Abstract: “Pagans, Christians, Poets,” by Corey Abel

Eliot, who is known for some infamously dogmatic remarks, actually had a nuanced view of culture and art grounded in a robust conception of tradition. Relying primarily on *The Sacred Wood* and *After Strange Gods*, as well as selected critical essays, I offer a careful analysis that shows how Eliot’s often unwisely provocative rhetoric is undermined by ironic and counter-intuitive illustrations and cautious verbal ‘thrusts and retreats.’ I suggest that Eliot’s ‘catholic’ sensibility provides a view of tradition that powerfully challenges modern ideological habits of thinking.