

RUSSELL AND THE ELIOTS

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Carole Seymour-Jones. *Painted Shadow: a Life of Vivienne Eliot*. London: Constable, 2001; New York: Doubleday, 2002. Pp. xxii + 682. £20.00, US\$35.00 (hb); £9.99, US\$9.95 (pb).

Carole Seymour-Jones makes the case for Vivien(ne) Eliot's silencing by the "collusion" of her husband and Bertrand Russell. Whether there is any truth to this, she displays an astonishing grasp of daily events during the periods that the Eliots lived with Russell, with hardly a meeting or epistolary concern overlooked. Chapters 5–10 are fascinating. Russell met Vivien a day after Lawrence's rejection of him. He made Vivien personal gifts and even signed a lease with her. The two Eliots must have been a major thread, if not purpose, of Russell's life in 1915–18. This is her main contribution to Russell studies.

She also claims that Russell had a "Satanic aspect", which is stressed in "Mr. Apollinax" (p. 280; also 62, 192, 296), accepting Monk's analysis of "Satan in the Suburbs" as autobiographical (pp. 105–7). But she wrongly dates the poem as composed after the Eliots moved in with Russell (pp. 101, 121) in September 1915, whereas Eliot scholars place it at about the time that Eliot, and not merely the Channing-Cheetahs, called him "unbalanced" (*Letters*, 1: 92). She also misidentifies Russell as the First Tempter ("atheism"; p. 441) in *Murder in the Cathedral*. Eliot's notes show he thought of Russell as the Second (power).

Although Seymour-Jones creates an overwhelming sense of pity for Vivien, it is not only for her worsening illness or ill-treatment but for the insight we gain into her literary side. Vivien assisted with such enterprises as *The Criterion*.

Her papers are in the Bodleian, Oxford. They include what Seymour-Jones calls a sketch of Russell in Notebook 3 for a work called "Parties". As for her letters to him, Seymour-Jones states it as factual that Russell "destroyed them deliberately in an attempt to distance himself from her" (pp. 653, 104) and "laid a false trail in his autobiography" (p. 144). Aside from the fact that Vivien's side in the Russell Archives *is* incomplete, and probably very much so, there is no documentary evidence that Russell destroyed anybody's letters for that purpose.
