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Edited by Steven Minas, Susan McCabe, Catherine Theis

The Sound of the Past

Echoes and Incantations in Eliot, H.D., and Woolf

SERIES IN LITERARY STUDIES

What animates the relation between past and present, and how might loss itself become a generative force? "The Sound of the Past" reconsiders the works of T. S. Eliot, H. D., and Virginia Woolf as interlocutors for pressing concerns—porosity, interconnection, and the conditions of individual freedom. Moving across modernist studies, poetics, ecocriticism, and archival theory, the authors of these essays develop rigorous new readings that not only reposition canonical figures but also amplify resonances that have long remained inaudible. Erudite and incisive, the collection demonstrates how modernist texts continue to shape the horizons of contemporary thought.

Dr. Karla Kelsey

Charles B. Degenstein Professor of English and
Creative Writing
Susquehanna University

Summary

'The Sound of the Past' collects nine essays on the topic of Modernism and its relationship to past histories, literatures, artworks, environments, and cultural moments. The collection specifically explores the way sound informs the work of T. S. Eliot, H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), and Virginia Woolf. Some chapters address sound through allusion and prosody, while others do so through travel and "anaesthetics." Sound allows echoing, seeming, voicing, announcing, scaling, plunging, and hearing. These allowances offer a wide approach to both literary and sound studies. This collection addresses various genres, including the long poem, the novel, the travelogue, and the "it-narrative." As such, it will be a useful collection for anyone interested in the multiform way Modernist writers echo or channel their precursors.

About the editors

Susan McCabe was born on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles, has taught in Oregon and Arizona, and received her PhD at UCLA. She also taught and conducted research in her mother's country of Sweden. She teaches at the University of Southern California. She directed the PhD in Literature and Creative Writing Program at USC (2006-2009), and has acted as President of the Modernist Studies Association. She is the author of six books, including two critical studies—'Elizabeth Bishop: Her Poetics of Loss' (Penn State University Press, 1994) and 'Cinematic Modernism: Modern Poetry and Film' (Cambridge University Press, 2005)—and two poetry volumes, 'Swirl' (Red Hen Press, 2003), and 'Descartes' Nightmare' (winner of the Agha Shahid Ali prize and published by Utah University Press in 2008). She is also the author of a bi-biography of a modernist poet and writer pair, 'An Untold Love Story: H.D. & Bryher' (Oxford 2021). Most recently, McCabe's new poetry book, 'I Woke A Lake' (2025), has been published by The Center for Literary Publishing (CLP) at Colorado State University (CSU).

Steven Minas is a lecturer in the Department of English at the University of Southern California. His research focuses on the early modern period with a broad interest in poetics. He has published on Milton's use of allusion in 'Milton Studies' and on the history of creative criticism in 'Diacritics'.

Catherine Theis is the author of the poetry collection 'The Fraud of Good Sleep' (Salt, 2011) and the play 'MEDEA' (Plays Inverse, 2017). She is the translator of Slashing Sounds (University of Chicago Press, 2024), the first collection of the Italian poet Jolanda Insana to be published in English. Theis' latest collection of poems, 'By a Roman', will be published by Antiphony Press in October 2025. Her work has also been published in 'Classics in Modernist Translation' (Bloomsbury, 2019), a volume that addresses modernist engagements with the literature of Greco-Roman antiquity. Her contribution, "Braving the elements," explores the similarities between poets H.D. and Robinson Jeffers and their interest in the choral odes of Euripides' The Bacchae. Theis teaches at the University of Southern California.



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