is amusingly lauded and shunned, and for justifiable reasons (perhaps the man was just better at sex than at pushing the future of the English language a bit closer to the light; I shall always recall the lascivious lord via Hark a Vagrant's comic about him). And man, is Eliot obsessed with the verse play. I mean, come on - Shakespeare kind of upset the apple cart for anyone wanting to go down that road...At least Tom Sterns knew his limitations.

Joking aside, a very worthwhile collection to anyone interested in literature, not even just poetry and poetics. Eliot's writing will just showcase how to showcase your own enthusiasm about writers who indeed caress words into something grander than mere sentences.

Drew says

The rating and this review are technically tentative because I have only read the first "On Poetry" section and the essay "Virgil and the Christian World," which is most of the work anyway. For that, Mr Eliot's perspective and thoughts, as well as his personality, impress and charm me.

I'm holding off on reading his specific criticisms of authors in the second "On Poets" part because I'd rather read those authors for myself first.

Ash Giri says

Brilliant work by Eliot. He is one of those critics that enflames our love for language. Highly recommended.

Doug says

I did not read every essay in this collection, but I did manage a few before returning to the library. What a master Eliot is. His critical acumen is second to none. And his style is never stilted, stuffy. Truly a pleasure

to read. That he should condemn Milton for harming the language is not only insightful, but amusing.

I do not share his Christianity, but his take on 'Virgil and The Christian World' is illuminating. Likewise 'On Minor Poetry' -- wonderfully exposed, and I mean that in the best of senses, exposition.

Heather Hall-Martin says

Tough getting through some of this, but still learning which is the most important thing.

Alan says

My Ph.D advisor Leonard Unger made his career on the first book studying TS Eliot's verse, in 1947, and to the end of his life, as a scholar and wit, he returned to Eliot's subjects, like 17C wits (and Shakespeare) as well as to Eliot himself, in Eliot's Compound Ghost, which strongly influenced my own dissertation, *This Critical Age: Deliberate Departures from Literary Conventions in Seventeenth Century English Poetry* (1976/ 1981). I read much of *On Poetry*... prior to graduate school, as an undergrad at Amherst College, in courses on Criticism and in writing my senior thesis on *The Uses of Prosody*, on four 16 and 17C English poets, Wyatt, Spenser, Donne and Milton. Eliot's reflections on Milton's poetry (two essays here) remark the Secretary of State's (then called Latin Secretary, under Cromwell) freedom with blank verse.

Eliot's remarks on Vergil's almost chance prominence in Christian poetry, especially the Fourth Eclogue which happened to mention the Virgin, and a child to be born to eternal life. Eliot may also remark on Vergil's prosody, his alliterative hexameters, but I do not now recall half a century later.

In "On Poetry and Poets," Eliot says a major purpose for contemporary poets is to meld in colloquial language without diminishing commonplace activities and thought. I paraphrase, which my mentor L Unger never did. At any rate, Eliot might have been more tolerant than I for the colloquialisms of Rap, though I suspect he too would have considered it what Chaucer's Host assesses Chaucer's own terrible tale to be, "Rime doggerel."

Nash says

The overall rating is tentative because only the first "On Poetry" section and the essay "Virgil and the Christian World" were read.
