The Criterion Miscellany: A Lost Series

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ABSTRACT: The Criterion Miscellany was a monographic series published by Faber and Faber from 1929-1936 as an offshoot of its journal the Criterion (1922-1939), which was edited in its entirety by T. S. Eliot. Bibliographic control of this series is virtually non-existent, as it is not analyzed in any of the standard printed or electronic bibliographic sources. The internal policies of the Criterion Miscellany are discussed, as are known and possible involvements of Eliot, various contributors to the series, and the physical characteristics of the numbers themselves. A checklist of the titles published is also furnished.

It is not generally known that T. S. Eliot, who edited the Criterion from 1922-1939, was also editorially involved with a monographic series, the Criterion Miscellany from 1929-1936. Bibliographic control of this series is virtually non-existent, as it is not analyzed in any of the standard printed or electronic bibliographic sources. So, in this sense it is a "lost series" and one which is particularly interesting both because of Eliot's association and because of the literary reputations of a number of its contributors.

Most of the material printed in the pages of the Criterion was personally solicited by Eliot, and he occasionally carried this practice over into the Criterion Miscellany, as the following examples will illustrate. While most of the contributors to the series are deceased and have left no record of their experiences in connection with the Criterion Miscellany, there are a few exceptions. The late English critic F. R. Leavis related one method by which material was acquired for the "Miscellany"—that being direct solicitation by Eliot. In "Scrutiny: A Retrospect," Leavis refers to a pamphlet he wrote in 1931 "at the invitation of the editor of the Criterion...for the Criterion Miscellany." However, Leavis explained,
though Eliot suggested the subject—contemporary literary criticism—and saw the manuscript through several revisions, in the end its harsh tone evidently proved to be too much for the diplomatic Eliot, since he did not include it in the *Criterion Miscellany*. Leavis attributed the rejection to Eliot’s fear of offending the literary establishment of the day. As Leavis himself put it, “Eliot knew that such a pamphlet would arouse unforgiving hostility in the dominant literary world...what he objected to was the pamphleteering strength.”

A similar instance of direct solicitation occurred with James Joyce, who had two sections from his as yet unnamed *Finnegans Wake* published in the “Miscellany”: *Anna Livia Plurabelle* in 1930 and *Haveth Childers Everywhere* in 1931. In addition to soliciting the sections from *Work in Progress*, Eliot also approached Joyce about publishing episodes from *Ulysses* in the “Miscellany.” Joyce, however, declined for a variety of reasons:

As regards the proposal to publish episodes of *Ulysses* in the *Criterion Miscellany* I am against it. First it implies that I have recognised the right of any authorities in either of Bull’s islands to dictate to me what and how I am to write. I never did and never will. Secondly the episodes are of unequal length, thirdly I think that at least seven of the eight episodes would not pass the censor. I see by the press that this nobleman announces his intention of banning films which contain pictures of “bedroom scenes, hardships of prison life and the Prince of Wales,” there is only one argument with such idiots. Fourthly *Ulysses* is a book with a beginning, middle and an end and should be presented as such. The case is quite different with *W.I.P.* which has neither beginning nor end.

Another way in which material was obtained is described by the Indian novelist Mulk Raj Anand, who published *Persian Painting* as No. 25 of the *Criterion Miscellany* in 1930. Anand says that his pamphlet was placed with Herbert Read’s support. Read, editor of the *Burlington Magazine*, and literary and art critic in his own right, also acted as unofficial assistant editor of the *Criterion* during its early years. According to Anand, Read wrote to Eliot on his behalf about the *Persian Painting* monograph, praising it. Anand did not approach Eliot directly because he felt Eliot unsympathetic towards his type of criticism. However, Eliot did become directly involved, and when the pamphlet was published, Anand was “favored with an invitation to lunch by the poet along with Herbert Read.” Significantly, this social approach is the manner in which Eliot conducted much of the *Criterion* business. Anand feels that it was not uncommon for writers and authors to submit unsolicited material for publication in the *Criterion Miscellany* but that Eliot was responsible for selecting the majority of the titles published. Naomi Mitchison, author of *Comments on Birth Control* (*Criterion Miscellany* No. 12) sought access to the “Miscellany” by way of the unsolicited contribution. She did not know Eliot personally; nor did she have anyone speak in her behalf. She says that she submitted her manuscript directly to Faber and Faber with no solicitation and as nearly as she recollects, received little, if any, editorial assistance from Eliot or anyone else.

It would seem then, that while Eliot was on occasion directly involved with the *Criterion Miscellany* the degree of his involvement varied with the particular author or title under consideration. Interestingly, though, the same might be said of his involvement with the *Criterion* too, since in the production of that journal he utilized the services of several persons in various capacities. Richard Aldington served as assistant editor of the *Criterion* in 1922-23, during which time he published articles and reviews there in addition to determining layout and typographic format. Aldington was also instrumental in setting up the reviewing mechanisms for foreign periodicals. Irene Fassett was the *Criterion* secretary from 1923-28. Aside from exercising what Eliot referred to as her “unique powers of organization and management,” she contributed a number of reviews. Anne Bradbury was production controller for the *Criterion* from 1936 till the journal’s cessation in 1939. One of her duties is worth mentioning in light of Eliot’s previously mentioned proclivity for personally soliciting the bulk of the material published in the *Criterion*: she was to “... sift through unsolicited articles and poems, to recommend whether any of them should be published.” Clearly, Eliot was not afraid to delegate editorial authority.

Finally, there is the matter of Herbert Read’s association with Eliot and the *Criterion* — particularly during the first ten years, during which time Read served as unofficial assistant editor to Eliot. It is interesting to note that Eliot once revealed to Read that the contents of the ideal journal ought to look as though editorial thought and care had been focused on each item included in the publication. His specifying that the contents ought to look such a way and not that the editor himself should have taken steps to produce that effect is perhaps significant, for Eliot was a man to whom exact meanings, shadings, and subtle differences counted in his writing — whether for publication or otherwise. The implication is that the editor cannot always personally see to these things, and yet he still remains the editor. By the same token, Eliot may not have been personally responsible for the copy editing or even the solicitation of all of the *Criterion Miscellany* material, but we know that he was editorially involved with a number of items. Given the additional fact that he allowed the series to be issued under the *Criterion*’s title, it is not unlikely that he also edited and/or solicited a significant amount of the remaining material, especially when his friends and *Criterion* associates were involved.
There also appears to have been a close connection with the Criterion itself, which, it should be noted, had a body of contributors referred to by Eliot as his “phalanx.” Twelve of the thirty-seven authors who contributed to the Criterion Miscellany also had work published in the Criterion: Eliot, A. W. Wheen, H. M. Tomlinson, D. H. Lawrence, Herbert Read, James Joyce, J. M. Murry, Douglas Jerrold, Christopher Dawson, H. G. Porteous, Keith Feling, and A. F. Clutton-Brock.

In all, forty-three titles were published in the Criterion Miscellany including material by some of the best known writers and critics of the day: D. H. Lawrence, H. G. Wells, James Joyce, John Middleton Murry, and André Breton, as well as Eliot himself. The topics treated reflect the series title in that they are miscellaneous, ranging from art and literature—both creative and critical—through economics and religion.

The physical appearance of the Miscellany titles was uniform for the most part. There were, however, some exceptions. The covers of numbers fifteen (Joyce’s Anna Livia Plurabelle), twenty-eight (Dr. Watson by S. C. Roberts), thirty-one (George Grosz’s Post War Museum), and forty-three (André Breton’s What is Surrealism?) all incorporated some form of decorative motif: none of the other covers deviated from the norm. In addition, the last two numbers, Background to Chinese Art by Hugh Gordon Porteous and the piece by Breton, differed slightly from the rest in that the price was not printed on the covers. The price generally was one shilling—with three exceptions: Italian Painting (No. 7, by A. F. Clutton-Brock), An Outline of French Painting (No. 36) and An Outline of English Painting (No. 41), both by R. H. Wilenski. These three numbers were priced at two shillings.

Another point where no consistency at all was shown is on the title page. Here the addition and deletion of the “limited” status of Faber and Faber seems never to have been resolved. It changed no less than a dozen times over the years. The same holds true for the imprint, which at times supplies the month and year of publication and at other times does not. All of the titles in the series were identical in at least one crucial point: each was prominently described as being a part of the Criterion Miscellany: on front and back covers and on the half-title.

The cessation of the Miscellany in 1936, three years before the demise of the Criterion, occurred for economic reasons. Eliot had come to regard the Criterion Miscellany and pamphlet publishing in general as an “impossible luxury.” He mentioned to Stephen Spender in 1938 that in order to justify the production of a pamphlet a sale of ten thousand copies would have to be guaranteed. The best-sellers of the series were numbers by James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence. The sale figures for the Criterion Miscellany editions of Joyce’s Anna Livia Plurabelle and Haveth Childers Everywhere were 10,166 and 5,590 respectively. D. H. Lawrence’s contributions were Pornography and Obscenity and Nettles. Net-
41. *An Outline of English Painting from the Middle Ages to the Period of the Pre-Raphaelites* (1933) by Reginald Howard Wilenski. Lemon yellow paper wrappers, 74 p.
Popular Music Periodicals in the Library
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ABSTRACT. In the face of intensive and far-reaching social changes, it is imperative for library collections to reflect the needs and interests of their users and potential users in order to remain a vital force in contemporary society. This article attempts to provide libraries with a blueprint to facilitate the evaluation and selection of popular music periodicals. An annotated list of periodicals is appended to the text.

A leading library scholar has noted that the distinctive advantage of what libraries can offer over those sources of information individuals presently can provide for themselves is richness of resources and trained expertise in their use. The American library in its various manifestations has an outstanding record of success in serving society. There is abundant evidence of the high esteem in which libraries have been and are held throughout our nation's history.

The fact remains, however, that the library's role as a preserver and disseminator of information and culture is presently being subjected to serious challenges. In the face of intensive and far-reaching social changes, the library as a long respected American institution has come to be viewed in some quarters as part of the problem rather than as a positive change agent.

A few individuals have called attention to the fact that it is imperative for material in libraries to reflect the needs and interests of their users (and potential users) in order to remain a vital force in contemporary society. Almost two decades ago, Don Roberts emphasized the profession's failure to display much sensitivity to the acquisition of popular culture materials:

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